



temptations

basil lazer

t e m p t a t i o n s

their cause, meaning and purpose

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The Word declares that people will be judged by what they have done, or their works. This means that they will be judged by their thoughts and intentions, for these are in what people do just the way their souls are in their bodies.

Arcana Cœlestia 9824³

What someone intends and therefore thinks comes out in its unique physical effect—in his speech or in his action, for example. This shows that the whole person is characterised by his intentions.

Arcana Cœlestia 10076⁴

People cannot be reformed unless they have freedom, because they are born with all kinds of evil propensities that have to be removed in order for them to be saved, and these cannot be removed unless a person sees them in himself, acknowledges them, rejects them, and at last turns away from them.

Heaven and Hell 598

introduction

The purpose of this booklet of quotations from the Writings of the New Christian Church is to show that temptation is more than just the enticement to do or think wrong that we notice when temptations strike. Temptation is the active interference of hell in our personal lives, through our weakest point, the vices that we love the most and expend the most effort to deny or excuse.

The quotations show an altogether new picture of what goes on in hell and heaven as someone struggles with temptations—the cunning powers of hell and the Lord’s on-going participation in our struggles.

But where does this information come from, and how has it, thanks to God, reached us? How have such disclosures been made possible, and who was the Lord’s instrument for this great purpose?

Emanuel Swedenborg, from whose works the quotations come, was

by far the greatest and most comprehensive revelator ever to be used by the Lord to bring to mankind Divine revelations and spiritual truths. The books containing these great teachings are known to many as “the Writings” of the New Church, and although first given to the world more than two hundred years ago, they are as inspiring and relevant today as if they had just been written. This is because, coming directly from the Lord through the pen of Swedenborg, they are ageless and as such have a perpetual appeal to every generation.

The Lord permitted Swedenborg to witness and describe in minute detail, over a period of nearly thirty years, life in heaven, hell, and the spiritual world in general, while he was still in this earthly life. Remarkable as that may seem, anyone who has read substantially in the Writings with an open mind can testify that this is not to be confused with spiritualism or occult practices of any kind. There turns out to be nothing eerie about it.

*Swedenborg’s greatest work, **Arcana Cœlestia**, a title which might be translated “What you don’t know about heaven,” or perhaps “heavenly secrets,” discloses in twelve volumes the spiritual or internal meaning of Genesis and Exodus as the story of every human being’s spiritual birth and rebirth. As such, it of course includes numerous very profound revelations, not the least a thorough description of what causes temptations, why they happen, what they accomplish, and how we can cooperate with the Lord as*

He triumphs over them on our behalf.

*The interested reader is directed to a few books which give a comprehensive description of this great man, Swedenborg, his years of preparation, and what has been accomplished through him by the Lord. These books are **Swedenborg, Life and Teaching**, by George Trowbridge; **The Swedenborg Epic**, by C. O. Sigstedt; and **The Essential Swedenborg**, by Sigfried Synnestvedt.*

In reading the Writings, one quickly learns that people live one life on earth, during which time they make their own choice by the life they live, as to whether they will go to heaven or hell after physical death. There their life continues to eternity with no discernable difference, but in a spiritual body, not in a physical body.

*There are a few distinctive concepts that one should have in mind when reading what follows about temptation. One is that the term **temptation** does not refer so much to the element of enticement, as mentioned above, but more to the element of trial and choice in our lives. Another distinctive concept is that **regeneration** or **rebirth** is a life-long process, rather than a matter of vicarious atonement. Rebirth is a gift from the Lord, given as people make their day-by-day choices between good with its truthfulness, and evil with its self-justifying lies. Thirdly, the term **charity** refers to loving other people rather than to isolated benevolent acts. And finally, when the term **innocence** comes up, it means something more like*

integrity than lack of experience of evil. Someone who has been through the hell of evil ways and has been reborn through temptations, hard choices, and then right living, is innocent.

This booklet is divided into twelve sections, unified by the subject of temptation and following a logical progression, but each section is free-standing in the sense that knowledge of one section is not absolutely vital to understanding another section. A certain amount of repetition will therefore be noticed, but the reader who chooses to browse rather than to work systematically through the sections will be at no insurmountable disadvantage.

*The numbers at the ends of the excerpted passages refer to the numbered paragraphs of *Arcana Cœlestia* (AC), or of other books of the Writings as indicated (see Appendix). Swedenborg's method was to number paragraphs independently of page numbers, and the practice has been followed in virtually all subsequent editions and translations of his works.*

It is well to be aware of what we are up against in temptation and to see how victory is possible through the Lord, whose great love and mercy is continually operating in many different ways, leading us from evil to good. We have our own part to play in this, by seeing our own particular evils, avoiding them with determination, and praying to the Lord for victory over them. That such victories are possible, the quotations which now follow will show.

where temptations come from

1

Temptations are nothing other than struggles between the evil spirits and the angels who are with a person. Evil spirits dredge up every mean act a person has done, including thoughts that he has had since childhood—the wicked things and the lies—and accuse him. For them, nothing is more enjoyable than this. But the Lord protects the person through the angels and keeps the evil spirits and demons from ranging out of bounds, beyond what the person can endure, and overwhelming him.

AC 741

During temptations there are evil spirits, as was said, who stir up a person's lies and bad acts—even arouse from his memory everything he thought and did from childhood on. They do this so

cunningly and mischievously that it defies description. But the angels who are with the person bring up his good deeds and truths and defend him in this way. The person experiences and notices this battle and attributes it to the remorse and pangs of conscience.

There are temptations of two kinds—intellectual and volitional. Under intellectual temptations, evil spirits just call up the bad things the person has done, accuse him, and condemn him. They also call up his good deeds, but they pervert these in a thousand ways, and they call up his thoughts besides. But this temptation is mild and is noticeable only as a recollection of these things in memory, sometimes with accompanying anxiety.

Under volitional temptations, however, acts and thoughts are not stirred up, but there are evil demons (as evil spirits of this kind may be called) who inflame the person with their lusts and filthy loves—which he shares—and in this way attack through the person's own lusts. They do this so mischievously and stealthily that no one can believe it is from them. For in one quick motion they surge into the life of his selfishness to bend and twist his feeling for good and truth almost instantly into a feeling for evil and falsity, so that the person does not know but that he is doing this himself and it springs from his free will. This temptation is quite severe and feels

like inner pain and searing torment. I have come to know and understand through many experiences that this is what happens, as well as when and how evil spirits and demons were flowing in, from where, and overwhelming whom!

AC 751

I have already said that spiritual temptation in a person is a struggle between the evil spirits and the angels who are with that person, and that this struggle is usually felt in his conscience. About this struggle one should also realise that angels are ceaselessly protecting the person and fending off the harm that the evil spirits intend him. They also guard the things that are false and wrong in the person, for they know perfectly well where the false and wrong things in the person come from—from evil spirits and demons.

Nobody ever produces anything false and evil by himself. It is the evil spirits with him who produce it, all the while making the person think it is from himself. That is how malicious they are. And what is more, they accuse and condemn the person at the very time when they are dumping this into him and misleading him. I can back this up by many experiences.

A person without a belief in the Lord cannot be taught not to think

that evil comes from himself, so he makes the evil his own and becomes like these evil spirits who are with him. People are like this. It is because the angels know this that they even guard what is false and wrong in a person during temptations. Otherwise he would be destroyed, because the person has nothing except what is evil and the falsity it generates. He is like a perfect heap and collection of evils and their false concepts.

AC 761

But spiritual temptations are little known today. They are not permitted as much as they used to be because people do not have true belief, so they would be destroyed. There are other things instead of spiritual temptations, such as misfortunes, grief, and anxiety, coming from worldly and bodily causes, as well as physical sickness and disease, which keep overruling and interrupting one's life of lusts and selfishness, raising his thoughts and focusing them on more inward, sober matters. But these are not spiritual temptations. Spiritual temptations only happen for those who have received from the Lord a conscience about goodness and truth. Conscience is precisely the field where spiritual temptations are active.

AC 762

People undergoing temptation wonder what the object is. The object is love. Evil spirits and evil demons confront it and raise doubts about it—the greater the love, the more the doubts! If no beloved object were in doubt—hopeless, in fact—it would be no temptation. Certainty of success portends victory, and is victory.

Since few know what temptations are like, let's briefly explain it.

Evil spirits never attack anything but what a person loves

Evil spirits never attack anything but what a person loves, and they contend the most viciously with whatever someone loves the most ardently.

Evil demons are the ones who confront anything related to a response to love, and evil spirits confront things relating to affection for the truth. As soon as they notice even the slightest thing that someone loves, or get a whiff, so to speak, of what is enjoyable and dear to him, they instantly attack it and want to destroy it, and with it the whole person, since his life is made up of

his loves. Nothing anywhere is more enjoyable to them than to destroy someone this way, and they would keep it up forever if the Lord did not shoo them away. The sly, malicious ones work their way into one's actual loves, flattering them and proselytising the person, and as soon as they enlist him, they try to destroy his loves and thus kill him. They do this in a thousand baffling ways.

They do not contest by arguing against anything good and true, either. Conflicts like this are insignificant, for if these spirits were beaten innumerable times, they would still keep on, since arguments against good and truth never run out. Instead, they distort good and true things and excite with a kind of selfish, persuasive passion so that the person does not know but that he is in the same selfish persuasion. At the same time, they inflame this with a delight snatched from some other delight the person has, and in this way they very cunningly infect and corrupt him. They do it so skillfully, by taking him from one thing to another, that if the Lord did not bring help, the person would never know but that it was his own wickedness.

Similarly, they attack those feelings for the truths that make up the conscience. As soon as they notice anything whatsoever related to conscience, they fashion their own response out of the misconcep-

w h e r e t e m p t a t i o n s c o m e f r o m

tions and superstitions in the person, and with these they darken and distort the light of truth or else bring on anxiety and torture him. They also keep his mind focused on one fixation to fill it with fantasies while secretly entangling his selfish wishes in the fantasies. There are countless other wiles that it would make no sense to describe. These are a few very general ways that they can

**the malicious demons and spirits take
no chances, because their life depends
on being able to destroy**

penetrate someone's conscience which more than anything else they take the greatest delight in destroying.

From these few examples—very few in fact—you can see what temptations are like and that in general temptations are in keeping with loves. From this you can also form an idea of what the Lord's temptations were like. They were the most severe, for the greater the love, the more severe. The Lord's most burning love was salvation of the whole human race, so it was complete affection for good and affection for truth, in the ultimate degree. Against these

loves all the hells struggled with the most malicious guile and virulence. But the Lord still overcame them by His own power.

There is this about victories: that afterwards the malicious demons and spirits take no chances, because their life depends on being able to destroy, but when they find out that someone is the kind that can stand up to them, they run away from the first attack, the same as they do when they approach the border of heaven. Horror and terror come over them immediately, and they retreat headlong.

AC 1820

Conscience is a new intention and a new way of understanding, from the Lord. It is, therefore, the Lord's presence with a person—the more the person responds to goodness and the truth, the closer. If the Lord's presence is closer than the degree to which the person is responsive to goodness and the truth, he enters temptation. The reason is that the evils and misconceptions in the person, in a mixture with the good qualities and truths in him, cannot stand a closer presence. You can tell this by certain things that come out in the other life. To be specific, evil spirits cannot approach any heavenly community at all without beginning to feel anguish and torment. And evil spirits cannot stand to have

angels look at them, or they writhe and fall unconscious. And, moreover, hell is distant from heaven because it cannot stand heaven, or in other words, the Lord's presence, which is in heaven. This is why it says of them in the Word, "Then they will start to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Hide us!'" (Luke 23:30) and "They will say to mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the one sitting on the throne!'" (Rev. 6:16). And a gloomy cloud emitted from the evils and falsities of the people in hell looks like a mountain or rock that they are hidden under.

Temptations and torments seem to come from the Divinity because they are brought out through the divine presence of the Lord, yet they are not from the Divinity—the Lord—but from evils and misconceptions in the one who is tempted or tormented. For nothing comes from the Lord except good, true, and merciful holiness. Obviously this good, true, and merciful holiness is just what people on the side of evil and falsity cannot stand, because they are on the other side, or in opposition. Evil, falsity, and unmercifulness always strive to violate that holiness, and the closer they come to it, the more they are in torment. When they do get close and are consequently in torment, they think that the Divinity is the one tormenting them.

The presence of spirits with people depends on their loves. Good spirits and angels are near people who have spiritual and heavenly love, and evil spirits are near people who have only physical and worldly love. This is so true that anyone can find out what kind of spirits are with him just by paying attention to what kind of loves he has—or what kind of goals he sets, which is the same thing, since everyone sets goals by what he loves.

AC 4307

The Egyptians' forcing the Children of Israel to serve represents the effort at dominance by those who have different established practices, opposed to the truths of the church. And as to this effort at dominance, I have been privileged to know what it is like among evil people from hell. Their effort and intention to dominate good people who have the truth defies description. For they employ every kind of malice, cunning, fraud, trickery, and cruelty, and in such abundance and variety that if just part of it were told, hardly anyone in the world could believe it, they are so cunning and professional, and also so unspeakable!

In short, they are of a kind that cannot be withstood at all by any person or even by any angel, but only by the Lord. The reason why they have this intention and make this effort is that everything

enjoyable in their life, and therefore their life itself, consists in doing evil. Nothing else, therefore, occupies their thoughts, and so they have no other intention. They are quite incapable of doing good, because it disgusts them. Any good they do is for their own benefit, therefore for themselves. These days the hells are vastly increasing due to people like this.

AC 6666

the Lord's temptations

2

The Lord's life was continual temptation and continual victory, from earliest childhood until His last hour of life in the world. This can be established from many things in the Old Testament, and this passage in Luke establishes that His temptation did not end with

**the Lord's life was continual
temptation and continual victory**

the temptation in the wilderness: "After the devil finished the whole temptation, he left Him for a while" (Luke 4:13). His continual temptation is also established by the fact that He was

tempted on the cross right up to His death, or the last moment of life in the world. This shows clearly that the Lord's whole life in the world, from earliest childhood, was continual temptation and continual victory.

The final temptation was when, on the cross, He prayed for His enemies—which is for everyone in the whole world. Except for this last temptation, the life of the Lord in the Gospels, in the Word, mentions only His temptation in the wilderness. That is all that was revealed to the disciples. The literal sense represents

**to destroy anyone's love is to destroy
that person's life itself, for love is life**

what they did notice as so mild that it is hardly anything, for to say so-and-so and answer such-and-such is no temptation. And yet it became more grievous than any human mind could ever possibly believe. No one can appreciate what a temptation is like except the one undergoing it. The temptation narrated in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13 does include the most important temptation: that for love of the whole human race He confronted

the self-interest and materialism that the hells were fraught with.

