

# "THIS IS OUR GOD"

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*"But love with man, and his life from it, do not become spiritual by merely knowing and understanding truths unless he also wills and does them."*

(Apocalypse Explained 832:5)

## ABBREVIATIONS

Arcana Coelestia	AC
Apocalypse Explained	AE
Apocalypse Revealed	AR
Divine Providence	DP
Doctrine Of Sacred Scripture	D Of SS
Doctrine Of Life	D Of Life
Doctrine Of The Lord	D Of Lord
Doctrine Of Uses	D Of U
Heaven & Hell	HH
The New Jerusalem & Its Heavenly Doctrine	HD
True Christian Religion	TCR

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## INTRODUCTION

*"In that day they will say, Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.*

*This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation. (Isaiah 25:9)*

What is our conception of God? Is He a remote, inaccessible Being, far removed from the everyday life of mankind? Is He a stern, relentless, terrifying Avenger, waiting to punish all who displease Him? Does He have to be appeased by continuous ritual and ceremonial? Is He something ethereal and without form, Who can never be visualised by our limited human understanding? Or is He someone warm, loving, merciful and personal, Who is deeply and intimately concerned with the well-being of each one of us? It is important that we get this question of the Divine straightened out in our minds, as our entire religious thinking is based on it. It is not so much a question of belief, as what we believe and Who we believe in.

It is now some 200 years since the Lord Jesus Christ, through His humble and faithful servant, Emanuel Swedenborg, revealed the most amazing and penetrating truths about Himself and His Word, ever to be given to the world, by opening Swedenborg's spiritual sight for nearly 30 years after a long period of preparation. The medium used for these great revelations is a series of books known as "The Writings", which contain the spiritual, or internal meaning of the Word of God.

The Lord promised to come again and He has done so through the Writings. In these books He speaks to us in a new way, not as immature, stumbling children, *"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear"*. John 16: 12, but as rational adults who can reason and assess spiritual values for themselves. He tells us about Himself and His plans for mankind in such a logical, feasible way, that the impact on a genuine seeker after spiritual truth is tremendous. So much so that, in a spiritual sense, it can be compared only to an emergence from the pitch darkness of midnight into the vivid light of noonday. This is the effect of the impact of these great new revelations on the mind of one reading them for the first time. In fact, so bright is the spiritual light thus revealed, that one is temporarily "blinded" as it were, and can only begin to comprehend by degrees the stupendous significance of what the Lord has now given to the world for the first time. There is no hysteria or the stirring up of false emotionalism, but a calm, sane revelation by the Lord disclosing who He is, the purpose of creation, His relationship to mankind and the eternal provision He has made for each one of us, as well as many other vital facts too numerous to mention.

The Church which has been formed as a result of these revelations is appropriately named the New Church. (Foretold in Revelation Chap 12 & 21) It is the aim and mission of this Church to enlighten and broaden the spiritual knowledge of mankind through the Writings and to show that these vital teachings can be applied in a practical way to daily life. Also to make the Writings available to all who are interested and to encourage their study, as only in this way can these Divine truths become known and accepted. So, all who really wish to know God as never before and want to come into a deeper and transcending experience of the Divine in their daily lives, are invited to read this booklet and ponder on the quotations given.

It is pointed out that the Writings are in no way connected with Spiritualism, or any other religious organization (other than the New Church), but are an entirely new revelation of Divine Truth direct from the Lord to man. Nothing like this has ever occurred before in the world's history. The Writings are absolutely unique in that they teach and reveal eternal facts about which the world had no previous knowledge.

Now, one of the most important things stressed in the Writings is that there is only one God (not three) and that His Name is the Lord Jesus Christ. This great truth is the basis or foundation upon which the New Church is built, and once it is seen in the light of these new revelations, an entirely new conception of the Christian religion begins to emerge. We are also shown many other wonderful truths which stem from this one great truth of the Divine Human of the Lord, as this becomes a focal point from which we are able to see how heaven and earth act together in a perfect spiritual conjunction under His supreme and loving control. All of which makes the Lord an ever present, loving reality to us. Our fears and doubts then vanish

like smoke and we can say with all our hearts: "Yes, this is indeed our God. We have waited for Him and He has now revealed Himself as never before."

We are now going to let the Writings speak for themselves on a number of vital teachings, quoting suitable passages which explain each one in turn. However, it must be emphasised that this is but a tiny fraction of the vast storehouse of spiritual knowledge contained in the Writings. It is therefore hoped that readers may in this way become sufficiently encouraged to read some of these great books for themselves and thus receive a new and blessed experience, which could have eternal consequences for them. Each book of the Writings is divided into numbered sections and the relevant section number is given at the end of each quoted passage in what now follows.

## 1. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The belief among Christian churches nowadays is that God, the Creator of the universe, procreated a Son from eternity. That Son came down and took on a human manifestation in order to redeem people and save them. This belief is wrong, however. It spontaneously falls apart as long as our thinking focuses on the fact that there is one God. To sound reason it is worse than nonsense to think that the one God procreated some Son from eternity and that God the Father together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, each of whom is individually God, together make one God. This fiction completely vanishes like a shooting star in the air when the Word is quoted to show (a) that Jehovah God himself came down and became human and (b) that Jehovah God also became the Redeemer.

As for the first point, the following passages show that Jehovah God himself came down and became human:

Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a Son, who will be called God with us. ([Isaiah 7:14](#); [Matthew 1:23](#))

A Child is born to us; a Son is given to us. Authority will rest on his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful, God, Hero, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. ([Isaiah 9:6](#))

It will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him to free us. This is Jehovah whom we have waited for. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation. " ([Isaiah 25:9](#))

The voice of one crying in the desert, "Prepare a way for Jehovah; make a level pathway in the solitude for our God. And all flesh will see it together. " ([Isaiah 40:3, 5](#))

Behold, the Lord Jehovah is coming with strength, and his arm will rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him; like a shepherd he will feed his flock. ([Isaiah 40:10-11](#))

Jehovah said, "Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Zion. Behold, I am coming to live in your midst. " Then many peoples will cling to Jehovah in that day. ([Zechariah 2:10-11](#))

I, Jehovah, have called you in justice; I will give you as a covenant to the people. I am Jehovah. This is my name. I will not give my glory to another. ([Isaiah 42:6, 8](#))

Behold, the days are coming when I will raise up for David a righteous offshoot who will reign as king and execute judgment and justice on the earth. And this is his name: Jehovah our Justice. (; [33:15-16](#))

Then there are the passages where the coming of the Lord is called "the day of Jehovah," such as [Isaiah 13:6, 9, 13, 22](#); [Ezekiel 31:15](#); [Joel 1:15](#); [2:1-2, 11, 29, 31](#); [3:1, 14, 18](#); [Amos 5:13, 18, 20](#); [Zephaniah 1:7-18](#); [Zechariah 14:1, 4-21](#); and elsewhere.