Every temptation is an attack on a love that a person has. Whatever the amount of love, that is the amount of temptation. If it is not an attack on love, it is no temptation. To destroy anyone's love is to destroy that person's life itself, for love is life. The Lord's life became love for the whole human race, and indeed it was so great and of such a kind that it was nothing but pure love. Against this life of His, continual temptations were let loose, as has been said, from earliest childhood until the last moment of His life in the world.

The love that was very precisely the Lord's life was represented in metaphor when He was hungry, and the devil said, "If you're the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into bread," and Jesus answered, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by all the words of God" (Luke 4:2-4; Matt. 4:2-4).

The fact that the Lord confronted materialism, or everything related to worldly love, is represented where the devil took Him up on a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth in a moment and said, "I'll give you all this power and its glory, since it's been given to me and anyone I want to give it to.

So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” But in answer Jesus said, “Get behind me, Satan, for it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only Him’” (Luke 4:5-8; Matt. 4:8-10).

The fact that He confronted self-interest and everything related to self-interest is represented where the devil escorted Him to the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and told Him, “If you’re the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it’s written, ‘He

the greater the love, the more severe the temptation

shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” And Jesus said to him, “Again, it is written, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’” (Matt. 4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12).

Continual victory is indicated by the fact that after temptation “angels came and cared for Him” (Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13).

In summary, from earliest boyhood until the last moment of His life



“if you worship me it will all be yours” - page 30

in the world, all the hells were confronting the Lord. He continually met, mastered, and conquered them, and only out of love for the human race as a whole. This love was not human but Divine, and the greater the love, the more severe the temptation, so one can verify how severe the struggles were, and how savage on the part of the infernal. I, Emanuel Swedenborg, know for certain that these were the facts.

AC 1690

all kinds of temptations

3

There are many temptations. In general, they are heavenly, spiritual, and worldly, not to be confused in the least. There can be heavenly temptations only for people who love the Lord, and spiritual ones for those who have charitable love for their neighbour. Worldly temptations are entirely different from these. They are not temptations but only anxieties about whatever attacks their worldly loves, stirred up by misfortune, diseases, and malfunction of the blood and body fluids.

These few remarks give some idea of what temptation is. Clearly it is anguish and anxiety about things that are hostile to what we love. For those who love the Lord, anything hostile to love for the Lord causes a deep internal anguish. This is temptation on a heavenly

plane. For those who have love for the neighbour, or charity, anything hostile to this love arouses pangs of conscience. This is temptation on a spiritual plane. But what many worldly people call “temptations” and “remorse of conscience” are not temptations but only anxieties about what is threatening their loves, as when they anticipate and apprehend being deprived of prestige, worldly goods, reputation, pleasures, bodily life, and so on. Still, these anxieties usually yield some good result.

People who have charity on a worldly level have temptations, too—all kinds of people with variant beliefs, gentiles, and idolaters—from things that threaten their life’s beliefs that they hold dear. But these are difficulties that simulate spiritual temptations. **AC 847^{2,3}**

In temptations there is exhaustion and desertion, there is discouragement and resultant enervation and indignation as well as other feelings of inward pain, in variety and with variations according to the states of evil and misbelief which evil demons and spirits stir up and the victim struggles against. Diabolical spirits long to discover some falsity more than anything else. In fact, it is common for them to supply a misconception themselves and then use it as an accusation. **AC 1917**

When a person asserts himself against the evil and falsity poured in and stirred up by evil spirits during temptations, that person has more freedom than under any conditions other than conditions of temptation, although he cannot appreciate this at the time. The freedom is an inner freedom, in which he wants to subdue evil, and it is sufficient to equal the strength and persistence of the evil that confronts him. Otherwise he would never be able to resist.

This freedom comes from the Lord, who inserts it into the person's conscience and by means of it enables him to conquer the evil as if on his own.

Through this freedom one is gifted with a selfhood in which the Lord can do good. Without a selfhood gained in freedom (given, that is) people can never be reformed, because they cannot receive the new will which is conscience. The freedom supplied in this way is precisely the plane for the flowing in of goodness and truth from the Lord. This is why people who do not resist from free will, or in freedom, during temptations, fall victim to them.

AC 1937⁵

The Lord never forces anyone. Someone who is forced to think the truth and do good is not reformed but thinks untruth and

wants what is wrong all the more. All compulsion has this effect, as records and documents from life show. They make two things known: that conscience does not allow itself to be forced, and that we incline toward what is forbidden. Besides, everyone wants to move from constraint to freedom, because this is a vital matter.

So it is obvious that the Lord dislikes anything that does not come out of freedom, that is, voluntarily or from free will. For when

Someone who is forced
to think truth and do good
is not reformed
but thinks untruth and wants what is
wrong all the more

someone worships the Lord under compulsion, he is not worshipping from anything in himself. He makes an outward show, or rather is forced to make it. Inwardly there is either nothing or else repugnance—contradiction, in fact.

Thanks to the freedom the Lord provides, when someone is being

regenerated, he uses self-control, is humble, even coerces his rationality to submit, and so he receives an angelic selfhood. Then the Lord improves this selfhood step by step and makes it more and more free. So it becomes responsive to goodness and therefore to truth, and delights in it, and is happy with good and truth, like the angels. Of this freedom the Lord Himself says in John (8:32,36), “the truth shall make you free . . . if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed”.

People without a conscience do not know what this freedom is at all, for they place freedom in pleasure and the liberty to think and

we incline toward what is forbidden

speak falsity and to intend and do evil, and not repress these things and be humble, much less coerce themselves. This is quite the opposite thing, and the Lord teaches of them, “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34).

They get this enslaved freedom from the infernal spirits who are around them and infuse it into them. When they participate in

these spirits' lives, they participate in the spirits' loves and lusts. They are wafted on a putrid, fecal happiness. When they are carried away on its rush, so to speak, they think they are in freedom, but it is infernal freedom. The difference between this infernal freedom and heavenly freedom is that the one is deadly and drags them down toward hell, but the other—heavenly freedom—is vital and carries them up toward heaven.

Self-coercion is mastering and subduing the evils and false convictions that rise from the outer person up into his rational life. It is not some plunge into poverty and misery or giving up all physical pleasures. Evil is not mastered and subdued this way, and sometimes another evil may be stirred up, like merit for self-denial. Moreover, the person's freedom suffers. Only in the soil of freedom can goodness and true belief be planted.

AC 1947

Temptations are nothing other than the inner person's wrestling with the outer; that is, the spiritual person with the worldly. For they both want to control, and when there is a question of control, there is a struggle, which is wrestling.

In an inward sense, the “wrestlings of God” and “prevailing” (see

Gen. 30:8) are temptations in which the person is successful, but in the outward sense this is resistance on the person's worldly level, since all temptation is just that. For spiritual temptations are a matter of control—a matter of which will be in charge, the inner person or the outer, or in other words, the spiritual or the worldly, since they are mutually opposed. So when someone is in

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temptation, the inward or spiritual person is ruled by the Lord through the angels but the outer or worldly person is ruled by spirits of hell. The struggle between them is what is experienced as temptation in the person. When someone is fit for regeneration both in his beliefs and in the way he lives, he will prevail in temptations, but when he is not able to be regenerated, he will give way in temptations.

Temptation is the way the inner being of a person merges with the outer. For they differ with one another, but temptations reduce them to accord and agreement. The exterior person is definitely the type that, left to itself, craves nothing but physical and worldly things. They are the joy of his life. But when the inner person is open to heaven and wants heavenly things—as those who can be regenerated do—then heavenly things are a joy to that inner person. When someone is under temptation, there is strife between these two joys. The person does not know it, because he

temptation is the way the inner person merges with the outer

does not know what heavenly joy is and what hellish joy is, much less how opposite they are. But angels of heaven can in no way join a person in his physical and worldly pleasure until it is brought into compliance, so that physical and worldly pleasure is no longer the object, except to serve heavenly pleasures. Once this happens, angels can be with the person in both pleasures, and then his pleasure becomes bliss, and finally, in the next life, happiness.

Anyone who thinks that a person's worldly pleasure before regeneration is not infernal and not beset with diabolical spirits, is very much mistaken. He does not know what people are like. As to his worldly plane, a person is in the clutches of demons and infernal spirits before regeneration, no matter how much he might seem to himself to be just like anyone else and can be just as holy as the rest. He can debate about the truth and goodness of his faith and even think he is confirmed in it. If he does not detect in himself any fondness for what is right and fair in his job and for truth and goodness in company and in life, he should know that he is enjoying the kind of pleasure that the infernals do, for in his pleasure there is no love other than love of self and love of the world. When these loves make up someone's pleasure, there is nothing of charity in it and nothing of faith.

Once this pleasure is dominant, the only way it can be blunted and overthrown is by affirming and acknowledging the holiness of belief and good behaviour, and then by temptation. For people who do not affirm and acknowledge the good and truth associated with belief and charity are unable to enter any temptation at all. There is nothing within them that resists the evil and the falseness that worldly pleasure encourages.

Temptation occurs only to people who are experiencing the good effects of the truth—that is, people who love the truth, or have affection for it—since someone who does not love the truth he has, or feels no response to it, does not care about it. But someone who loves it is anxious not to have it injured. What makes up a person's intellectual life is what he thinks is true, and what he has stamped on his mind as being good makes up the life of his will. Therefore, when what he thinks is true is attacked, his intellectual life is attacked, and when what he has stamped on his mind as being good is attacked, the life of his will is attacked. When someone is tempted, therefore, his life is at stake.

The first battle is about truth, because this is what one loves at first. Evil spirits attack whatever someone loves. Once he loves goodness more than truth (the precedence having reversed), he is tempted in regard to goodness.

But not many people know what temptation is these days, because not many undergo temptation at all. Only people with the good motives of belief, which is love for the neighbour, can be tempted. People without this charity would succumb at once if tempted, and those who succumb start confirming evil and having false convictions. It brings them into contact with evil spirits who master

them. This is why so few people come under any kind of spiritual temptation these days. They only feel certain worldly anxieties—to keep them from the self-love and materialism that they would otherwise rush into without restraint.

AC 4274

Note in general that good and truth are always brought together in the course of temptations. The reason is that evil and falsity resist and, so to speak, revolt and try to interfere with the connection of goodness with truth and truth with goodness, in every way they can. This struggle develops between the spirits who are with a person—between the spirits of evils and false concepts and the spirits of goodness and true beliefs. The person notices it in the form of temptation, as if within himself. So when the spirits of goodness and true beliefs overcome the spirits of evils and false concepts, the Lord sends the good spirits joy through heaven. The person feels this joy, too, as if in himself, as a soothing relief.

But the joy and relief are not due to the victory but to the meeting of goodness and truth, for the uniting of goodness with truth always has joy in it. It is the heavenly marriage, in which is the Divinity.

AC 4572²

Conditions during temptation, compared to conditions afterwards, are like those in a dungeon or prison—squalid and filthy, because when someone is being tempted filthy spirits are near him. They encircle him and stir up the evil inclinations and false ideas that are in him, and they keep these active and exacerbate them until he is in despair. This is why the person is in filth and squalor at that time.

In the other life, all spiritual states can be seen with the eyes, and when this state of temptation comes out to be seen, it looks like a

when a condition of temptation stops the fog lifts and the air clears

fog drifting out of foul places, and you can smell the stench from it. This is how the aura surrounding someone in temptation looks, and someone who is being laid waste; in other words, is in a pit in hell.

But when a condition of temptation stops, the fog lifts and the air clears. The reason is that the temptations reveal the misconcep-

tions and bad tendencies in the person and remove them. That mist appears as these are revealed, and the air clears as they are removed. This changing condition is represented by Joseph's shaving and changing his clothes (Gen. 41:14).

A state of temptation can also be compared to the state a person is in when he is among thieves—hair standing up, expression desperate, and clothes torn. If someone succumbs in temptation, he stays this way, but if he overcomes in temptation, then after he has relaxed his face, combed his hair, and changed his clothes, he becomes jovial and at peace. And there are, indeed, spirits and demons of hell who surround you in the guise of criminals, and attack, and induce temptation.

AC 5246²⁻⁴

All temptations seem bad, because they are inner anxiety and pain, and are like damnation. This is because then the person is placed in a condition appropriate to his bad inclinations, so he is among bad spirits who accuse him and torment his conscience. Yet angels protect him; that is, the Lord does through angels. He maintains the person's hope and trust, which are the inner weapons with which he fights back. The worldly plane of life enters temptation especially when it is accepting the spiritual plane, because life's evils

and false beliefs occupy the worldly plane.

AC 6097

Around everyone, and around every good spirit, is a general sphere of effort from hell and a general sphere of effort from heaven. The sphere from hell is a sphere of effort to do harm and destroy. The one from heaven is a sphere of effort to do good and rescue. These spheres are general. Concurrently there is a special sphere

**people are in equilibrium and are free
to think and intend evil as well as to
think and intend good**

around every person, for spirits out of hell and angels from heaven are with each person, so people are in equilibrium and are free to think and intend evil as well as to think and intend good.

Therefore, when someone of the church enters temptation, which takes place when he follows his bad inclinations, then a struggle goes on around him between the spirits out of hell and the angels from heaven. The struggle lasts as long as the person sticks to his

bad inclinations. In the struggle it sometimes seems to the spirits from hell that they are winning, and they press on, sometimes that they are being defeated, and then they retreat. It makes them afraid that more angels from heaven might join in against them and that then they might be thrown into hell and never get out again. And this is what does happen when they are defeated.

When spirits out of hell fight against angels, they are in the world of spirits and are at liberty there. These things can demonstrate, then, what is meant in an inner sense by the fact that the Egyptians infested and oppressed the descendants of Israel, and that the more the Israelites were mistreated, the more they multiplied. Also the fact that Jehovah, that is, the Lord, fought for them and subdued the Egyptians by plagues, and finally sank them in the Red Sea.

AC 6657

When someone is in temptation, that person is beset all around by false concepts and evil influences that interfere with the light flowing in from the Divinity, which is truth and goodness. The person is, so to speak, in the shade. Shadows, in the other life, are simply a siege of misbeliefs, for these take away the light and therefore the awareness of consolation by truths for the person in

temptation. But when someone emerges from temptation, light appears, with its spiritual heat, which is truth with its good. This brings happiness after anxiety. This is the morning that follows night in the other life. The reason why good is then noticeable and truth appears is that after temptation, truth and good work down within and take root. When someone is in temptation, he is as if hungering for what is good and thirsting for the truth, so when he emerges from temptation, he absorbs good like a hungry person feasting on food, and he takes on truth like a thirsty person drinking.