That Jehovah himself was the one who came down and took on a human manifestation is clearly established in Luke, when it says, "Mary said to the angel, 'How will this take place, since I have not had intercourse? The angel replied to her, The Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and the power of the Highest will cover you; therefore the Holy One that is born from you will be called the Son of God'" ([Luke 1:34-35](#)). In Matthew it says that in a dream an angel told Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, that the child that had been conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit. And Joseph did not have intercourse with her until she

gave birth to a Son and called his name Jesus ([Matthew 1:20, 25](#)). The "Holy Spirit" means the divine power that radiates from Jehovah God, as we will see in the third chapter of this work [[138-188](#)].

Everyone knows that an offspring's soul and life come from its father, and the body comes from that soul. To state it very openly, then, the Lord's soul and life came from Jehovah God; and because divinity cannot be divided, the Lord's soul and life was the Father's divinity itself. This is why the Lord frequently called Jehovah God his Father, and Jehovah God called the Lord his Son. What would be more absurd to hear therefore than the idea that the soul of our Lord came from Mary his mother? Yet this is the very thing that both Roman Catholics and Protestants are dreaming today, and they have not been awakened by the Word yet. (TCR 82)

The inner core, or in other words, the soul of one conceived of Jehovah, is nothing but Jehovah, so the Lord's very life was Jehovah himself. Jehovah—the divine nature, that is—cannot branch off the way the soul of a human father does in order for offspring to be conceived. The more human offspring depart from a resemblance to their father, the more they depart from their father himself, increasingly so as they mature. That is why fathers love their children less and less the older they grow. It was different with the Lord; as his human side grew up, he did not withdraw from his Father but continually drew closer, until they achieved perfect oneness. Clearly, then, he is identical with Jehovah the Father, as he himself also teaches plainly in John 14:9,11. *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;"* (AC 1921:3)

The Lord was as other men, except that He was conceived of Jehovah, but still was born of a virgin mother, and by birth derived from her infirmities like those of man in general, from which He receded. There are two hereditary natures united in origin in man - one from the father, the other from the mother. The Lord's hereditary from the Father was the Divine, but His hereditary from the mother was an infirm human one. This infirm nature which a man derives

(By way of further explanation of this profound subject and to show that the Lord was Jehovah (God) before coming into the world as a babe, the following passages are also included. These disclosures are now made to man by the Lord for the first time through the Writings and are of tremendous significance, revealing as they do what has hitherto been a great mystery. It will be seen that this is a very deep revelation and will give the reader some idea of the vital Divine Truths contained in the Writings. The quotations in this Section, under the heading of "The Virgin Birth", are of only a general nature and serve to illustrate something of the quality and overwhelming importance of this sublime Christian teaching. For a detailed study of this vital subject and what relates to it see Chapter 2 of TCR which is entitled "The Lord the Redeemer".)

*"the Angel who has delivered me from all harm."* (Gen 48:16) As regards 'the redeeming angel' - that the Lord's Divine Human is meant - this is clear from the consideration that by His assumption of the Human and making it Divine the Lord redeemed man, that is, delivered him from hell, on account of which, in respect of His Divine Human, the Lord is called the Redeemer. The reason why the Divine Human is called an angel is that the word 'angel' means one who has been sent, and the Lord's Divine Human is called 'the One who has been sent', as is evident from quite a number of places in the Word, in the Gospels. Furthermore, the Divine Human that existed before the Lord's Coming into the world was Jehovah Himself flowing in by way of heaven when He was declaring His Word. Jehovah was above the heavens, but what passed from Him through the heavens was the Divine Human at that time; for by means of Jehovah's flowing into heaven a human image was presented, and the Divine itself as present by this inflowing was the Divine Man. This is the Divine Human which has existed from eternity and is called the One who has been sent, by which is meant that which goes forth and which is one and the same as 'the angel' spoken of here.

But because Jehovah was no longer able to reach men by flowing into them through that Divine Human of His, for the reason that they had distanced themselves so far away from that Divine, He took on a human form and made it Divine. Then by flowing in from this into heaven, He could reach right out to those

members of the human race who would accept the good of charity and the truth of faith from His Divine Human, which had thus been made visible, and so could deliver them from hell - a deliverance which could not possibly have been accomplished in any other way. This deliverance is what is called Redemption, and the Divine Human itself effecting that deliverance or redemption is what is called 'the redeeming angel'.

But the Lord's Divine Human, it should be recognized, is above heaven - as the Divine itself is - since the Lord is the Sun that gives heaven its light; thus heaven is far below Him. The Divine Human present in heaven is the Divine Truth going forth from Him, which is the light radiating from Him as from the sun. In Essence the Lord is not Divine Truth, for that Truth is what goes forth from Him like light from the sun; rather, His Essence is Divine Goodness itself, which is one with Jehovah.

The Lord's Divine Human is also called 'the angel' in other places in the Word, for example when He appeared to Moses in the bramble-bush, described as follows in Exodus, (Exodus 3). It is the Lord's Divine Human that is referred to here by the name 'the angel of Jehovah'. He was really Jehovah, which he is also explicitly called. Jehovah's presence there within His Divine Human may be recognized from the consideration that the Divine itself could not become visible except through the Divine Human, as the Lord's words in John 1:18 "*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*" And in John 5:37 "*You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,*" (AC 6280)

It is well known that the Lord was born like anyone else and that when He was a young child he learned to talk like any other young child, after which He grew in knowledge, and also in intelligence and wisdom.

From this it is evident that His Human was not Divine when He was born but that He made it Divine by His own power. He made it Divine by His own power because He had been conceived from Jehovah, as a result of which the inmost core of His life was Jehovah Himself. For the inmost core of anyone's life, called the soul, is derived from the father, whereas that which clothes what is inmost, called the body, is derived from the mother. The inmost core of life derived from the father is constantly flowing into and having an effect on the external derived from the mother, endeavouring even in the womb to make it similar to itself. This may be recognized in the fact that children are born with their father's disposition, and sometimes grandchildren and great grandchildren with their grandfather's and great grandfather's disposition. The reason for this is that the soul, which is derived from the father, constantly wishes to make the external derived from the mother similar to itself and an image of itself.

Seeing that this is what goes on with man, one may recognize that it was what went on especially with the Lord. The inmost part of Him was the Divine Itself because it was Jehovah Himself, for He was Jehovah's only-begotten Son. And since that inmost part was the Divine Itself, how, more so than with any man, could the Divine fail to make the external derived from the mother an image of itself, that is, similar to itself, so that the Human - the external, derived from the mother - would be made Divine? This He accomplished by His own power because the Divine, which was the Inmost by which He had an effect on His Human, was His in the same way as a person's soul, which is the inmost part of him, belongs to that person. And because the progress which the Lord made conformed to Divine order, He made His Human, while He was in the world, to be Divine Truth; but after that, when He was fully glorified, He made it to be Divine Good, and so one with Jehovah. (AC 6716) (See also AC 3138, 3212, 3296, 3490, 4402, 5688 and 3246 which show that the regeneration of man is an image of the glorification of the Lord's Human.)

'*She saw that he was good*' Exodus 2:2 means the discernment that it came by way of heaven. This is clear from the meaning of 'seeing' as a discernment and from the meaning of 'good' here, since it is used in reference to the law of God in the Lord, as coming by way of heaven. But as for the meaning here of 'good' as coming by way of heaven, this is an arcanum which none can know unless it is brought to light. When the Lord made His Human Divine, He did so by means of a transmission from the Divine through heaven. Heaven contributed nothing of itself to what was transmitted; but in order that the Divine itself might flow into the Human it passed through heaven. This transmission was the Divine Human before the Lord's

Coming; it was Jehovah Himself in the heavens, who was the Lord. The Divine which passed through heaven was Divine Truth or Divine Law, which Moses represented; and the Divine which passes through heaven is good. From this one may see why it is that 'she saw that he (her son) was good' means the discernment that it came by way of heaven. (AC 6720)

"*the angel of the LORD appeared to him*" Exodus 3:2, means the Lord's Divine Human. This is clear from the meaning of 'the angel of Jehovah' as the Lord's Divine Human. The reason why the Divine Human is called 'the angel of Jehovah' is that before the Lord's Coming, whenever Jehovah passed through heaven He appeared in human form, as an angel; for heaven as a whole resembles one entire human being, called the Grand Man, which has been the subject at the ends of quite a number of chapters. When therefore the Divine Himself passed through heaven He appeared in human form, as an angel, before the eyes of those to whom He spoke. This was Jehovah's Divine Human before the Lord's Coming. And the Lord's Human, having been made Divine, is also Jehovah's Divine Human, for the Lord is Jehovah Himself in the Divine Human. (AC 6831)

## 2. THE TRINITY

Those who worship one God in whom there is a divine trinity and who is therefore one person become more and more alive, and become angels on earth. Those however, who convince themselves to believe in a plurality of gods because there is a plurality of divine persons become more and more like a statue with movable joints, inside which stands Satan, talking through its hinged mouth. (TCR 23)

When told that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the three essential components of the one God as our soul, our body and our actions [are the essential components of a human being], the human mind may still think that three persons play the roles of these three essential components, when in fact there could not be three separate persons. When however, we see the Father's divinity as the soul, the Son's divinity as the body, and the Holy Spirit's divinity (or divinity emanating) as action, and we see them as three essential components of one single God, then they become understandable. For the Father has his own divinity; the Son derives his divinity from the Father; and the Holy Spirit derives its divinity from them both. Since they share the same soul and essence, they constitute one God.

If we called these three divine components persons, however, and assigned each one its own responsibility - if we saw the Father as assigning spiritual credit or blame, the Son as mediating, and the Holy Spirit as putting things into effect - then we would be splitting a divine essence that is actually unified and indivisible. We would have made none of the three fully God; we would have given each one only a third of the power - an arrangement that a sound intellect has no choice but to reject. (TCR 168)

We are all capable of using the trinity within each of us to picture the Trinity in the Lord. In every one of us there is a soul, a body and our actions. It is the same in the Lord. According to Paul's letter to the Colossians, "*All the fullness of divinity dwells physically in the Lord*" ([Colossians 2:9](#)). Therefore there is a divine trinity in the Lord and a human one in us. It is a mysterious concept that there are three divine persons and yet there is one God, and that although there is one God, he is not one person. Surely reason has nothing in common with this idea. It puts our reason to sleep and makes our mouths speak like a parrot. When our reason is asleep, everything our mouths utter is without life. When our mouths say things that our reason diverges from and disagrees with, our statements are bound to be foolish.

Nowadays human reason has been restricted in regard to the divine Trinity like someone chained hand and foot in a prison. Our reasoning power is like a Vestal virgin buried in the ground for extinguishing the sacred fire. Yet the divine Trinity ought to shine like a lighthouse in the minds of people in the church, since God with his trinity and with the unity in his trinity is essential to all that is holy in heaven and in the church. Making the soul one God, the body another and the actions a third would be exactly like turning the three essential components in us into three separate entities. Does this not amount to mutilating and killing us? (TCR 169)

The Trinity that the modern-day Christian church has embraced and integrated into its faith is that God the Father bore a Son from eternity, and the Holy Spirit came forth from them both. Each one is a god all by himself.

The only way the human mind can grasp this trinity is to view it as a "triarchy," like a government of three monarchs in one country, three generals over one army, or three heads in one household, each of whom has equal power. What other outcome could such a situation have except destruction? Any of us who try to picture or sketch that triarchy in our mind's eye, with its unity in mind as well, can view it only as a person with three heads on one body or three bodies with one head. This deformed image of the Trinity is bound to show up in those who believe in three divine persons, each of whom is God in his own right - those who connect them into one God while denying that "one God" means one person.

The concept of an eternally begotten Son of God who later comes down and takes on a human manifestation is like the ancient nonsense about human souls created at the beginning of the world that enter bodies and become people. It is also like the absurd notion that someone's soul can cross over into someone else. (TCR 171)

The soul acts on and in the body but not through it. Instead, the body acts on its own initiative on behalf of the soul.

The soul does not act through the body in that the soul and the body do not consult and engage in decision making with each other. The soul does not command or request the body to do this or that, or say this or that with its mouth. The body does not call for or petition the soul to give it, or supply it with, something. Everything belonging to the soul belongs to the body, mutually and reciprocally.

The same is true for the divine and the human natures in the Lord. The Father's divine nature is the soul of his human nature, and the human nature is his body. The human nature does not ask its divine nature to tell it what to say or do. This is why the Lord says, *"In that day you will ask in my name. And I will not tell you that I am going to petition the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me"* ([John 16:26-27](#)). "In that day" means after glorification, that is, after complete and absolute union with the Father. (TCR 154)

It has been said that one Divine by itself is not possible, but that there must be a trine, and that this trine is one God in essence and in Person. It may now be asked, What trine God had before the Lord took on the Human and made it Divine in the world? God was then likewise Man, and had the Divine, the Divine Human, and the Divine proceeding, that is, the Divine being [esse], the Divine manifesting [existere], and the Divine proceeding for as has been said, God without a trine is not possible. But the Divine Human was not then Divine even to ultimates. Ultimates are meant by "flesh and bones," and even these were made Divine by the Lord when He was in the world. This was what was added, and this is the Divine Human that God now has. This too, may be illustrated by this comparison. Every angel is a man, having a soul, having a body and having a proceeding; and yet this does not make him a complete man, for he does not have flesh and bones as a man in the world has.