AC 6829

To “die in the wilderness” (Exod. 14:11) means to fall victim in temptation and therefore to be condemned. This shows that “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?” means that, with damnation, where is the difference if it is from infestation by false ideas, the state they were in before, or by temptations where they succumb, the state they are in afterwards.

Clearly these are desperate words. People who are in despair, which is the climax of temptation, even think such things as this, and then they are on a slippery slope, or as if sliding into hell. But



false concepts and evil influences interfere with the light flowing in from
the Divinity - page 47

actually, a thought like this at that time is not harmful. Angels pay no attention to it, for there is a limit to everyone's strength. When temptation reaches the final limit of one's strength, he can hold on no longer but slips. But just then, on the brink of falling, the Lord raises him, and this releases him from the desperation. Usually he is then led into a state of hope and from there into full consolation and also into a festive mood.

A state of temptation where people succumb is called damnation because those who give in under temptation enter the state of the

temptations are for the purpose of confirming good states of mind and true beliefs

condemned. Temptations are for the purpose of confirming good states of mind and true beliefs, and uniting them like faith and charity, and this purpose is achieved when someone succeeds under temptation. But when someone fails, the truth and good are rejected, and falsity and evil are confirmed. A state of damnation for people comes from this.

As to the temptations that people of the spiritual church suffered, and the ones the people of this church will suffer, note that in people of a spiritual church a belief cannot be implanted except through temptations, so neither can charity, for in temptations a person is in a struggle against what is false and what is evil. The false and the evil flow from the hells into the outward level of a person, but what is good and what is true flow into the inward person from the Lord. So what we call temptation is the struggle of the inward person with the outward.

The more the outer person is brought under obedience to the inward person, the more faith and charity are implanted. For the

there must be temptation to regenerate a person

outer or worldly plane of a person is a receptacle of truth and goodness from the inner plane. If the receptacle is unsuited, it receives nothing that flows from within but either rejects it, kills it, or smothers it, so there is no regeneration. This is why there must be temptation to regenerate a person, which is brought about by

the sowing of belief and of charity, and thus by the formation of a new will and a new way of understanding. This is also the reason why the Lord's Church is spoken of as militant.

AC 835 I²

Temptations are on-going hopelessness about salvation, mild at first but more and more serious, until finally there is doubt, almost to the point of denial, about the presence of the Divinity and about His help. Spiritual life is ordinarily carried to this extreme in temptations because this gets worldly life out of the way. Then, in this medium of despair, the Lord keeps the innermost plane of life in the struggle against falsity. As a result, this despair is soon dissipated by comfort that the Lord then provides. For after every spiritual temptation there is consolation and something like renewed life.

AC 8567

the struggles of temptation

4

It is very true that the Lord guides people through spirits and angels. When evil spirits begin to take control, angels are busy turning aside evil influences and false ideas, so a struggle develops. This is the struggle that one is aware of as the perception and dictates of conscience. By these clues, as by the temptations, people would clearly recognise that spirits and angels are with them if they were not so involved in their bodies that they believe nothing that is said about spirits and angels. If people like this felt these struggles a hundred times, they would still pronounce them fantasies and caused by some mental illness. I have known about these struggles and vividly felt the effect of them a million times, almost continually now for some years, including who caused them, what kind of spirits, where, when they ebbed, and when they

flowed. And I have talked with them!

AC 227

To eat products of the ground in great sorrow (Gen. 3:17) represents a miserable state of life, especially since to eat, in an inward sense, means to live. Add the fact that a miserable life

a person lives like a wild animal if his
inner plane is separated from his
outer plane

it is through the inner person that
the Lord makes someone human

follows when evil spirits begin to attack and the angels around a person get to work, and all the more if the evil spirits begin to be in control. Then the evil spirits lead the outer person, angels the inner, of which so little is left that the angels can hardly find anything of it to protect the person with. This results in misery and stress.

People who are spiritually dead rarely notice misery and stress like this. The reason is that they are no longer human, no matter how much they think that they are more human than anyone else. They do not know what is spiritual and heavenly and what eternal life is any more than animals do. Like the animals they look downward at things on the ground and around at worldly things. All they cherish is their ego, and they indulge whim and sense with the full consent of their rational minds.

Being dead spiritually, they do not undergo any struggle or temptation. If it did come over them, it would be more severe than they could survive, and they would condemn themselves even worse and plunge even deeper into the damnation of hell. So they are spared until they are taken into the other life, where they can no longer die of any temptation or misery. Then they undergo very serious experiences, which are also meant by the cursed ground and eating the fruit of it in great sorrow.

AC 270

A person lives like a wild animal if his inner plane is separated from his outer plane so that it functions only in a general way in him. For it is through the inner person that the Lord makes someone human. But the wild animal in people comes from the outer plane.

Without the inner dimension, this is nothing but a wild animal with animal nature, animal drives, animal appetites, animal illusions, and animal sensations. And the same organs. Yet this outer person can reason, and, as it seems to him, reason cleverly. He gets this ability from the spiritual substance which life from the Lord can flow into, but which is distorted in such a person and turns into a life of evil, which is death. This is why he is spoken of as dead.

AC 272

No one can resist evils and falsities until he knows what evil and falsity are, and therefore not until he has been taught. He does not know what evil is, much less what falsity is, until his intellect and judgment are strong, and this is why people do not enter temptations until adulthood—each when grown up. But the Lord did in childhood.

In the very beginning, each person resists on the basis of the morals and the verities that he is acquainted with. By and through them he passes judgment on bad and false things. And each person, when he first begins to resist, thinks that the goodness and the truths with which he resists are his own. That is, he attributes them to himself, and he also attributes to himself the power to stand fast.

This is acceptable, for at that point the person has no way of knowing any better. Until someone has been regenerated he cannot know at all—not to the extent of being able to say that he knows, accepts, and believes—that no goodness or truth is from himself but all goodness and truth are from the Lord. He does not know, either, that he cannot resist anything evil or false by his own fortitude. In fact, he does not know that evil spirits stir up and pour in evil and false influences, still less that through evil spirits he

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is in touch with hell. Nor does he know that hell is pressing in on him like the sea on every part of the shore, which no one can hold back by his own strength. But before he is regenerated he cannot help thinking that it is by his own strength, so this is permissible, and in this way he is introduced to struggles or temptations. But later he gets more and more enlightened.

When someone is at the stage where he thinks that goodness and truth are from himself and the power to resist is his own, the good

morals and the truths with which he resists bad behaviour and false beliefs are not good and true, though they seem to be, for his ego is in them, and he takes credit for victory and gloats as if he had conquered evil and falsity, although the Lord alone is the one who fights and wins. No one is capable of knowing that this is the way it is, excepting people who are being regenerated through temptations.

AC 1661²⁻⁴

It is truth that is in the front lines, for the fight is carried on by means of truth. The truth makes known what falsity is and what evil is. Therefore, these conflicts never come up before a person is equipped with a knowledge and grasp of the truth and good behaviour.

AC 1685

When people are convinced that they can do good and resist evil by their own power and that this is how they merit salvation, the notion clings, and it causes goodness to be bad and the truth to be false. But it is still appropriate for someone to do good just as if it came from himself, so he should not hold back, thinking, “If I can do no good on my own, I should wait for a direct stimulus,” and thus wait inertly. This is not appropriate, either. He should do

good as if from himself, but when he is mulling over the good that he does or has done, he can think, acknowledge, and believe that the Lord, present with him, did it.

If a person gives up, thinking as was described, he is not a vessel in which the Lord can act. The Lord cannot influence anyone who abandons everything which power can flow into.

AC 1712²⁻³

many people are unaware
that each person has an inward plane,
a reasoning plane, and a worldly plane

Many people are unaware that each person has an inward plane, a reasoning plane, and a worldly plane, and that the planes are quite distinct from one another—so distinct, in fact, that one plane can dispute with another. For the reasoning plane, spoken of as the rational side of the person, can dispute with the worldly plane, which is the worldly side of the person. The planes are so distinct, in fact, that the rational side of the person can see and discern a fault in the worldly side, and, if it truly is rational, correct the fault.

Until the two planes are in alignment, a person cannot be an integrated person nor be in peace and quiet, because one plane fights with the other. For the angels with a person guide his rational plane, but evil spirits who are with him guide his worldly plane. This gives rise to conflict.

If the rational level prevails, the worldly is subdued, and this gives a person a conscience. But if the worldly plane wins, he can get no conscience at all. If the rational plane wins, his worldly level becomes just as if it, too, were rational. But if the worldly plane wins, the rational plane becomes worldly to all intents and purposes. Furthermore, if the rational plane wins, angels come closer to the person and fill him up with charity, which is something heavenly that the angels get from the Lord. Then the evil spirits go far away. However, if the worldly plane prevails, the angels go farther away—that is, more toward his inner reaches—and evil spirits approach more closely his rational plane and keep attacking it, filling the lower parts of his mind with hates, resentments, deceits, and so forth.

If the rational plane prevails, the person finds peace and quiet, and in the other life heavenly peace. But if the worldly plane wins, he seems to be in peace while he lives, but in the other life he enters

the turmoil and torment of hell.

This shows the human condition on the rational plane and on the worldly plane. So there is nothing that can make someone blessed and happy except for the rational level to keep the worldly in line and both to be in alignment. This is only accomplished by love for other people, which comes only from the Lord.

AC 2183²⁻⁴

inward, rational and worldly

5

It is people's inward life that makes them people and distinguishes them from animals. On this inward plane people live after death to eternity, and by it the Lord can raise them up among the angels. It is the matrix from which people are made human. These inner reaches of people do not have life in themselves, but they are forms that receive life from the Lord. The more someone is evil, either by practice or by heredity, the more he is as if separated from this inward level that is the Lord's and is with the Lord. For although it is part of a person and inseparable from him, to the extent that someone moves away from the Lord, he is as if separated from his inner life. But the separation does not separate him from his inner plane, for then he would no longer be capable of living after death. It is insurrection and a distancing on the part of his less lofty

levels—the rational and the worldly—from this inmost level. The more the insurrection and distancing, the more the disconnection from the Lord, and the less the insurrection and distancing, the more the person is joined with the Lord by this inmost plane of existence.

AC 1999³⁻⁴

The rational plane of a person is intermediate between the most inward plane and the most outward.

AC 1015

the rational plane of a person
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inward plane and the most outward

The rational plane is what joins the innermost plane of people with the outermost. The connection depends on the state of the rational plane. But the rational plane is nothing unless affection flows into it, activating it and giving it life. So it follows that the state of the rational plane depends on that of the affection. When an affection for good flows in, this affection for good becomes, in

the rational plane of existence, an affection for the truth. The opposite goes for an affection for evil.

AC 1589

The rational plane is born from the innermost person as a father and from the most outward as a mother. Unless these two are joined together, nothing rational exists at all.

AC 1895

The rational plane of a person comes from the joining of the inmost person with the life and emotions of the worldly plane.

AC 1907

The worldly plane in relation to the rational plane, or, in other words, the outermost person in relation to the more inward person, is like a housekeeper.

AC 3020

The contaminated aspects of one's worldly life are all the things related to self-interest and materialism. When these contaminated qualities have been cleaned up, good states and true concepts flow in.

AC 3147²

It is painful to separate truth from the worldly level of a person and raise it to a rational level, for on the worldly level are fallacies, evil self-interest, and false convictions. So long as these are present and are attached to the truth, the worldly side of the person keeps the truth for itself and will not let it be raised onto the rational level. This is because the worldly side of a person questions the truth and debates whether or not it is so. As soon as the Lord sorts out the evil self-interest and false convictions, however, and out of goodness, the person begins to abandon his arguments against the truth, then truth is ready to separate from the worldly plane, rise to the rational, and be clothed in goodness.

AC 3175

The worldly side of a person is quite fully in the world, and the foundation of people's thought and will is laid in the worldly plane as in the ground. This is why a person is aware of a struggle between his rational or inner life and his outer or worldly life as he is regenerated. It is also why his outer person is much slower and more difficult to regenerate than his inner. For what is nearer the world and body cannot easily be coaxed to obey the inner person.

AC 3469

evil from hell and good from heaven

6

Regarding struggles with the hells and victories over them, the fact is that once conquered, always conquered, for through victory one gains power over them. To that extent a person establishes his position and makes the goodness of love and the truth of belief part of himself. The hells never dare attack this again.

When the Lord was in the world He opened Himself to struggles of temptation with all the hells, and through them He made the human in Him Divine, at the same time reducing the hells to obedience forever. For this reason, the Lord alone has power over the hells forever and by Divine power fights for humankind.

AC 8273³

Here is how the influence of evil from hell begins. When someone takes up an evil practice, first by consent, then by intention, and at last wholeheartedly, the hell that specialises in that evil is opened up (for the hells are classified according to evils and all their varieties), and then the influence of that particular hell is added. When someone takes up an evil in this way, it sticks with him, because the hell whose influence he is then under finds fulfilment in its evil. Therefore, it does not let go but holds on obstinately and makes the person think about the evil, occasionally at first, then whenever anything like it comes up. In the end this hell makes that evil the ruling authority in the person.

When this happens, he seeks ways to establish that it is not evil until he fully convinces himself. Then, so far as he can, he makes an effort to remove outward restraints, and makes fitting, proper, and finally noble and honourable, things like adultery, theft through sly tricks, various forms of arrogance and ostentation, contempt for others, persecution in the guise of justice, and so forth. These things work like open theft—after people commit an evil on purpose two or three times, they are unable to stop, since it obsesses their minds.

evil from hell and good from heaven

Note, too, that it does a person no harm for evil to come to mind, since spirits out of hell constantly pour in evil, and angels constantly clear it out. But when evil enters someone's intention,

things like adultery work
like open theft

after people commit an evil
on purpose two or three times
they are unable to stop, as it
obsesses their minds

it is harmful, for then it goes right into action so far as outward restraints do not prevent it. Evil enters the will from being held in mind, from consent, and most of all through act and consequent delight.

AC 6204

It has often been observed that evil spirits are notorious for adopting a person's opinions and obsessions, and when they do,

they lead the person at will, because whoever puts himself into someone's obsessions and into his opinions gains control of the person and makes him his servant. The influence through angels, however, comes by way of people's affections, which they gently bend toward goodness and do not break. This influence is quiet, almost unnoticeable, being from within, and always through free will.