That the Lord made His Human Divine even to its ultimates, which are called "flesh and bones," He made clear to the disciples, who when they saw Him believed that they saw a spirit, saying:

*See My hands and My feet that it is I Myself; feel Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have* ([Luke 24:39](#)).

From this it follows that now God is Man more than an angel is. Comparison has been made with an angel and with a man; yet it must be understood that God has life in Himself, while an angel does not have life in himself, for he is a recipient of life. That the Lord as to both the Divine and the Divine Human, is life in Himself He teaches in John:

*As the Father has life in Himself so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself* ([John 5:26](#)).

Here by "Father" the Lord means the Divine in Himself; for He says elsewhere that the Father is in Him, and that the Father and He are one. (AE 1112:3)

Other important teachings on the Trinity may be found in the following numbers from TCR:-

174-176 - A Trinity of Persons was unknown in the Apostolic Church, but was put forward by the Nicene Council, then introduced into the Roman Catholic Church and from this into the churches that separated from it.

177-178 - From the Nicene and also the Athanasian doctrine concerning the Trinity has arisen a faith in three gods, which has perverted the whole Christian Church.

179-181 - From this source has arisen that abomination of desolation and affliction, the like of which shall never again come to pass, which the Lord foretold in Daniel, the Gospels and Revelation.

182 - Because of this, unless a new heaven and a new earth (meaning the New Church) were established by the Lord, no flesh should be saved.

### **3. WHY THE LORD CAME INTO THE WORLD**

The Lord came into the world to save the human race, which otherwise would have suffered eternal death. He saved it by gaining control over the hells, which were assaulting everyone who entered this world and everyone who left it. He also saved the human race by glorifying his own human nature, because this gave him the power to keep the hells under his control forever.

His gaining control over the hells and the simultaneous glorification of his human nature were effected by allowing the human nature that he received from his mother to undergo spiritual crises and by continuous victories in those crises. His suffering on the cross was his last spiritual crisis; in it he made his victory complete. (HD 293)

According to God's laws, he can forgive us our sins only to the extent that we follow our laws and stop doing them. God cannot regenerate us spiritually beyond the point to which we, following our laws, have regenerated ourselves in an earthly way. God makes an unceasing effort to regenerate us and save us, but he cannot do it unless we prepare ourselves as a vessel, leveling a pathway for God and opening the door. A suitor cannot enter his beloved's bedroom before she becomes his bride - she locks the door and keeps the key with her. After she has become a bride though, she gives her bridegroom the key.

Even for all God's omnipotence, he could not have redeemed humankind unless he had become human. He could not have made his human nature divine unless it was first like a human being as an infant and then like a human being as a child. Later his human nature also needed to form itself into a vessel and a dwelling place for his Father to enter, which he did by fulfilling everything in the Word, meaning all the laws of the divine design in it. The more he completed this process, the more he united himself to the Father and the Father united himself to him.

"However, these are just a few points I bring up for the sake of illustration, so that you can see that divine omnipotence exists within the divine design and follows that design in its governing called providence. Constantly and to eternity divine omnipotence acts in accordance with the laws of its own design. God cannot act against them or change even the tip of one letter of them, because he is the divine design along with all its laws." (TCR 73)

God could not have redeemed people, that is, rescued them from damnation and hell, without first taking on a human manifestation. There are many reasons for this; they will be disclosed step by step in what follows. Redemption was a matter of gaining control of the hells, restructuring the heavens, and then establishing a church. Despite his omnipotence, God could not accomplish these things except through his human manifestation, as one cannot do work without arms. In fact, in the Word his human manifestation is called the arm of Jehovah (Isaiah 40:10; 53:1). By analogy, one cannot attack a fortified city and destroy the temples of idols there without powerful means.



The Word as well makes it clear that having a human manifestation gave God the omnipotence to do this divine work. God is in the inmost and purest realms. There was no other way he could cross over to the lowest levels where the hells exist and where people were at that time, just as a soul cannot do anything without a body. By analogy, there is no way to overpower enemies who are not in sight and whom we cannot get close to with weapons such as spears, shields or guns.

To redeem people without a human manifestation would have been as impossible for God as it would be for someone [outside India] to take control of people in India without sending in troops on ships. It would be as impossible as growing trees on heat and light alone if air had not been created as a medium through which they travel and earth had not been created in which the trees could grow. In fact, it would be as impossible as catching fish by throwing a net in the air and not in the water.

Given Jehovah's inherent nature, despite his omnipotence he could not touch any individual devils in hell or any individual devils on earth and control them or their rage or tame their violence unless he could be as present in the farthest realms as he is in those closest to him. In his human manifestation he is in fact present in the farthest realms. This is why the Word refers to him as the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (TCR 84)

It is believed in the church that the Lord was sent by the Father to make atonement for the human race, and that this was accomplished by his fulfilling the law and by his suffering on the cross, that in this way he bore our damnation and paid the full price, and that if it were not for this atonement, payment and propitiation, the human race would have died an eternal death. This is believed to have been a matter of justice, which some, too, call "retributive justice."

It is quite true that we would all have perished if the Lord had not come into the world, this was not a matter of retributive justice, since that is not a divine attribute. Justice, love, mercy and goodness are divine attributes, and God is justice itself, love itself, mercy itself and goodness itself. Further, where we find these we find no vindictiveness and therefore no retributive justice.

The "fulfilling the law" and "the suffering on the cross" has meant that through them the Lord paid the full price for the human race and delivered it from the predicted or fated damnation. Put this together with the principle that we are saved simply by believing that this is what happened, and what follows is the dogma that the Lord's merit is imputed to us if we take these two acts to be a substitute for our giving satisfaction [to God for our sins], though they actually belong to the Lord's merit.

However, this dogma collapses in the light of what has been said about the Lord's fulfillment of the law and his suffering on the cross. At the same time we can see that "the imputation of merit" is a phrase without substance unless we take it to mean the forgiveness of sins that follows repentance. You see, nothing that belongs to the Lord can be credited to us, but salvation can be transferred to us by the Lord after we practice repentance - that is, after we see and acknowledge our sins and then desist from them, doing this because of the Lord. Then there is a way in which salvation is transferred to us: we are saved not on the basis of our own worth and our own righteousness but by the Lord, the only one who has fought and overcome the hells and who alone thereafter fights for us and overcomes the hells for us. (D of Lord 18)

(See also D of Lord Nos. 8 to 36, where it is explained how the Lord fulfilled all things of the law and why He endured and overcame all temptations when in the world, thus making His Human Divine.)

The Lord's advent into the world and the glorification of His humanity had as a goal the conjunction of people with God the Father in the Lord and through Him, thus that it is He who is to be approached. This the Lord also confirmed by His saying so many times that people must believe in Him to have eternal life. Who cannot see that the Lord said all these things about Himself in His humanity, and that He never would have said, or could have said, that He was in people and people in Him, and that they must believe in Him to have eternal life, unless His humanity was Divine? To ask the Father in the Lord's name does not mean to go directly to God the Father, neither does it mean to ask for the sake of the Son, but it means to go to

the Lord, and to the Father through Him, because the Father is present in the Son, and they are one, as the Lord Himself teaches. This is the symbolic meaning of "in His name". (AR 618:3)

All the churches before the Coming of the Lord were representative churches, which could see Divine truths only in the shadow of darkness, but after the Coming of the Lord into the world a Church was established by Him which saw Divine truths, or rather, which could see them in light. The difference between those churches is all the difference between evening and morning; the state of the church before the Coming of the Lord is also called evening in the Word, and its state after His Coming is called morning.

The Lord, before His Advent into the world, was indeed present with the men of the church, but mediately, through angels who represented Him; whereas since His Advent, He is present with the members of the church immediately; for in the world He put on the Divine Natural, in which He is present with men. The glorification of the Lord is the glorification of His Human, which He assumed in the world, and the glorified Human of the Lord is the Divine Natural. That this is the case is evident from the fact that the Lord rose from the tomb with His whole body which He had in the world, leaving nothing behind; consequently He took with Him from the tomb the Natural Human itself, complete from first to last. Therefore, after His resurrection He said to the disciples who believed that they saw a spirit: "*Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.*" (Luke 24:37,39)

From this it is clear that His natural body by glorification was made Divine. Therefore Paul says: that in Christ "*all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*" (Col 2:9) And John says: that Jesus Christ the Son of God, "*is the true God*". (1 John 5:2) Hence the angels know that the Lord alone, in the whole spiritual world, is fully Man.

It is well known in the Church that all worship with the Israelitish and the Jewish race was merely external and that it shadowed forth the internal worship which the Lord revealed. Thus worship before the Coming of the Lord consisted in types and figures, which represented true worship in appropriate imagery. Indeed the Lord Himself appeared among the people of old, for He said to the Jews: "*Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad .... Very truly I tell you, before Abraham was born, I am!*" (John 8:56,58)

As the Lord however, was only represented at that time, which representation was effected by angels, so all things relating to the Church with the Jews were made representative; but after He came into the world, those representations came to an end. The interior reason for this was that the Lord, while in the world, put on the Divine Natural from which He enlightens not only the internal spiritual man, but also the external natural man. If both of these are not enlightened at the same time, the man remains as it were in the shadow of darkness; but if both are so enlightened he is, as it were, in the light of day.

When only the internal man is enlightened and not at the same time, the external, or when only the external and not the internal, it is as when one sleeps and dreams. When he awakens, he remembers his dream and from it fashions various conclusions, which nevertheless are imaginary. He may also be likened to one walking in his sleep who supposes the objects he sees are seen in the light of day.

The difference between the state of the Church before the Lord's Coming and after it is like the difference seen in reading a paper by one who reads it at night by the light of the moon and stars, and by one who reads it in the sunlight.

In the pale light of the moon the eye is liable to error, but not in the brilliant light of the sun. Thus it is written concerning the Lord: "*The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: '...he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning,'*" (2 Sam 23:3,4) The God of Israel and the Rock of Israel, is the Lord.

In another place it is written: "*The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.*" (Isaiah 30:26) These words are spoken of the state of the Church after the Coming of the Lord. Briefly, the state of the Church before the Coming of the Lord may be compared to an old woman

whose face was painted and who thought herself beautiful because of the bright colour of the paint; whereas the state of the Church after the Coming of the Lord may be compared to a maiden comely in her native beauty.

The state of the church before the Lord's coming is like the skin from a piece of fruit - like an orange, an apple, a pear or a grape - and like the taste of that skin. The state of the church after his coming is like the flesh of those types of fruit and like the taste of that flesh. And so on.

This is because ever since the Lord added on a divine physical form, he enlightens our inner spiritual self and our outer earthly self at the same time. When just our inner self is enlightened but not our outer self, a shadow is cast. The same is true when our outer self is enlightened but not our inner self. (TCR 109)

If the Lord's church were completely obliterated from the planet, the human race could never survive. Every last person would die. The church resembles the heart. As long as the heart thrives, so can the surrounding organs and limbs. But as soon as the heart dies, everything else dies too. The Lord's church on earth is like the heart; from it the human race — including people outside the church — receives life. Since no one has the faintest idea why this is so, I wish to explain. The situation of the earth's entire population resembles that of the human body with all its parts. In this body, the church plays the role of the heart. If there were no church supplying the heart's place — a church with which the Lord could be united by means of heaven and the world of spirits — a break would occur. And if there were a break between the human race and the Lord, we would be annihilated immediately.

For this reason, a church has always existed, ever since the first moment of humanity's creation. Even when the church has begun to die out, it has always remained alive in a few people. The Lord came into the world for the same reason. Had divine mercy not prompted him to come, the whole human race on this planet would have been destroyed, because at that time the church had reached its last stages and hardly any goodness or truth was left.

Because we humans, regarded in ourselves, are much lower than animals, we have no chance at survival unless we are intimately connected with the Lord through heaven and the world of spirits. Left on our own we would plunge headlong into destroying ourselves and everyone else, because the ruination of ourselves and everyone else is all we long for.

Our proper code of life is to love one another as we love ourselves, but what we actually do these days is to love ourselves more than others and thus hate everyone else. Now, with unreasoning animals the case is totally different. Their proper code is the one they live by, and so they live in thorough harmony with their destiny. We humans though, live exactly opposite to the pattern ordained for us, so if the Lord did not take pity on us, if he did not bind us to him through angels, we could not possibly survive a single moment. Of this fact humanity is unaware. (AC 637)

No devil can ever put an angel to the test. As long as the angel remains in the Lord, evil spirits cannot even approach at a distance without being seized immediately by horror and terror. Much less could hell have approached the Lord if he had been born divine, free of any evil clinging to him from his mother.

It is a common saying among preachers that the Lord also bore the wickedness and evil of the human race. But it would be impossible to draw wickedness and evil off into himself except by way of heredity. Divinity is not susceptible to evil.

In order to conquer evil by his own strength, therefore — which no human ever was or ever will be able to do — and become the sole embodiment of uprightness, the Lord wished to be born like any other person.