AC 6205

Note that everything bad comes in through hell, and everything good through heaven from the Lord. But evil can become part of a person because he believes and is convinced that he thinks of it and does it by himself, so he makes it his own. If he believed the real facts, then he would not make evil something of his own but would take on goodness from the Lord as a part of himself. Then as soon as evil seeped in, he would think about it as coming from the evil spirits around him, and when he thought that, angels would turn it aside and force it back. For angels have influence in what someone knows and believes, but not in what someone does not know and does not believe. They can influence only what is a person's own.

When someone takes on something evil as a part of himself, he acquires the sphere of that evil. Spirits from hell who enjoy that

same evil attach themselves to the sphere, since like joins like. The spiritual sphere around a person in this life or around a spirit is what spreads out from his loves. It tells what he is like from a distance. In the other life, everyone gets together according to spheres, even communities. And they also separate by them, for opposite spheres collide and repel each other. So all the spheres of evil loves are in hell, and all the spheres of good love are in heaven—in other words, those who are in these spheres.

AC 6206

the mechanics of

7

temptation

There is an ebb and flow after temptation, because the person does not know what the truth is. But as this gradually ends, the light of truth comes through. The reason for this is that so long as someone is in that state, the innermost plane cannot affect the outermost. On this deeper plane of a person are imprints, which are affections for goodness and the truth. On the outer level are greedy desires and the false ideas they produce. So long as these surface qualities are not tamed and quenched, there is not a clear path for the good traits and truths to come from within, i.e. through the inner person from the Lord.

Temptations, therefore, serve to tame the outer person and make it comply with the inner. Anyone can appreciate this from the fact

that as soon as things that someone loves are attacked and broken, as during misfortunes, illness, and depression, his selfish wishes begin to subside, and as they do, he begins to speak with piety. As soon as he returns to his former state, however, his outer being rules, and he hardly thinks of pious things. It is the same at the time of death, when outer concerns begin to fade away.

This should show what the inner person and the outward person are, and what imprints are, and also how selfish desires and self-indulgence prevent the Lord from being able to act through the inner life of a person. Also from this it is clear to everyone what temptations accomplish—those inner pangs called the remorse of conscience—namely that the outer person complies with the inner. Obedience of the outer person to the inner is nothing other than that responses to goodness and truth are not interfered with, resisted, and smothered by selfish wishes and the false ideas that they engender.

AC 857

Truth governs in a state of temptation. For everyone who is in temptation, a truth that guides and governs the thoughts flows in from the Lord. It helps them up whenever they sink into doubts and despair. This governing truth is truth such as they have been

taught from the Word and from doctrine and have accepted as their belief. They do recall other truths at that time, but those do not govern their inner being. Sometimes the truth that governs does not emerge noticeably to the intellect but lies low in the background and governs nonetheless. For the Lord's Divinity flows into it and thus keeps the inner plane of the mind focused on it,

no one is led into any
spiritual temptation before he has
reached adulthood

and so when it comes to light, the person who is under temptation receives consolation and is buoyed up.

It is not this truth exactly, but an affection for it through which the Lord guides people who are in temptation, for Divinity influences only qualities related to affection.

The truth that is planted and rooted in people's inner life is planted and rooted through affection and not at all without affection. This truth, planted and rooted in through affection, is there to stay. It is

recalled by affection, and when it is, the affection related to this truth emerges. This affection is the person's reciprocal affection.

Since this is the situation for a person in temptation, no one is led into any spiritual temptation before he has reached adulthood and in the process has acquired some truth that he can be governed by. Otherwise he would succumb, and then his condition afterwards would be worse than before.

These observations should show the meaning of truth governing in a state of temptation, which is the meaning of “the keeper of the prison” (Gen. 39:22).

AC 5044¹⁻²

Temptations in people are spiritual struggles between bad spirits and good ones. The struggles are caused by, and are about, things a person has done and thought of which are in his memory. The bad spirits accuse and assault, but the good exonerate and defend. These struggles seem to be inside the person, for things that flow into people from the spiritual world come out as if they were not from there but in the people themselves.

Temptations are the same way when spirits undergo them, so when

spirits are going to enter temptations, the Lord arranges their inner being, i.e., their truths and their good qualities, in such a way that false notions and evil motives from hell can be resisted through His direct influence, and through His indirect influence via heaven. People in temptation can be protected in this way.

When someone is being tempted, he is near hell—especially the hell that the Red Sea stands for, because people who knew about the truth but lived an evil life, and who adopted false concepts due to the evil, are in that hell. The things that bring people anxiety during temptations flow in from the hells, through spirits.

These observations explain the meaning of temptations flowing in from hell, which is represented by camping near the Red Sea (see Exod. 14:2).

“Let us alone to serve the Egyptians” (Exod. 14:12) means not wanting to be kept from giving in. Serving the Egyptians is giving in to those who infest through false ideas. “Let us alone,” when said on account of the influence of Divine Truth during infestations and temptations, means not to hinder and not to restrain. This is because two forces or powers act in these states, one that comes from false ideas from the hells induced into the outer person, and

the other from truths supplied by the Lord in the inner person. These two forces are mutually opposed. The false concepts induced from the hells take their force and power from self-interest and materialism in the outward part of the person, but the truths supplied by the Lord take their force and power from one's love for other people and for the Lord.

When someone wins, this inner force and power always prevails, because it is Divine and does not let the force and power from

**after each spiritual temptation come
enlightenment, tender feelings,
well-being and happiness**

false notions build up to more than can be repelled. When these two forces act, the inner force, from the Lord, keeps pulling the person out of it, so to speak, and holding him back to keep the falsities from dragging him down so that he might fall. For when two forces meet in opposition, one generally advances, and the other withdraws. Forces in the spiritual world are the affections associated with what one loves. The tools they work with are



a state of temptation is turbulent but the state following temptation
is peaceful - page 81

truths, and in the opposite sense, false concepts.

AC 8168

After each spiritual temptation come enlightenment, tender feelings, well-being, and happiness—well-being from the enlightenment by truth, and happiness from positive feelings about goodness. Consolation follows temptation. The reason is that temptations implant and unite truths and good patterns of life so that as to his spirit the person is brought farther into heaven and into heavenly communities he had not been in before. When the temptation is over, communication with heaven, which had been partly closed before, is opened. This is where the enlightenment, good feelings, well-being, and happiness come from, for angels with whom the person is now in touch pour in through the truth and the good.

The twelve springs at Elim (Exod. 15:27) stand for enlightenment by truth and the well-being from it, for springs stand for truths. The seventy palm trees stand for positive feelings toward the truth that comes from goodness, and a resultant happiness.

AC 8367

All organisation of truths is done by the good effects of love, because it is under the influence of goodness and according to it

that truths fit together and, with goodness, form a body, so to speak, in the image of the person they are in. For the image of a person's spirit, which is indeed the person because it is the inner person, precisely corresponds to the organisation of the truths that spring from the goodness in him. This is why an angelic sphere of the goodness of love pours out and affects people when angels are brought near them, and true beliefs shine in their faces. Things like this are seen very noticeably in the spiritual world.

This organising comes about after temptation because temptation sows the goodness and truths in people, but only later are these organised. A state of temptation is turbulent, but the state following temptation is peaceful. Organisation comes about in quiet. And this is also why a happy feeling follows temptation, due to enlightenment by truth, and the joy of responding to goodness.

AC 8370

Good loves and true beliefs do not become part of a person during temptations, but after them, because when temptations are going on, evils and evil's misconceptions are stirred up on the one side, and on the other the goodness in the person, and the truths of the goodness. His state is troubled. In this state his inner dimensions

open up. But after temptations he quiets down, and in this state the Lord brings goodness and the truths of goodness into his opened inner life. This clarifies what is meant by good loves and true beliefs not becoming part of a person while temptations are going on.

AC 10686

8

In the throes of temptation, evil spirits are allowed to bring out everything bad and false in a person and use the person's evil and falsity as a weapon. Once they are defeated, however, they are no longer allowed to do this, for all at once they can tell that the person is confirmed in good and truth. Spirits have this perception more keenly than people in this life do. Just from the sphere of a person confirmed in good and truth they know at once his condition, what response they will get, and so on. This is clearly evident in a regenerate spiritual person. Evil spirits are around him as much as around an unregenerate person, but they are under control, and they serve. They are deprived of the power to do evil and to think what is false.

AC 1695²

Anyone who is in the struggles of temptations and wins gets more and more power over evil spirits—the diabolical crew—until finally they do not dare to tempt him any more. Every time a victory is won, the Lord sorts into place those good qualities and truths used to fight that battle, and the more these are purified in this way, the more the heavenly qualities of love fill the outward person and complete the alignment.

Anyone who says that the outer person can be brought into alignment without the struggles of temptations is wrong, because

**anyone who is in the struggles of
temptation and wins gets more and
more power over evil spirits**

temptations are the means by which evil and false qualities are removed, good and true ones are introduced, and the traits of the external person are reduced to obedience to serve the more inward, rational person, and through this the innermost—that is, the Lord acting on the innermost level of the person. Only someone who has been reborn through temptations is capable of

knowing that temptations accomplish this. But how this happens can hardly be described in the vaguest way, since it is done without the person's knowing why and how, because it is a Divine activity of the Lord.

AC 1717²⁻³

The struggles of temptations overcome bad inclinations and false ideas, so that one is clothed in good inclinations and truths, because this is how bad inclinations and false ideas are dispersed. When these are dispersed, good inclinations and truths take their place. Then these assert themselves more and more and are thus reinforced.

It is evil spirits who stir up bad inclinations and false ideas. If these are not stirred up, a person scarcely knows that they are evil and false, but if they are stirred up, it is obvious. And the longer the struggle of temptations goes on, the more obvious this is, until, finally, evil inclinations and false ideas are revolting.

As evil inclinations and false ideas are dispersed, good inclinations and true ideas take their place, and the more horrified one is by evil inclinations and false ideas, the more the Lord supplies a love for good qualities and for truths. Also, the more horrifying evil and

false things are, the less the evil spirits dare approach. They cannot stand aversion and horror for the evils and falsities which their life consists in. Sometimes terror seizes them as soon as they get near. And the more the love for good and truths, the more angels like to be around a person, and with the angels, heaven, for they are in their kind of life when they are among good loves and true beliefs.

AC 1740²⁻³

Temptations do not come about only to confirm a person in true beliefs, but also to fit truth and goodness more perfectly together, for in temptations the person fights for true concepts, against false ones. He is in pain inwardly, and in torment, so his vital pleasures of selfishness and sensuality fail. Then good inclinations flow in from the Lord, and evil things seem revolting. This gives rise to new thoughts, the opposite of earlier ones, which the person can later be bent toward and in this way be bent from evil things to good ones. And these can be united with true beliefs.

AC 2272

In all temptations there is a scepticism about the Lord's presence and mercy, about salvation, and about such things, because people under temptation are in an inward anxiety amounting to despair.



an appreciation of happiness and joy come only by contrast with the opposite, therefore loneliness and temptations are drawn out to despair - page 91

They are kept in this anxiety, for the most part, in order to be without doubt, eventually, that everything is at the Lord's mercy, that salvation is only through Him, and that everything from themselves is bad. They are convinced of these facts by struggles in which they overcome. This leaves a residue of various states of goodness and truth to which the Lord can later turn their thoughts—thoughts which would otherwise drift into foolish ideas and carry their minds away from truth and goodness.

AC 2334

A person is simply an instrument or vessel that receives life from the Lord, for a person does not have independent life. The life that

**people under temptation are in an
inward anxiety amounting to despair**

flows in from the Lord comes from His Divine love. This love, or the life from it, flows in and affects receptors on the rational and natural level in people. These receptors in people are in an unreceptive attitude to the Lord's life, due to the bad heredity people are born into and the evil they build up by what they do. Still, the life that flows in adapts the receptors insofar as it can.

These receptors on people's rational plane and natural plane are the concepts that we call true, and, in their own right, truths are nothing other than awareness of changes in the forms of those receptors, and awareness of changes in their status according to which variations emerge in different ways. These occur in the most subtle substances in ways that defy description.

Good itself, which has life from the Lord—or which is life—is what flows in and does the modifying.

When these receptors, which can be modified, are in a position and attitude inhospitable to life, as mentioned, it can be assumed that they need to be rearranged into a position hospitable to life, or accepting of life. There is no way this can happen so long as a person is in the state he was born in and in which he has placed himself, since the receptors will not cooperate, because they are stubbornly resistant and are obstinately against the heavenly order according to which life acts. The “good” that they respond to and obey relates to self-interest and materialism, which makes the receptors behave as they do, owing to the gross heat in it. So before they become compliant and can be capable of receiving anything of the life of the Lord's love, they need to be softened.

The softening takes place by no other means than temptations, for temptations remove characteristics of self-love, contempt for others compared to oneself, and, therefore, self-glorification, and the characteristics of hate and the revenge it inspires. When temptations have somewhat moderated and subdued these

temptations remove characteristics of self-love, contempt for others, and therefore, self-glorification

qualities, the receptors begin to become yielding and compliant with the life of the Lord's love which is always flowing into people.

So this is the way good begins to be united with truths, first on people's rational level, then on their worldly level. For truths, as was observed, are nothing other than awareness of modifications in form according to conditions which keep changing, and this awareness is from the life that flows in.

This is why temptations, or in other words, spiritual struggles, regenerate people—that is, make them anew. And it is why people

then get another disposition and indeed become manageable, humble, uncomplicated, and tender-hearted.

These observations show what profit temptations yield: that goodness from the Lord can not just flow in but also make the receptors receptive and in this way relate to them. **AC 3318²⁻⁴**

Through despair people come to accept, actively and consciously, that nothing of truth and goodness comes from themselves and that by themselves they are lost, but that the Lord frees them from damnation and that salvation flows in on truth and goodness. Despair also has the purpose of making the happiness of life from the Lord felt, for when people emerge from despair, they are like people who were condemned to die and are freed from prison.

Besides, loneliness and temptations bring on states opposite to heavenly life, states which bring on a sense and an appreciation of the happiness and joy of heavenly life. A sense and an appreciation of the happiness and joy come only by contrast with the opposite. To provide adequate contrast, therefore, loneliness and temptations are drawn out to their ultimate—i.e., to despair. **AC 6144**

Temptations are struggles with bad inclinations and false concepts. When someone overcomes them, he is strengthened, for he fights by means of truths and for truths against what is false and what is wrong. The person does not notice at the time that he is fighting by means of truths and for truths, because truths are in his most inward levels, so they do not come to his notice, which is on an outer plane. But that it is by means of and for truths is clear from the fact that there is a struggle and afterwards victory, which can only come from confrontations of opposites. The opposites are bad and good, false and true. But note that it is not the person who fights, but that the Lord fights for the person—against the hells, in fact, which are trying to infiltrate and dominate the person.

AC 8924

While a person is being regenerated and made spiritual, he is continually in a struggle, which is why the Lord's church is called "militant." Always before this, selfish desires have ruled, since the whole person is made up of purely selfish desires and the misconceptions that come from them. As he is regenerated, his selfishness and misconceptions cannot be wiped out instantaneously, for that would amount to destroying the whole person. This is the only life he has acquired! Therefore, evil spirits are left with him for a long time, to stir up his selfish motives and thus permit them to be detached in countless ways, to the point where the Lord can bend the person toward goodness and in this way reform him.

During temptation, all the spiritual nourishment the evil spirits

allow a person is like leaves and grass (see Genesis 1:30). Evil spirits totally despise everything that is good and true—i.e. everything related to love for the Lord and belief in Him, which are the only things that are good and true, since they have eternal life in them. But the Lord gives the person nourishment comparable to the herb yielding seed and the tree in which is fruit—in other words, peace and quiet with its joy and happiness—from time to time.

If the Lord did not protect people every moment—even every micro-second—they would be instantly destroyed, for such murderous hatred prevails in the world of spirits against anything related to love for the Lord and belief in Him that it could never be described. I can vouch with certainty that this is the case, since for some years now I have been with spirits in the other life, though also in my body as well. I have been surrounded by bad ones, even the worst of them, and sometimes in the thousands. They have been allowed to pour out their poison and infest me in every way they could, and yet they could not harm my smallest hair, I was so well protected by the Lord. From so many years of experience, I have been thoroughly informed about what the world of spirits is, and also about the struggle that people who are being regenerated must go through to reach the happiness of eternal life.

The periods and states of a person's regeneration, all together and separately, amount to six, spoken of as the days of his creation. For he changes, step by step, from not human to starting to be human, first a little bit, then more, until the sixth day, when he becomes an "image" of God.

AC 62

Meanwhile, the Lord keeps fighting for him against evil influences and false concepts, and through struggles strengthens his position

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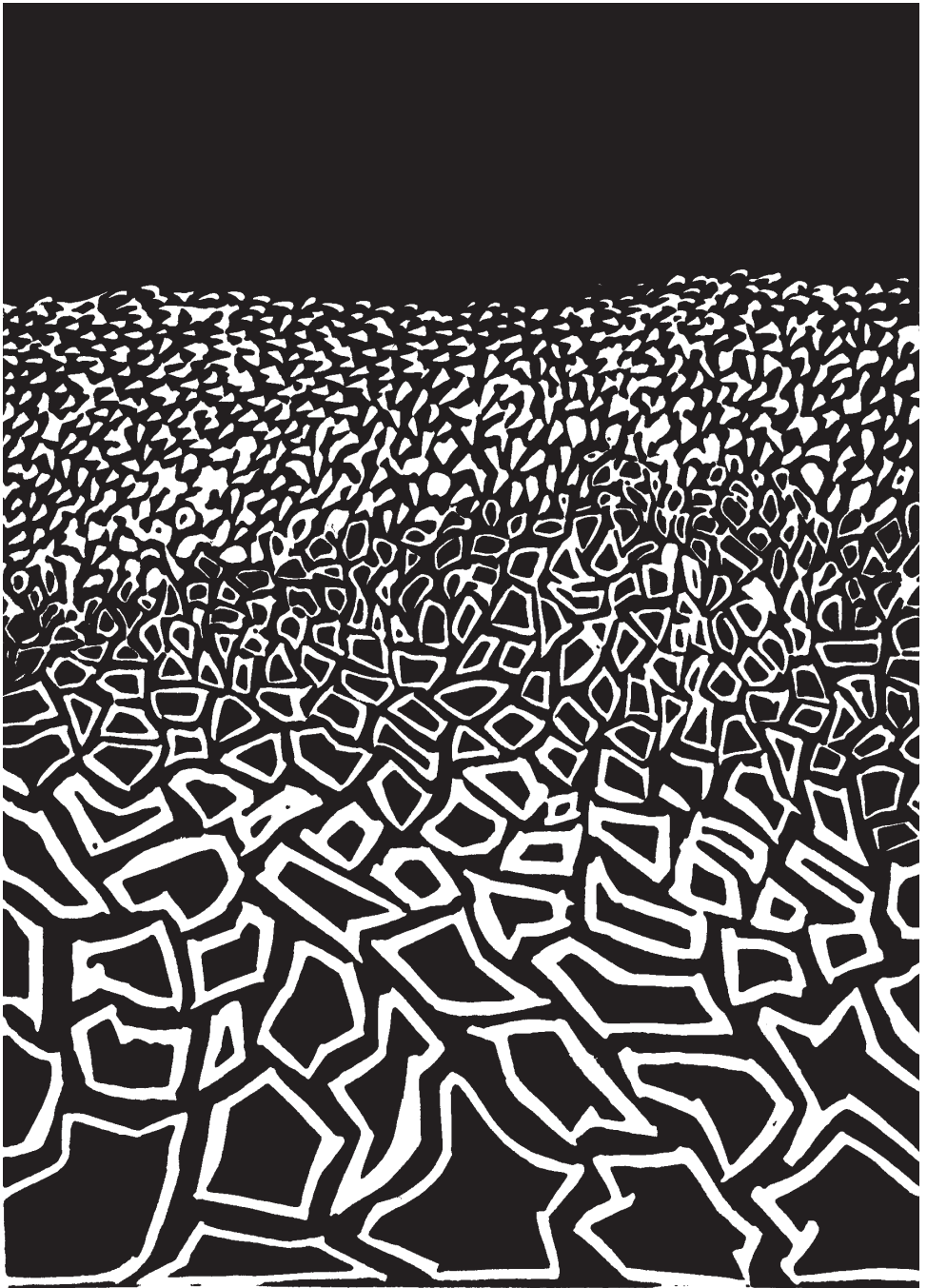
in the truth and in goodness. A time of struggle is a time when the Lord is busy, which is why the Prophets call a regenerated person the work of God's fingers. Nor does the struggle abate until love takes the leading role, and then it ceases. When the work reaches the point where belief unites with love, it is called "very good," because then the Lord acts in him as His "likeness." At the end of

the sixth day, the evil spirits withdraw, and the good come in, and the person is brought into heaven, or into heavenly paradise.

AC 63

“Until the waters had dried up from the earth” (Gen. 8:7). These words refer to the appearance that false concepts go away, as can be concluded from the situation of someone who is being regenerated. Today everybody thinks that the evil inclinations and false ideas in people are shattered and eliminated when they are being regenerated, so that when they are regenerated nothing of evil and falsity remains, and a person is clean and upright, as if scrubbed and washed with water. But this is a very false concept. Not one evil tendency or false idea is ever shattered and eliminated. Everything received by heredity and acquired by activity remains, so that even a regenerated person is nothing but evil and falsity. This is quite apparent in souls after death.

This becomes quite obvious in the fact that nothing of goodness and nothing of truth is from people. It is from the Lord, and everything bad and false is people's, from their egos. And a person on earth, as well as a spirit, and even an angel, if left to himself in the least, would hurry to hell. This is why even the Word says that



“until the waters had dried up from the earth”—
the appearance that false concepts go away - page 96

heaven is not pure. The angels accept this, and anyone who does not accept it cannot be among angels. It is only the Lord's mercy that frees them—drags them out of hell, in fact, and holds them back from running into it on their own. Angels are fully aware that the Lord holds them back from hurrying to hell, and so do good spirits to some extent. Evil spirits, like people on earth, do not believe this, but it has often been demonstrated to them.

Since the human condition is such that nothing evil and false can ever be shaken off so as to be eliminated, because people's own lives consist in evil and false things, the Lord, by Divine mercy, subdues a person's evils and falsities through temptations to the point where they seem almost lifeless, as He regenerates the person. Yet the evil and false elements are not dead, only controlled so as to keep them from opposing good and true qualities from the Lord. And through temptations the Lord provides a new ability to accept good qualities and true concepts, gifting the person with ideals about good and truth, and an interest in these qualities, toward which bad inclinations and false concepts can be deflected.

The Lord also inserts into a person's general notions particulars, and the details of the particulars, which are tucked away in him and which he knows nothing about. These are more internal than the

sphere of his grasp and notice. The particulars and details are able to serve as receptors or vessels for the Lord to fill with love for others, and fill this love with innocence. Their marvellous blending in a person might represent a kind of rainbow, which is why the rainbow has become a symbol of a covenant (as in Gen. 9:12-17).

When someone has been formed in this way, he is spoken of as reborn. All his bad qualities and wrong concepts remain in existence, yet all his good qualities and true concepts are spared,

heaven is not pure

too. As for a bad person in the other life, all his evil ways and false notions, just as they were in his bodily life, come back and are turned into hallucinations and the torments of hell. But as for a good person, all his states of good and truth, like states of friendship, love for others, and selflessness, with their joys and happiness, are brought back, immeasurably expanded and multiplied. So these are the things referred to (Gen. 8:7) by the drying up of the waters, which is the seeming elimination of falsities.

If people could be reformed under compulsion, there would not be anyone in the universe who was not saved, for nothing would be easier for the Lord than to force people to fear Him and worship Him, even love Him in a sense. The ways are innumerable. But since we do not relate positively to what we do under compulsion and therefore do not make it part of ourselves, far be it from the Lord to force anyone.

So long as a person is struggling, or is a member of the “militant” church, it seems as if the Lord compels him and that he has no freedom. For then he is always struggling with his self-interest and materialism; in other words, against the freedom he was born in and grew up in. This is why there seems to be compulsion. Yet in the struggles in which he wins, there is greater freedom than there is without struggles. The freedom does not belong to him, but to the Lord, and yet it seems like his own.

AC 288 I

People who are being regenerated are in a quiet state at the very outset, or a state of outward peace. Outward peace, or peace in outward aspects, is known as quietness. It emerges from a state of Divine peace deep within and comes out in surface qualities through the removal of selfish desires and false notions, for these

are what cause all unrest. Everyone is also in a state of quiet at the beginning of his life, or in infancy, but the more anyone advances into life, or grows up, the farther he gets from this state. He gets involved in worldly matters and consequently in the anxieties of self-interest and materialism and the false ideas these produce.

It is nearly the same in the new life of someone who is being regenerated. At the outset he enjoys a quiet state, but as he moves

**if people could be reformed under
compulsion
there would not be anyone in the
universe who was not saved**

into his new life, he moves into an unquiet state as well. For the evil inclinations and false ideas that he has adopted earlier float up and surface to disturb him—eventually to the point where he is undergoing temptations and harassments by a diabolic swarm who make a constant effort to destroy his new life. Yet he still has a state of peace on the inmost plane. If he did not, he would not resist, since he keeps seeing this state as the purpose of the

struggles he is in. Without this as the purpose, he would never have the strength and toughness to fight.

This is also the reason why he wins. And since this inner peace is his purpose, he reaches it after the struggles or temptations. It is like the time of spring for him, after the seasons of autumn and winter pass, or like the time of dawn after the evening and night.

AC 3696

When conditions in someone who is being regenerated are reversed—that is, when goodness takes the lead—then temptations come. Before that, the person cannot undergo them, because he lacks concepts to defend himself by and to go back to for reassurance. For the same reason, no one undergoes temptations until he has reached adulthood. Temptations unite the truth with goodness.

AC 4248

Today hardly anyone in the Christian world knows the source of temptations. People who undergo them assume that they are just stresses that creep out from evil inclinations deep inside a person, which disturb him at first, then distress him, and finally torment

him. But they completely fail to realise that temptations are caused by the evil spirits around someone. They fail to realise it because they are in the company of spirits while they live in the world, and they hardly think there is any spirit at all around them. And yet people are interiorly in the company of spirits and angels all the time!

Temptations set in when someone is in the process of regeneration, for no one can be regenerated without going through

**in the struggles in which one wins,
there is greater freedom than without
struggles**

temptations. These are brought out by evil spirits who are around the person, for at that time he is placed in his own particular state of evil—that is, the one that belongs to his own ego. When he enters this state, bad spirits, hellish ones, surround him. When they notice that he is inmosty protected by angels, the evil spirits stir up the misbelief that he has thought about and the bad things he has done. But angels defend him from deep within.

This confrontation is what is felt in the person as temptation, but so faintly that he hardly knows but that it is just anxiety. For people, especially if they know nothing about spiritual influence, are quite in the dark and are hardly aware of a thousandth part of what the evil spirits and angels are disputing. Yet it is about the person and his eternal salvation, and the battle is waged by means of the person, for they are contending on the basis of—and about—qualities in the person. I am privileged to know most certainly that this is so. I have heard the battle, felt the spiritual influence, seen the spirits and the angels, and I have spoken with them at the time and afterwards, even about the controversy.

Temptations mainly come up when someone is becoming spiritual, for then he is getting a spiritual grip on the truths of his belief. The person is often unaware of this, yet the angels around him see traces of spirituality in his worldly interests, inasmuch as his innermost makeup is now open toward heaven. And this is why someone who has been regenerated is among angels after life in this world, and there he both sees and feels spiritual things that formerly seemed like worldly ones to him. So when someone is in this state, he can be defended by angels when attacked by bad spirits during temptation. It gives the angels a foothold to work from. They influence the spiritual plane in him, and through it the

worldly plane.

And so when worldly truth is removed, so that a person has nothing to defend himself with, he enters temptations and is accused by bad spirits, who are all quite worldly-minded. They mainly accuse one of telling lies against what is good. For example, they charge that he has thought and said “you should do good to your neighbour,” and has demonstrated it in act. Then they charge

people are interiorly in the
company of spirits and angels
all the time

that by “neighbour” he only means people who are good and value the truth, but not those who are bad, are dishonest, and cannot be changed. So, since he no longer wants to do good things for bad people—unless they are benefited by punishment to improve them or to keep them from harming others—the spirits charge that he thinks and speaks falsely, and that he does not say what he thinks.

As another example, when someone becomes spiritual he no

longer thinks it is holy and pious to give to monasteries, nor even to wealthy churches, and before he became spiritual he had thought these things were holy and pious, so the evil spirits accuse him of duplicity, and they dredge up all the opinions that he used to foster about its being holy and pious, and also everything he did on the basis of that thinking.