Otherwise being born would have been of no use to the Lord. He could have taken on a human identity without birth, as he sometimes did when appearing to the earliest church and to the prophets as well. In order to clothe himself also in evil that he could fight against and overthrow, however, he did come into the world, and by this means he would unite the divine nature to the human nature in himself. (AC 1573:6-7)

The Lord glorified His Human by combats against the hells and at the same time, by continual victories over them; the last combat and victory being that on the cross; therefore He then fully glorified Himself, as He also teaches in John 13:31 After Judas had gone out, Jesus said: *"Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.."* And again in John 17 *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."* Also in Luke 24 *"Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

To glorify the Son of man means to make the Human Divine. That those things were said concerning the passion of His cross, is evident. That by the last combat, which was the passion of the cross, He fully subdued the hells, the Lord also teaches in John 12: Jesus replied, *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."* Jesus said, *Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."* He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Hell as a whole is what the term 'the prince of this world' or the devil refers to. From these verses it is evident that by the passion of the Cross the Lord not only overcame and subdued the hells but also completely glorified His Human. From this comes salvation to the human race, for which reason also the Lord came into the world, as He also teaches in John 12:27. It was for the sake of the remembrance of this that the feast of unleavened bread or the Passover was primarily established; and it was why He rose again at that feast.

The reason why on account of deliverance from evil and from the falsities of evil is also meant is that all deliverance from evil comes about through the subduing of the hells by the Lord and through the glorification of His Human; without these there is no deliverance. For a person is ruled by the Lord by means of spirits from hell and angels from heaven. Unless therefore the hells had been altogether subdued, and unless the Lord's Human had been altogether united to the Divine Himself, and had thereby also been made Divine, no one could have possibly been delivered from hell and been saved; for the hells would have always prevailed, because the human being has become such that left to himself his thought consists of nothing other than that which belongs to hell. From this it is evident why it is that the same feast means worship and thanksgiving on account of deliverance from evil and from the falsities of evil. (AC 10655:2-4)

#### **4. THE SECOND COMING**

The Lord, speaking in the presence of His disciples of the consummation of the age (the final period of the church), toward the end of His predictions, foretells its successive states in respect to love and faith as follows: *"Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."* (Matt 24:29-31)

Those who understood these words according to the sense of the letter have no other belief than that during that latest period, which is called the final judgment, all these things are to come to pass just as they are described in the literal sense, that is, that the sun and moon will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky, that the sign of the Lord will appear in the sky, and He Himself will be seen in the clouds,

attended by angels with trumpets; and furthermore, as is foretold elsewhere, that the whole visible universe will be destroyed, and afterwards a new heaven with a new earth will come into being.

Such is the opinion of most men in the church at the present day. But those who so believe are ignorant of the arcana that lie hidden in every particular of the Word. For in every particular of the Word there is an internal sense which treats of things spiritual and heavenly, not of things natural and worldly, such as are treated of in the sense of the letter. And this is true not only of the meaning of groups of words, it is true of each particular word. For the Word is written solely by correspondences, to the end that there may be an internal sense in every least particular of it.

What that sense is can be seen from all that has been said and shown about it in the Arcana Coelestia; also from quotations gathered from that work in the explanation of The White Horse spoken of in the Apocalypse. It is according to that sense that what the Lord says in the passage quoted above respecting His coming in the clouds of heaven is to be understood. The "sun" there that is to be darkened signifies the Lord in respect to love; the "moon" the Lord in respect to faith; "stars" knowledges of good and truth, or of love and faith; <sup>7</sup> "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" the manifestation of Divine truth; "the tribes of the earth" that shall mourn, all things relating to truth and good or to faith and love; <sup>8</sup> "the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven with power and glory" His presence in the Word, and revelation, <sup>9</sup> "clouds" signifying the sense of the letter of the Word, <sup>10</sup> and "glory" the internal sense of the Word; <sup>11</sup> "the angels with a trumpet and great voice" signify heaven as a source of Divine truth.<sup>12</sup>

All this makes clear that these words of the Lord mean that at the end of the church, when there is no longer any love, and consequently no faith, the Lord will open the internal meaning of the Word and reveal arcana of heaven. (HH 1)

The Second Coming of the Lord is not to destroy the visible heaven and the habitable earth. That its purpose is not to destroy anything but to build up, consequently not to condemn but to save those who, since His First Coming have believed in Him, and those who will hereafter believe, is evident from these words of the Lord:- *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only."* (John 3:17-18.) *"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day."* (John 12:47-48.)

The Last Judgment took place in the spiritual world in the year 1757. (For a detailed description see THE LAST JUDGMENT.) This I, (Emanuel Swedenborg) solemnly attest because, while fully conscious, I saw it with my own eyes. (TCR 772)

The purpose of the Lord's Coming is to form a new heaven made up of people who have believed in him, and to establish a new church made up of people from now on who believe in him. These are the two goals of his Coming. His ultimate purpose in creating the universe was exactly this: to form an angelic heaven made up of people. In this heaven, all who believe in God will live in eternal bliss. The divine love that God has, and that is his essence, cannot intend anything other than this, and the divine wisdom that God has, and that is God, cannot produce any other outcome than this.

The universe was created for the purpose of having an angelic heaven made up of members of the human race, and also for the purpose of having a church in the world, since the church gives the human race access to heaven. In addition, saving people, which requires that they be born in the world, is itself an ongoing act of creation. For this reason the Word sometimes uses the word "create," and means by it "forming people for heaven.: *"Behold, I am creating a new heaven and a new earth. Enjoy forever what I am creating. Behold, I am going to create Jerusalem as a rejoicing.."* (Isaiah 65:17-18.) Also in many other passages. (TCR 773)

The Lord cannot manifest himself to everyone in person, and yet he foretold that he would come and build a new church, which is the New Jerusalem. Therefore it follows that he is going to accomplish this through the agency of a human being who can not only accept these teachings intellectually but also publish them in printed form. I testify in truth that the Lord manifested himself to me, his servant, and assigned me to this task; after doing so, he opened the sight of my spirit and brought me into the spiritual world; and he has allowed me to see the heavens and the hells and to have conversations with angels and spirits on a continual basis for many years now. I also testify that ever since the first day of this calling, I have accepted nothing regarding the teachings of this church from any angel; what I have received has come from the Lord alone while I was reading the Word. (TCR 779)

(A good outline of the Consummation of the Age, showing the internal, or spiritual meaning of the Second Coming, resulting in the New Heavens, the New Earth and the New Church, is given in Chapter 14 of TCR.)