Countless other examples are the same. These examples are just a little illustration. The spirits mainly enter the affections that someone used to have, and stir them up, as well as the dishonest and bad things he has thought of and done, and in this way they lead him into anxiety, and most often into doubt, to the point of despair.

So this is where spiritual anxieties come from, and so-called pangs of conscience. To the person, they seem to be within himself, owing to the passing in—and the passing on. Someone who knows and believes this is like someone who sees himself in a mirror and knows that it is not himself that appears in the mirror or behind it, but his reflection. But anyone who does not know and believe it, is like someone who sees himself in a mirror and thinks that it is he himself who appears there, not his reflection.

AC 5036

In people who are being regenerated, a change takes place, in that they have been led to goodness by way of the truth, and afterwards goodness leads them to the truth. When this reversal happens—when their state changes and becomes the opposite of before, they grieve, for then they come under temptation. Through this temptation parts of their self-image are weakened and crippled, and good is brought in, and with the good, a new will, and with this a new freedom, and therefore a new selfhood. In Genesis 44 and 45, this is represented in the brothers of Joseph coming back to Joseph in despair and offering themselves to him as servants, and in their being kept in that state for some time. And Joseph identifies himself to them only after the temptation, for when a temptation is complete, the Lord shines in with consolation.

AC 5773

I have discussed with spirits the changing condition of human life, and that it is carried up and down, toward heaven, and toward hell. But those who let themselves be regenerated are carried steadily upward and thus into ever more interior heavenly communities. The Lord gives those who are regenerated extension of range into those communities principally through temptations, in which they resist evil ways and false concepts. For the Lord is then fighting, through angels, against the bad ways and false concepts, and so the

person is brought into the more interior communities of those angels. And once he is brought there, he stays. This also gives him a fuller and higher ability to comprehend.

AC 6611

When someone is being regenerated, he is placed in struggles against false concepts, and the Lord then holds him to the truth—

people in a church of any doctrine
can be regenerated,
but those with genuine truths more
readily than others

but to the truth that he has convinced himself is true. By means of this truth false notions are confronted. It is even possible to confront them from truth that is not genuine, if it is at least of a kind that can identify with goodness to some extent. Integrity is what mates truth with goodness, for integrity is the connecting link. This is why people in a church of any doctrine can be regenerated, but those with genuine truths more readily than others.

AC 6765



Those who have not been taught about human regeneration will assure you that people can be regenerated without temptation, and sometimes that someone is regenerated when he has come through one temptation. But it should be known that no one is regenerated without temptation, and that many temptations come, one after another. The reason is that regeneration takes place in order for the previous life of the person to die away and for a new life that is heavenly to come in. You can assume from this that there certainly will be a struggle, for the former person resists and does not want to die out, while the life of the new person can enter only where the old life has expired. Clearly there is a struggle on both sides, and a fierce one because it is a struggle for life.

Thinking with enlightened rationality, one can conclude that people cannot be regenerated without a struggle—in other words, without spiritual temptations. And also that one is not regenerated by one temptation, but by many. For there are many, many kinds of wrong that have become the joy of the previous life—the old life. All those bad practices cannot be mastered once and for all, because they cling tenaciously. They have been rooted in ancestors going back for many centuries and are inborn in the person and confirmed by his deliberate misconduct from childhood. All these

bad traits are diametrically opposite to the heavenly goodness that is being introduced and that makes life new.

AC 8403

The following quotations are presented as a summary of this chapter:

People who are being regenerated undergo temptations.

AC 8958

Temptations are spiritual struggles in a person, for they are struggles between the badness in him from hell and the goodness in him from the Lord.

AC 8959

Temptation is induced by evil spirits who take up residence with a person, in his sinful ways and false notions. They stir up his wrongs and accuse him. The angels from the Lord, who reside in his good ways and true beliefs, call forth the true beliefs in him and defend him.

AC 8960

Temptations are about the dominion of evil from hell in a person

and of goodness from the Lord in him. The evil that wants to control is in the worldly or external person, while the good is in the spiritual or inner person. Therefore temptations are also about the dominance of one of these over the other. If the evil wins, the worldly side of the person dominates the spiritual. If the good wins, then the spiritual side dominates the worldly.

AC 8961

These struggles are waged through true beliefs from the Word. A person must fight through these against evils and false concepts. If he uses other means than these, he does not win, because the Lord is not in other means.

AC 8962

Since the struggle is waged by true beliefs from the Word, people are not taken into the battle until they have concepts of good and truth and therefore have achieved some spiritual life. For this reason, these struggles do not emerge until people have reached adulthood.

AC 8963

Anyone who lacks true beliefs from the Word on the basis of which to fight—who has no spiritual life in him from these beliefs—

is not brought into any struggle, because he will fail, and if someone fails, his condition after temptation becomes worse than before. Evil has then acquired power over good, and untruth over truth.

AC 8964

Because belief is rare today, the church is coming to an end, so few undergo spiritual temptations today. This is why it is scarcely known what temptations are and what they lead to.

AC 8965

Temptations lead to confirmation of true beliefs, implanting them, and making them voluntary, so that they become the good qualities related to love for others. For a person uses true beliefs to fight against bad inclinations and misconceptions, and his mind is aligned with truths, so when he wins, he becomes confirmed in them and implants them. And the bad inclinations and misconceptions he has confronted, these he regards as the enemy, and he rejects them. Temptations also subdue self-indulgent impulses that come from self-interest and worldliness, and they make someone humble. This makes him able to accept heavenly life from the Lord, which is new life, the life of a regenerated person.

AC 8966

Through temptations true beliefs are confirmed, good habits of love for others are implanted, and the self-seeking of evil is controlled, so the spiritual or inner person gains control, through temptations, over the worldly or superficial person. In other words, the good state of love for others and of belief gains control over the bad state of self-love and materialism. When that happens, a person gains insight into what is good and what is true, what is evil and what is untrue. From this comes intelligence and wisdom that then increase every day.

AC 8967

When valid beliefs are introducing someone to love for others, he undergoes temptations, and when he achieves the good state of loving others, the temptations end, for then he is in heaven.

AC 8968

In temptations a person has to struggle against bad inclinations and false concepts as if by himself, and yet believe that the Lord is doing it. If he does not believe it during the actual temptation, because then he is in the dark, he still believes it afterwards. If after temptation someone did not believe that the Lord alone was fighting for him and winning for him, he would only have undergone

a superficial temptation, a temptation that did not go deep nor implant any belief or love for others.

AC 8969

And note the following statements stressing the reasons why people must be regenerated:

Someone who does not receive spiritual life—i.e., who is not regenerated—cannot enter heaven, as the Lord teaches in John 3:3: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

AC 8548

People are not born into spiritual life by their parents, but into worldly life. Spiritual life is to love God above all and to love other people as you love yourself, in line with the teachings about faith that the Lord has taught in the Word. Worldly life, however, is to love oneself and the world more than you love other people, even more than God Himself.

AC 8549

By his parents, everyone is born into the evils of self-love and materialism. Every bad inclination that comes naturally, so to speak, is handed down to offspring uninterruptedly from parents,

grandparents, and great-grandparents, going back in a long line. Consequently, the inheritance of evil eventually reaches the point where a person's complete self-life is nothing but evil. This unbroken heritage can be interrupted and changed only by a life of belief and love for others, from the Lord.

AC 8550

What someone receives by heredity he inclines toward and always slides into, so that he confirms this evil in himself. He also adds more on his own.

AC 8551

These evil ways are quite opposed to spiritual life. They destroy it. Therefore, as to spiritual life, unless someone is conceived again, born and raised again, in other words, created again by the Lord, he is lost, since he wants nothing, and therefore thinks about nothing, except what is from hell.

AC 8552

People being like this, the arrangement of their lives is upside-down. What should rule serves, and what should serve rules. For someone to be saved, this alignment must be turned just the other way up. This is done through regeneration by the Lord.

AC 8553

the Lord's help in

10

temptation

Hardly anybody can find out what temptations or the struggles of temptation accomplish. They are the means of loosening and shaking off bad inclinations and false ideas and of developing a dread of them. They both provide a conscience and strengthen it. So they are the means by which people are regenerated. This is the reason why people who are being regenerated are sent into combat and undergo temptations. Those who do not go through this in their bodily life do it in the next life, if by their make-up they are able to be regenerated. For this reason the church is called “militant.”

The Lord, by His own strength or power, bore up alone under the most merciless struggles of temptation, for He was surrounded by

all the hells, and He consistently defeated them.

For people who are in the struggles of temptation, the fight is the Lord's, and it is He who conquers. A person can accomplish nothing against evil or infernal spirits by his own power. They are in such close touch with the hells that if one were defeated, another would rush in, and so on forever! They are like the sea pressing every part of a dike. If the dike were broken by a chink or crack,

God tempts no one

the sea would certainly never give up rushing through and flooding until nothing was left intact. This is how it would be for a person if the Lord alone did not bear the struggles of the temptations.

AC 1692

In the deepest sense, God tempts no one. He is always getting people out of temptation so far as possible, or so far as releasing them does no harm, and He always has in view the good to which He can lead people during temptations, for these are the only

terms on which God agrees to temptation. Although He is said to permit it, it is not according to the idea that people have of permission, the idea that in permitting He joins the conspiracy, since people can only comprehend that whoever permits something also wills it. On the contrary, what tempts and leads into temptation is the evil in the person. The cause of the evil is

what tempts and leads into temptation is the evil in the person

not in God at all, any more than the cause of someone's doing wrong and suffering punishment for it is in the king or the judge. Anyone who excludes himself from the laws of Divine order, all of which relate to goodness and therefore truth, places himself under laws opposing Divine order, which are the laws of evil and falsity, and this results in punishments and torments.

AC 2768

In temptations, the hells are against the person, and the Lord is for the person. For every false concept that the hells bring up, there is a response from the Divinity. The false concepts from hell are

inserted and flow into the outer or worldly plane of the person, but the response from the Divinity flows into the inner or spiritual plane. The person does not notice this response from the Divinity as he does those false ideas, and it does not stir up specific thoughts but influences them all. It is hardly noticeable except as hope and therefore consolation, but within these reassurances are countless things that the person does not know about—things of

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the sort that agree with his responses or loves, especially responses to, or loves for, goodness and the truth, which is the source of his conscience.

These things have been said to show that the life of the descendants of Israel in the wilderness delineates the series of temptations undergone by the people of the Lord's spiritual church who were freed. The purpose of their undergoing these temptations

was to further prepare them for heaven, because temptations, and only temptations, confirm good qualities and truths and unite them. Through them love for others becomes a spiritual belief in love for others, and belief becomes a belief in love.

These things that the Lord said mean that people of the church must go through temptations: “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:38-9; Mark 8:31-8); “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’” (Matt. 16:24-5; Luke 9:23-4); “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27); Jesus said to the rich man, “Come, take up the cross, and follow Me” (Mark 10:21); “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword” (Matt. 10:34).

But note that in temptations it is not the person who struggles, but the Lord struggles on the person’s behalf, though the person seems to be doing it. And when the Lord fights for someone, that someone wins in every way.

Not many people are led into temptations these days, because

people do not live by their beliefs, and therefore not conscientiously by the truth, and whoever is not conscientiously truthful owing to a good life, fails. Then his situation becomes worse than before.

AC 8159³⁻⁵

Anyone who thinks that when he is tempted he can resist by his own strength, yields. The reason is that he is mistaken and therefore gives himself the credit, assuming that he saves himself, and then he closes off the influence from the Divinity. But someone who believes that it is only the Lord who resists in temptations, succeeds. He is right, and he gives the Lord the credit, and recognises that he is saved by the Lord alone. Anyone who believes in loving other people gives the Lord all the credit for salvation and himself none.

AC 8172

“Jehovah will fight for you” (Exod. 14:14) means that only the Lord bears the struggles of temptations. Only the Lord bears the struggles of temptations and wins because only the Divinity can conquer the hells. If the Divinity did not act against them, they would flood in like a great, big ocean, one after another, which it is absolutely no use for anyone to resist, least of all since a person, as far as his

selfhood goes, is nothing but badness and thus from hell. The Lord extracts him from hell and then keeps him out of it. **AC 8175**

“And you shall be silent” (Exod. 14:14) means that they will accomplish nothing at all by their own strength. This is because “be silent” means to be at rest, and since the subject is temptations, it means not to think or believe that any of their own strength will help. Still, they should not drop their hands and wait for direct invigoration but struggle as if it were up to them, yet acknowledge and believe that it is from the Lord. **AC 8176**

As to its not being any of your business to get involved, people in temptation tend to drop their hands and turn to prayers, which they pour out ardently, not knowing that prayers do not work and that they should fight against the false notions and evils being hurled up from the hells. This battle is waged by means of true beliefs. These help, because they confirm good ways and truths against false ideas and evils. In the struggles of temptation people should strive as if on their own, but still acknowledge and believe that it is from the Lord.

If someone does not fight as if on his own, the goodness and the truth that flow in through heaven from the Lord do not become a part of him. But they do become a part of him when he fights as if on his own and yet believes that it is from the Lord. From this he gets a new self known as a heavenly self, which is a new will.

Besides, people who are under temptation and in no vital activity but prayer do not realise that they would not be prepared for heaven if the temptations were interrupted before running their full course, so they could not be saved. And for this reason the prayers of people under temptation are little heeded. For the Lord wants the result—the person's salvation—which He knows about but the person does not. The Lord does not act on prayers counterproductive to the goal of salvation.

And when someone in temptation succeeds, he does recognise the truth of the above. Someone who does not succeed, however, has doubts about Divine help and power, since he has not been heard. And sometimes he partly succumbs because he drops his hands.

These observations should show what is meant by not getting involved: namely, not to rely on prayer. For in prayer, one always thinks and believes that only the Lord knows if something is

practical or not, so one presents the remarks to the Lord and prays that the Lord's will, not his own, be done, according to the Lord's words during His most grievous temptation in Gethsemane (See Matt. 26:39,42,44).

AC 8179²⁻³

People who think that they earn points by their exploits cannot battle the evils that are from the hells, for no one can do this by himself. However, the Lord fights on behalf of people who do not think that they earn points by their exploits, and He wins.

AC 9978

An inner dimension, known as the inner person, is opened and is imparted to people by temptations. This is why everyone who is regenerated undergoes temptations. The inner person is opened and imparted to people by temptations because when someone is in temptations, which are struggles against evils and misconceptions, the Lord flows in from deep within and fights on the person's behalf. And a person can tell this from the fact that when he is in temptations he resists inwardly, for if he did not resist inwardly, he would not succeed but would give in.

This inner resistance does not come to the person's attention at the time, for when he is in temptations the evil and its falsities, which are attacking him, keep him in the dark. But the inner resistance comes to light after temptations, for those who are sensitive to the truth. For during worldly life people do not know about what the Lord brings into their inner life, since they are thinking on an outer or worldly level, and not with inward perception until they enter the next life. Still, when they win in temptations, they ought to recognise and acknowledge that they themselves did not fight, but the Lord fought for them. **AC 10685**

it all applies to our

11

daily lives

If you have read this far, you know where temptations come from, why they are permitted, and how to deal with them.

Or you may be saying, “Nice try, but you don’t know what I’m up against! I know from bitter experience that I always give way. I go forward one step and back three. I’m headed right for hell. But I’ll have plenty of company there, so why worry?”

And if you are saying that, you have met temptation! This is exactly how those hellish influences want us to talk. If they get us into this frame of mind, they have us, and we may not find out until too late. After this worldly life, we have lost our chance to change.

Obviously a person is led away from evil in order to be remade, for whoever is bad in the world is bad after leaving the world. If evil is not removed in the world, it cannot be removed later. Where the tree falls, there it lies, and as someone's life has been when he dies, so it stays. Moreover, everyone is judged by the things he has done. It is not that the things are listed, but it is that he goes back

whoever is bad in the world is bad after leaving the world

to those things and acts the same way, since death is a continuation of life, with the difference that a person cannot be remade then.

DP 277b

This is something the Lord wants us to know, and know now, not after death, when it is too late. He is always leading us away from our bad ways to reform and regenerate us, but it has to be our choice. He cannot and will not act unless we address our own evil ways of our own free will and call on Him for the victory over them that He alone can win (see section 10, above, about the Lord's aid).

So the lesson we have to learn is not to give up, not to be discouraged, not to weaken, and especially not to lose faith in the Lord, for evil can never win against Him. While He lived on this earth in a human form, He let all the evil powers of the hells attack Him, and He completely conquered them, once and for all (see section 2, above, about the Lord's temptations).

Having won a permanent victory over the hells, the Lord is now able to bring this victory into our lives. In His love for us, He

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assumed our own frail human form in order to conquer every single evil that ever crops up in people. Evils have no power when He is there, and He is with us in every temptation that He allows to attack us. He longs to win the victory for us, and He will if we just avoid our bad impulses and fight them as if it were our personal responsibility.

The Doctrine of the Lord 12-14, written by Emanuel Swedenborg,

explains that the Lord came into the world to control the hells and glorify His Human Divinity. The passion of the cross was the final struggle in the completion of the process. Paragraph 33 of the same book reads:

Temptations are nothing other than struggles against evil influences and false notions, and since evil influences and false notions are from hell, temptations are struggles against hell. And when people are undergoing spiritual temptations, there are evil spirits from hell around them, who induce the temptations. People are unaware that it is evil spirits who induce temptations, but I have come to know by many experiences that it is. It is on account of this that when someone conquers in temptations, thanks to the Lord, he is drawn out of hell and raised into heaven. It is on account of this that through temptations, or struggles against evil ways, a person becomes spiritual, and thus an angel.

The Lord, however, fought against all the hells by His own power, and He fully mastered and subdued them. At the same time He was making His humanness Divine, and because of this He keeps the hells mastered and subdued forever.

Before the Lord's Advent, the hells had grown up from below, high enough to start threatening even the angels in heaven as well as

every person entering and leaving the world! The hells had grown up that high because the church had been laid waste, and because of idolatries the peoples of the world were believing false ideas and doing wrong things. And hells come from people. In consequence of this, no person could have been saved if the Lord had not come into the world.

In the Psalms of David and in the Prophets there is a great deal about these struggles of the Lord's, but there is little about them in

we are never alone in our struggle against evil tendencies

the Evangelists [in the Gospels and Revelation]. These are the struggles meant by the temptations that the Lord bore, the last of which was the passion of the cross. It is because of them that the Lord is called the Saviour and the Redeemer. This is known in the church to the extent that they say that the Lord conquered death or the devil—i.e, hell—and that He rose again in victory, and also that without the Lord there is no salvation. Later paragraphs [Doctrine of the Lord 34-36] show how He glorified His human

nature, and how this made Him the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Re-Maker, and the Regenerator. Through temptations the Lord became the Saviour.

DL 33

So there is fresh hope and courage as we face temptations. The Lord has done all this for love—love for each of us. The span of our earthly lives is short, and the fulfilment the Lord has for each of us in eternity is long.

*Salvation, like temptation, is tailored to the individual. No two people are ever born exactly alike (See *Divine Providence* 56, *Arcana Cœlestia* 7236², *Heaven and Hell* 405, and *True Christian Religion* 32). We have our quirks of temperament, our points of view, our own reactions to the world. The world sees us as we want it to, but the one who can assess us from top to bottom, inside and out, is the Lord. In His infinite love for each individual among us, He is able to help our special needs in a special way.*

All we have to do is be willing. And take up the struggle as if it depended on us.

We are usually unaware of it, but divine help is active unceasingly throughout our lives. We are never alone in our struggle against evil tendencies. If we were, there would be no hope for us, since we are born into all kinds of evil ways and develop more of our own. Alone we are powerless against the subtle attacks of the hells.

the necessity of self-examination and repentance

12

The Lord's individual help is especially active during temptations—temptations that occur when our own inclinations are allowed to surface in order to be dealt with.

And this brings us to the necessity of self-examination. Self-examination is regular and honest investigation to see what particular evils we are inclined to. What inclinations would we follow if there were no law, no prison, no reprisals, no personal harm in it? Without this self-examination there is no struggle against the hells, and we carry these evils with us through life and into the next life. It is too late then to change. Now is the time to act. The choice between heaven and hell is in our own hands.

The whole Divine purpose of temptation is to bring us to the place

where we can see and acknowledge our own assortment of evils and then avoid them as sins against the Lord. This way the Lord can prepare us for our angelic lives in His new heavens. “Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

The many who go in by the broad way to hell are those who are filled with self-interest and worldliness and who, in their hearts, reject the Lord’s love and wisdom, even if many of them may outwardly appear to be honest and just. These are the people who have never examined themselves or practiced repentance against their evil inclinations and have refused to accept Divine truth or face up to the reality of themselves.

The few who go by the narrow way to heaven are those who have developed love for the Lord through self-examination and shunning their evil inclinations as sins against Him. They have accepted Divine truth, have let it apply to their lives, and have acknowledged in their hearts as they turned from evil ways that the Lord alone has won the victories for them.

*The Lord shows us the way, but it is a personal choice, as the following quotations from *The True Christian Religion (TCR)*, and *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine (HD)* will show.*

Active repentance is investigating yourself, recognising and acknowledging your sins, taking responsibility for them, confessing them before the Lord, praying for help and power to resist them, and in this way ceasing to do them, and leading a new life. And doing all this as if by yourself. And then, when the sins you have been guilty of return, you say to yourself, “I don’t want them, because they are sins against God.” This is active repentance.

Who cannot understand that whoever does not explore and see his sins stays immersed in them? For from birth everything bad is fun. Isn’t it pleasant to take revenge, fornicate, defraud, blaspheme, and especially to control other people out of self-interest? Doesn’t the pleasure make these sins invisible? And if they happen to be called sins, aren’t they excused for the pleasure in them, even by specious demonstrations that they aren’t sins? And don’t you go on with them this way and later do them more than before, until you don’t know what a sin is or whether there is sin?

It is different with someone who actively repents. He recognises and acknowledges his evils and calls them sins, and so he begins to avoid them and turn away from them, and eventually he finds that his pleasure in them is no fun. The more he does this, the more he loves good things and eventually feels pleasure in them. This is the

pleasure of angels in heaven.

In a nutshell, the more someone puts the devil behind him, the more he is chosen by the Lord, is taught and led by Him, withheld from evil ways, and kept in good ways. This way and no other is the way from hell to heaven.

TCR 567⁵⁻⁶

Someone who just acknowledges that he is a sinner in general, admits that he is guilty of all sins, and does not examine himself—i.e., look at his sins—is making confession, but he is not making the confession of repentance. Since this person does not find out about his evil inclinations, he lives the same way afterwards as before.

HD 162

Anyone who is living a life of belief and of love for others repents every day, reviews the bad inclinations in himself, acknowledges them, is on his guard against them, and asks the Lord for help. For on his own a person is always slipping, but the Lord is always raising him up and leading him to a good life. This is the status of people who live right.

HD 163

A person who is examining himself in order to repent should investigate his thoughts and his willful intents, and what things among them he would do if he could—namely, if he were not afraid of laws and the loss of his reputation, status, and assets. The evils of a person are in his thoughts and intentions. These are the source of all the bad things a person does physically. People who do not explore their bad thoughts and intentions cannot repent,

the evils of a person are in his thoughts and intentions

because they have the same thoughts and intentions afterwards as before. And yet to intend evils is to commit evils. This is what self-examination is all about.

HD 164

Oral repentance without living repentance is not repentance. Sins are not taken away by oral repentance but by living repentance. The Lord is always forgiving a person his sins, for He is mercy itself. But no matter how much a person thinks that his sins have been taken away, they stay with him, and they are only removed through

a life that follows the concepts of real belief. The more someone lives by this, the farther the sins are removed from his life, and the farther they are removed, the more they are taken away. **HD 165**

Anyone can reasonably conclude that the church cannot be in the person until his sins are removed—which can be illustrated by these analogies: Who can put sheep, and their young and lambs into fields or woods where there are all kinds of wild animals, before driving out the wild animals? And who can make a garden out of ground full of thorns, briars, and nettles before rooting out those weeds? Who can set up a government and a system to administer justice by law in a city held by the enemy before driving out the enemy? The evil inclinations in people are the same. They are like the wild animals, the briars and thorns, and the enemies. The church can no more share living space with them than someone can live in a menagerie where there are tigers and leopards, nor any more than anyone can lie in a bed with its mattress and pillows stuffed with poisonous weeds. **TCR 511**

Who does not know from common sense that it is not repentance just to confess vocally that you are a sinner? For what is easier for

the necessity of self-examination and repentance

someone in trouble and under stress than to fetch sighs and groans from his lungs and spill them out through his lips, and beat his breast, and hold himself guilty of all sins, even though he is not familiar with one sin in himself? Does the hellish crowd that inhabits his loves exit on his sighs? Wouldn't they be more apt to hiss right along and stay with him the same as before, as their

before repentance a person is like an uninhabited place with ferocious creatures in it

home? This shows that this kind of repentance is not what the Word means, but repenting bad actions.

TCR 529

Before repentance a person is like an uninhabited place with terrible ferocious creatures in it, dragons, horned owls, screech-owls, vipers, poisonous snakes, and in the shrubbery lewd demons and harpies, and leaping satyrs. But once these have been driven out by the person's diligence and work, the wilderness can be ploughed and cultivated into fields, and these can be planted, first

with oats, beans, and flax, and later with barley and wheat.

And an analogy with malice may be drawn. Plenty of it prevails among people. If malicious people were not corrected by laws and punished by flogging or death, no city would last, nor would any kingdom. A person is like a society in miniature. If he did not treat himself in spiritual terms as the malicious are treated in worldly terms, he would be corrected and punished after death, until he did not do wrong for fear of punishment. Yet he could never be forced to do good for the love of good.

TCR 53 I

Real repentance is to examine not just your acts but also your voluntary intentions, because understanding and willing become acts. A person speaks from thought and acts from will, so speech is thought speaking, and action is will acting. And because these are the source of speech and actions, it necessarily follows that your thought and will sin when your body does. People, moreover, are also able to repent of bodily misdeeds but still think and will evil. But this is like cutting down the trunk of a harmful tree and leaving its root in the ground. The same bad tree grows out of the root and spreads. But it is different when the root, too, is removed, and in a person this happens when he explores his willing

intentions as well, and removes evils through repentance.

A person explores his willful intentions when he examines his thoughts, because intentions show up in thoughts—explores how, when thinking about it, he wants and intends revenge, adultery, theft, and false testimony, and lusts after these things, as well as blasphemy against God, the Holy Word and the holy church, and so on. If he concentrates further on this and questions whether he would commit these wrongs if fear of the law and his reputation did not interfere, and if after questioning it he decides that he does not want those things, because they are sins, then he is truly and inwardly repenting. And all the more if when he senses a thrill in those evil acts and is free to commit them, but then resists and does not do it. For anyone who keeps doing this over and over, the pleasure of those evils, when they return, seems misery, and in the end he condemns them to hell.

This was the meaning of the Lord's words, "Whoever wants to find his soul must lose it, and whoever has lost his soul for Me, finds it" (Matt. 10:39).

Anyone who expels his willful evils through this kind of repentance is like the man who pulls up the tares sown in his field by the devil

in time for the seed planted by the Lord God the Saviour to fall on clear soil and grow into a crop (see Matt. 13:25-31).

TCR 532

People who do not examine themselves are like sick people whose blood is corrupted by vascular constriction, causing atrophy, numbness of the limbs, and acute chronic illness due to thickening, tenacity, acridness, and acidity of fluids and consequently of the blood. But those who examine their voluntary intentions are like people who are cured of those illnesses and return to the life they enjoyed when they were young. Those who examine themselves properly are like ships from Ophir loaded with gold, silver, and valuables. But before examining themselves they are like garbage scows which carry away the filth and dung of the streets.

People who examine themselves inwardly become like mines whose walls all glitter with the ores of precious metals, but before this they are like reeking fens with snakes and poisonous reptiles that flash their scales, and noxious insects with glittering wings. Those who do not examine themselves are like dry bones in a valley. But after self-examination they are like the same bones, which the Lord Jehovah endowed with muscles, made flesh come over them, covered them with skin, put breath in them, and they

lived (Ezek. 37:1-14).

TCR 534

It is a commonplace that habit is second nature, and it makes something easy for one person which is hard for someone else. This goes for self-examination and confessing what it discloses. What is easier for a servant, porter, or farmer than to work with his hands from dawn to dusk? Someone high-born and pampered, on the other hand, cannot do the same work for half an hour without sweat and fatigue. It is easy for a scout with a staff and comfortable shoes to hike for miles, while someone used to going by vehicle can hardly run slowly for a block. Every devoted craftsman does his work with ease and willingly, and when away from it is eager to get back, while another one, skilled in the same trade, but lazy, can hardly be driven to it.