## **5. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DIVINITY OF THE WORD OF GOD**

The Lord, when in the world, fulfilled all things in the Word and thus became the Word, that is, the Divine Truth even in ultimates. This is meant by the following passage in John 1:14:- "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" To become flesh is to become the Word in ultimates. What the Lord was, as the Word in ultimates, He showed to His disciples when He was transfigured. (See Matt. 17:2-9). It is there said that Moses and Elijah appeared in glory, and by Moses is meant the Word which was written by him, and in general the historical Word, and by Elijah, the prophetic Word. The Lord, as the Word in ultimates, was also represented to John in the Revelation (1:13-16). Here the whole description of Him signifies the ultimates of Divine Truth, or of the Word. The Lord before His incarnation was indeed the Word or the Divine Truth, but only in primaries, for it is said: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*" (John 1:1-2). But when the Word became flesh then the Lord became the Word in ultimates also; and it is from this fact that He is called the First and the Last in Revelation 1 etc. (TCR 261).

Truth Divine is called "the Word" and "the Word" denotes the Lord in John 1:1, because when the Lord was in the world He was the Divine Truth itself, and afterward when He was glorified, He became the Divine Good, and thenceforth all Divine Truth proceeds from Him. This Divine Truth is light to the angels, which light is that of the understanding. (AC 8861)

The Word, in consequence of being a revelation from the Divine, is Divine, in each and all things; for what is from the Divine cannot be otherwise. Whatever is from the Divine descends through the heavens down to man, and is accordingly accommodated in the heavens to the wisdom of the angels there, and on earth to the apprehension of men there. In the Word, therefore, there is an internal sense, which is spiritual, for the angels, and an external sense, which is natural for men. Hence it is that there is conjunction of heaven with man through the Word.

The genuine sense of the Word is understood by none but those who are enlightened; and only those who are in love to the Lord and have faith in Him are enlightened, for their interiors are elevated by the Lord into the light of heaven.

The Word in its letter cannot be understood properly except by means of a body of teaching drawn from the Word by an enlightened person. Its literal meaning has been accommodated so that it is possible even for those with no education to comprehend it; therefore [to find their way to a truer understanding] they need a body of teaching drawn from the Word to serve as a lamp. (HD 252-254)

The Lord's Divine influx does not stop midway, but goes on to its ultimates, and as the middle part through which it passes is the angelic heaven, while the ultimate is with man, and as nothing can exist unconnected, it follows that the connection and conjunction of heaven with the human race is such that

one continues in existence from the other, and that the human race apart from heaven would be like a chain without a hook; and heaven without the human race would be like a house without a foundation.

Since we have broken this connection by turning our inward natures away from heaven and toward the world and ourselves through our self-love and love of the world and have so pulled away that we no longer serve heaven as its basis and foundation, the Lord has provided a medium to serve in place of that basis and foundation and to maintain the union of heaven with humanity. That medium is the Word. (HH 304-305)

The natural man cannot be persuaded to believe that the Word is Divine Truth itself wherein are Divine Wisdom and Divine life; for he judges it by its style, and in this they do not appear. Yet the style of the Word is the Divine style itself, with which no other style, however sublime and excellent it may seem, is at all to be compared; for every other style is as darkness is to light. The style of the Word is such that there is holiness in every sentence, and in every word, and in some places even in the very letters. This is why the Word conjoins man with the Lord, and opens heaven. (D of SS 3)

The spiritual sense of the Word is not that sense which shines forth from the sense of the letter while one is studying and unfolding the meaning of the Word with intent to confirm some tenet of the Church. This is the literal sense of the Word. The spiritual sense does not appear in the sense of the letter, being within it as the soul in the body, as thought in the eyes, and as affection in the face, which act as one, like cause and effect. It is this sense chiefly which renders the Word spiritual, not for men only, but also for angels; and therefore by means of this sense of the Word gives communication with the heavens. (D of SS 5)

(See also AE 719 and 720, which explain the importance of a proper comprehension of the literal and spiritual senses of the Word and show that truths are extinguished and destroyed when they are falsified and adulterated. Also D of SS which gives a clear and comprehensive study of the significance and holiness of the Word. Among other things it shows that the Word is written by means of pure correspondences, that it is in all the heavens and is the source of angelic wisdom. See also TCR 212 and 213, which explain the three senses of the Word - The Natural, The Spiritual and The Celestial.)

*"And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse."* (Rev 19:11) This signifies the spiritual sense of the Word revealed by the Lord, and by it the interior meaning of the Word discovered, which is the Coming of the Lord. Seeing heaven open, signifies revelation from the Lord and thus manifestation. A horse means the understanding of the Word and a white horse the interior understanding of the Word. This is the Coming of the Lord, because by that sense it manifestly appears that the Lord is the Word and that the Word treats of Him alone; that He is the God of heaven and earth, and that from Him alone the New Church exists. The Lord said that they should see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (See Mat 17:24,26 etc.). The Lord also said this when He discoursed with His disciples concerning the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church when judgment takes place.

Everyone who does not think beyond the literal sense believes that when the Last Judgment arrives, the Lord will appear in clouds of the sky, accompanied by angels and the blowing of trumpets. But this is not the meaning. Rather it means that the Lord will appear in the Word, and He appears clearly in the Word's spiritual sense. He appears not only as being an embodiment of the Word, that is, of Divine truth itself, or as being inmosty present in the Word and in everything springing from it, but also as being a single God, having the Trinity in Him, thus as being the only God of heaven and earth. Moreover, it appears also that He came into the world to glorify His humanity, that is, to make it Divine.

The humanity that the Lord glorified, that is, the humanity that He made Divine, was the natural humanity, which He could not glorify or make Divine except by taking on a humanity in a virgin in the natural world, to which He then united His Divinity which He had from eternity. This union was achieved by temptations suffered by the humanity He had taken on, the last of which was His suffering of the cross and at the same time His fulfilling all of the Word, not only by His fulfilling all of the Word in its natural sense, but also by

His fulfilling all of the Word in its spiritual sense, and also in its celestial sense, which deals with Him alone. (AR 820)

(The following passages are included to demonstrate the tremendous power of the Word of God and how it is revered and sanctified by the angels. Here is the answer to those misguided people who, in their ignorance, despise God's Word and make light of its profound teachings. They say it is out of date and outmoded and has been replaced by modern scientific theories which explain away everything holy and sacred as dead myths and ridicule the great truths it contains as things of no account. How little they realise the vast importance of the Word of God and the place of honour it has in the World of Spirits and the New Heavens: What a shock these scoffers will receive when they enter the World of Spirits after death and see the marvellous beauty and power of this great Book which they had scorned as worthless:

Swedenborg was permitted by the Lord to see these incidents through his spiritual sight and to record them for us to contemplate. Here it is shown that the Word of God has a vast and eternal significance and splendour beyond anything which mankind could imagine. This is brought out in an amazing manner in the remarkable incidents which now follow.