Everyone in any function or pursuit is the same. What is easier for someone devoted to piety than to pray to God, and what is harder for someone given to impiety—and vice versa? What clergyman preaching before a king for the first time is not afraid? But when he gets used to it, he carries on unruffled. What is easier than for an angelic person to lift his eyes to heaven, or for a diabolical person to cast his eyes down toward hell? If the diabolical person

becomes hypocritical, he, too, can look up to heaven, but his heart turns the other way. The end a person has in view forms his habits and determines his character.

TCR 563

Since not many in the Protestant Christian world practise repentance, I might add that someone who has not looked within and sorted through himself cannot tell, in the end, what evil is, which condemns, and what good is, which saves, for he has no scruples by which to know. An evil inclination that the person does not see, recognise, and acknowledge, remains, and what remains takes root more and more until it clutters the more inward reaches of his mind. On account of this, the person becomes first worldly, then sensually, and finally physically obsessed. In these states, he does not know about any evil that condemns nor goodness that saves. He becomes like a tree on hard rock. It spreads its roots out among the chinks of the rock, yet it grows weak for lack of moisture.

TCR 564

Who does not know that a hypocrite can talk about God, an opportunist can talk about sincerity, or an adulterer can talk about chastity, and so on? But if people did not have a knack for opening

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and closing a door between thought and speech, and between intentions and actions, and did not have Prudence or Cunning there as a doorman, they would rush more savagely than any wild animal into unspeakable and bloody exploits. But after death that door is opened up on everyone, and then it is obvious what they

someone who has not looked within
and sorted through himself cannot
tell, in the end, what evil is

have been like. But in hell the people are restrained by penalties and by jailers.

So, dear reader, look within yourself, and fish out a bad inclination or two, and turn away from them out of religious principle. If you turn away for any other reason or purpose, you're only turning away to keep the world from knowing.

TCR 566

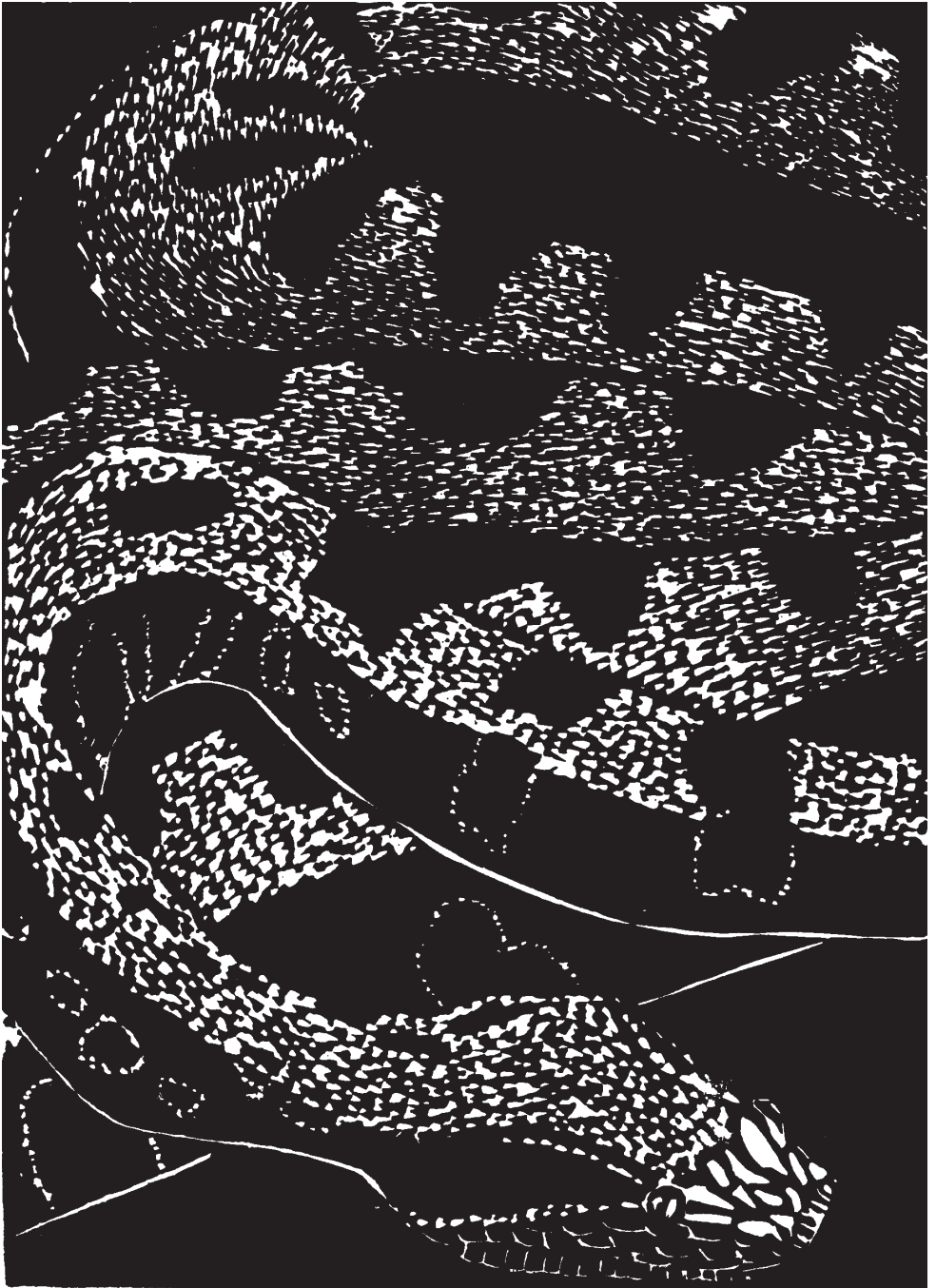
Here are some signs that sins have been remitted, i.e. set aside. People find pleasure in worshipping God for the sake of God and in

servicing other people for the sake of other people, and therefore in doing good things for goodness' sake and speaking the truth for the sake of truth. They do not hope to build credit through positive actions or through belief. They avoid and turn away from evil acts like enmities, hatreds, vengeance, and adulteries, and even from thoughts with that kind of intentions.

But here are some signs that sins have not been remitted, i.e., set aside. They worship God, not for the sake of God, and they serve other people, not for the sake of other people. So they do good things and speak the truth not for the sake of goodness and the truth, but for the sake of themselves and their material interests. They want to gain credit by what they do. They experience no displeasure in bad acts like enmity, hate, vengeance, and adulteries, and they freely indulge in contemplating these evils for the sake of the evils.

HD 167

After someone has examined himself, acknowledged his sins, and carried out repentance, he should remain unwavering in goodness to the end of life, for if he slips back into his previous life of wrong, and embraces it, he profanes, because then he mingles bad with good. So his later condition becomes worse than his previous



one who is on a high level as far as intellect goes but whose voluntary love is around his feet is comparable to serpents with iridescent scales - page 148

condition, according to the Lord's words, "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first".

HD 169

Analogies can illustrate what someone is like whose intellect has been elevated without taking along the love in his free will. He is like a high-flying eagle that immediately plunges down as soon as it sees prey below, such as chickens, young swans, or even lambs, and seizes them greedily. He is also like an adulterer who has a prostitute hidden in a lower room. By turns he goes up to the top floor of his house and sagely discusses chastity with visitors, in his wife's presence, and by turns ducks out of the gathering and satisfies his lust with the prostitute down below. This is what someone is like who is on a high level as far as intellect goes, but his voluntary love takes its place down around his feet, immersed in the filth of nature and sensual pleasures. Such people seem to be intellectually brilliant, yet their will is anti-intellectual, so they can also be compared to serpents with iridescent scales and to beetles

that shine like gold, as well as to the will-o-the-wisp in swamps, the glow in rotten wood, and phosphorescent substances.

Some of them can imitate angels of light, among people in this world as well as after death among angels of heaven. After a short examination, however, the angels strip them naked and throw them out. But this cannot be managed in the world, because their spirit is not open there but masked. The fact that they can imitate angels of light in face and speech is the reason why—and also the evidence that—they can raise their intellect almost to angelic wisdom.

Now, since the inner level and the outer level of a person can separate into such opposites, and since the body decays and the spirit remains, the point is that a dark spirit can lurk under a pure face, and a smouldering spirit under soothing talk. Therefore, my friend, know people not by their lips but by their hearts—that is, not by what they say but by what they do, for the Lord says, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15-16).

a P P e n d i x

The Writings are a unique set of books written through Emanuel Swedenborg by the Lord and are quite unlike any other books in the world today. Each is a masterpiece in itself and reveals new facets of the Lord's love and wisdom.

Some of the topics are:

*heaven, hell, and the world of spirits
the Divine Providence and how it works
Divinity in a human form
what the Trinity is
the spiritual meaning within the Word of God
the second coming of the Lord
repentance, reformation, and regeneration
the real meaning of charity
free will*

usefulness: being what you were created to be
marriage on earth and in the next life
what happened in the Last Judgment
the problem of evil
the problem of pain
the inward person and the outward
the meaning of creation
Divinity is love and wisdom
why the Lord loves and never hates
signs of the Lord's infinite and fathomless love
Divinity is the same in greatest and least things
the doctrine of degrees
atmospheres of the spiritual and natural worlds
the substance and material of creation
will and intellect as vessels for Divine love and wisdom

These are only some of the remarkable disclosures now given to the world by the Lord through these profound books. It can truly be said that these Writings have already begun to change the world. As they become better known, the Lord will bring more and more enlightenment and perception to people's minds. The day is coming when people will no longer grope in spiritual darkness, chaos, hatred and selfishness, but will bask in the light and warmth of love and understanding.

The main books of the Writings are:

Arcana Cœlestia (AC) (12 Vols)

True Christian Religion (TCR)

Heaven and Hell (HH)

Divine Providence (DP)

Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW)

Conjugal Love (CL)

The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine (HD)

Apocalypse Revealed (AR)

Apocalypse Explained (AE) (6 Vols.)

The Last Judgement

Coronis

The White Horse

Charity

Brief Exposition

De Verbo

Doctrine of Uses

Intercourse of Soul and Body

The Four Doctrines: of the Lord (DL), Sacred Scripture, Life and Faith

be strong and of good courage,
fear not,
nor be afraid of the world,
for the Lord your God goes with you;
He will not fail you nor
forsake you

Deuteronomy 31:6

Where to obtain copies of the Writings

In Australia

Swedenborg Centre

4 Shirley Rd, Roseville NSW 2069, Australia

Phone: +61 2 9416 2812

Email: info@swedenborg.com.au

Website: www.swedenborg.com.au

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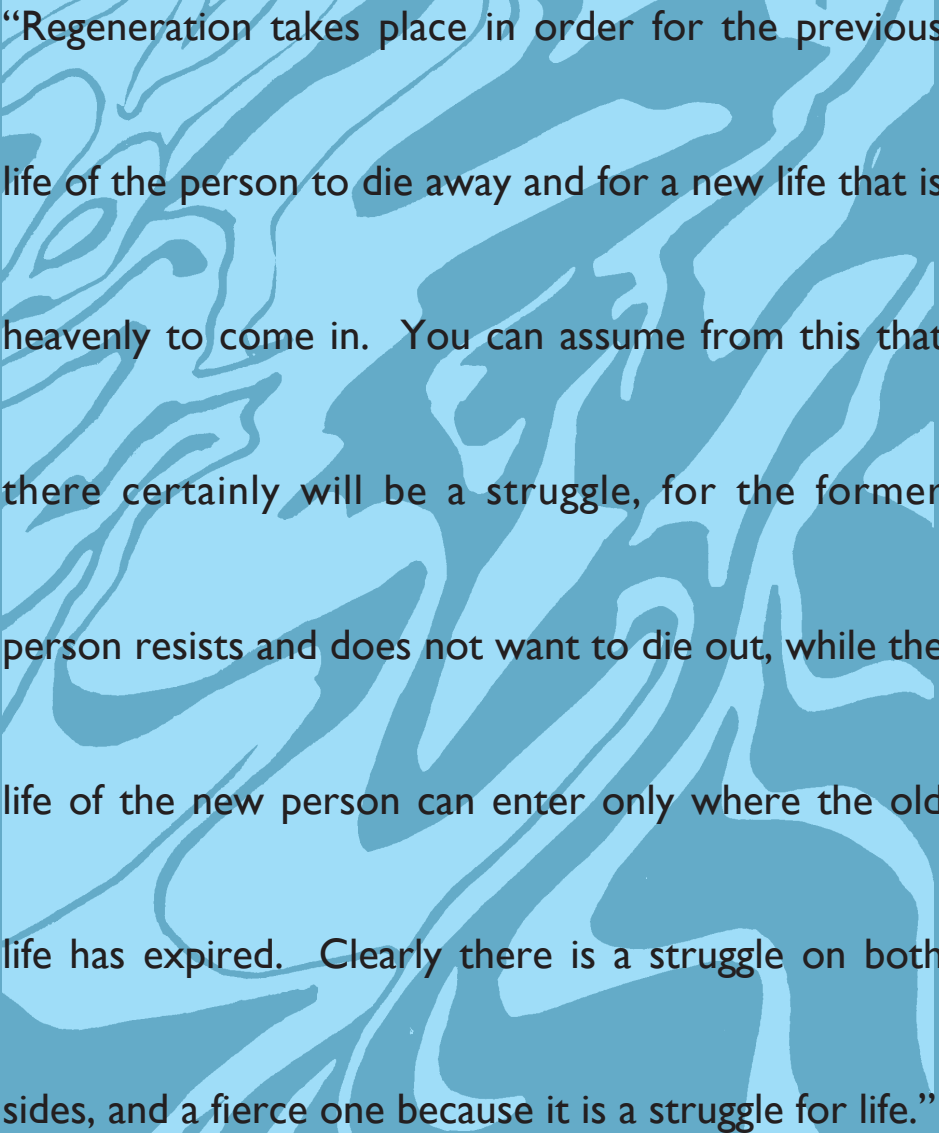
Phone: 610-430-3222

Fax: 610-430-7982

Email: info@swedenborg.com

Website: Swedenborg.com

For other countries or districts contact your nearest
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“Regeneration takes place in order for the previous life of the person to die away and for a new life that is heavenly to come in. You can assume from this that there certainly will be a struggle, for the former person resists and does not want to die out, while the life of the new person can enter only where the old life has expired. Clearly there is a struggle on both sides, and a fierce one because it is a struggle for life.”