At the beginning of this passage we are told that a discussion arose among some spirits as to whether anyone can see any genuine truth in the Word, unless he makes a direct approach to the Lord, Who is the Word itself. But because there were those who contradicted this, an experiment was made and it was found that those who approached God the Father did not see any truth, whereas those who approached the Lord directly were able to see truths very clearly. In the course of this dispute some spirits ascended from the abyss (mentioned in Rev 9), where the mysteries of justification by faith alone are the subjects of discussion. There it is said that they approach God the Father and see their mysteries in clear light. The reply was made, however, that they see them in a delusive light and that they do not possess one single truth. They were angry at this and quoted many passages from the Word, which indeed were true, but had become falsified in their minds. They were then answered as follows:-

"All those things which you have advanced are true in themselves, but with you they are truths falsified and these are falsities because they are derived from a false principle. That this is so we will now give you ocular proof. Not far from here is a place upon which the light of heaven falls directly. In the centre of it there is a table and if a paper is placed upon it on which is written a truth from the Word, the paper, by virtue of that truth, shines like a star. Therefore write your truths on a paper and let it be placed on the table and you will see." They did so and gave the paper to an attendant who placed it on the table. He then told them to move away and to look at the table. They did this, and lo, the paper shone like a star. Thereupon the attendant said: "You see those are truths which you have written on the paper. Now approach nearer and fix your gaze on the paper." They did so, and suddenly the light disappeared and the paper became black as though covered with soot from a furnace. The attendant then said: "Touch the paper with your hands, but take care that you do not touch the writing." When they did so, a flame burst forth and consumed the paper.

When they had seen this they were told that if they had touched the writing, they would have heard a report and would have had their fingers burnt. Then some who were standing behind said: "You see now that the truths you have misused to confirm the mysteries of your justification theory are truths in themselves, but in you they are truths falsified."

They then looked upwards and heaven appeared to them like blood and afterwards like thick darkness; and they themselves appeared to the eyes of the angelic spirits like bats, owls and other birds of night. So they fled away into their own states of darkness which shone in their eyes with a delusive light.

The angelic spirits who were present were astonished, as before this they had known nothing of that place and the table there; and presently a voice came to them from the southern quarter saying: "Come this way and you will see something still more wonderful." So they went and entered a room the walls of which



shone like gold and they saw a table there also, upon which lay the Word, decorated all around with precious stones, arranged in a heavenly design.

The angel attendant said: "When the Word is opened, a light of inexpressible brilliance shines from it, and at the same time from the precious stones there arises the appearance of a rainbow over and around the Word. When an angel from the third (or Celestial) heaven approaches, there appears over and around the Word a rainbow on a red ground. When an angel from the second (or Spiritual) heaven approaches and looks at it, the rainbow appears on a blue ground. When an angel from the lowest (or Ultimate) heaven approaches and looks, the rainbow appears on a white ground; and when a good spirit (from the World of Spirits) approaches and looks, there appears a light variegated like marble." The truth of this was then demonstrated to them. The angel attendant continued:- "But should anyone approach who has falsified the Word, the brightness first vanishes. If he then comes nearer and looks at the Word, there arises the appearance of blood around it, and he is warned to depart because there is danger".

However, a certain man who in the world had been a leading writer on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, came up boldly and said: "While I was in the world I did not falsify the Word. I exalted charity together with faith and taught that, in a state of faith in which a man exercises charity and does the works of charity, he is renewed, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In such a case, faith is not alone, that is, without good works, just as a good tree is not without fruit, the sun without light and fire without heat. I also reproved those who declared that good works were unnecessary. Moreover, in my teaching I insisted on the importance of the Ten Commandments and also repentance; and thus in a wonderful way I made everything in the Word relate to the Article on Faith, which I still explained and proved to be alone saving."

In the confidence of his assertion that he had not falsified the Word, he approached the table and disregarding the warning of the angel, he touched the Word. Immediately fire and smoke burst forth from the Word, followed by a crash and an explosion, which hurled him into a corner of the room, where he lay for some time as if dead. The angelic spirits were much surprised at this, but they were informed that this leader more than others had exalted the good works of charity, as if proceeding from faith; but that he meant only those relating to society, called moral and civil, which have as their end the world and worldly prosperity, and which have no regard to salvation. By works, too, he had understood some hidden operation of the Holy Spirit, about which man knows nothing, which are generated when he is in a state of faith.

After that the angelic spirits talked to each other about falsification of the Word. They agreed on the point that to falsify the Word is to take truths out of it and use them to reinforce falsities, which is dragging truths out of and away from the Word and killing them. An example would be taking all the truths listed before by the spirits from the abyss, applying them to the modern-day faith, and explaining them from that point of view.

Another example would be to take this truth from the Word: we have to live with goodwill and do what is good to our neighbour. We could reason that everything good that comes from ourselves is not really good since we hope to be rewarded for it, and on that basis convince ourselves that we ought to do what is good, but not for the sake of our salvation. If we adamantly espouse this point of view, however, we are dragging this truth out of and away from the Word and slaughtering it. In his Word, the Lord requires that all who want to be saved must love their neighbours and lovingly do them good.

The same goes for the rest of their list. (TCR 162)

## **6. REPENTANCE, REFORMATION AND REGENERATION**

The Lord himself also preached that people should repent so that their sins would be forgiven. He taught, in effect, that repentance is the beginning of the church; that if we repent, the sins within us will be removed; and that if our sins are removed, they are also forgiven. Furthermore, when the Lord sent out his

twelve apostles and also the seventy, he commanded them to preach repentance. From all this it is clear that repentance is the beginning of the church. (TCR 510)

As for the point that the church does not exist within us until the sins inside us have been removed, this is something anyone can conclude through the use of reason.

It can also be illustrated through the following comparisons. No one can pasture flocks of sheep, goats and lambs in fields or woodlands that are already occupied by all kinds of predatory animals, without first driving away the predators. No one can turn land that is full of thornbushes, brambles and stinging nettles into a garden without first uprooting those harmful plants. No one can go into a city that is occupied by hostile enemy forces, set up a new administration devoted to justice and judgment, and make it a good place for citizens to live without first expelling the enemy. It is similar with the evils that are inside us. They are like predatory animals, brambles and thornbushes and enemies. The church could no more live alongside them than we could live in a cage full of tigers and leopards; or lie down in a bed whose sheets were lined, and pillows stuffed, with poisonous plants; or sleep at night in a church building under whose stone floor there are tombs with dead bodies in them - would we not be harassed there by ghosts that were like the furies? (TCR 511)

After we have confessed our sins in this way and have prayed for forgiveness with a humble heart, repenting is to stop doing them and to lead a new life that follows the principles of caring and faith.

If all we do is make a blanket acknowledgment that we are sinners and declare ourselves guilty of all evils but without examining ourselves - that is, seeing our own particular evils - we are making some kind of confession, but not a confession that leads to repentance. Since we do not know what our evils are, we live the same way afterward as before.

If we are leading a life of caring and faith we repent every day. We reflect on the evils in ourselves, acknowledge them, take precautions against them, and pray to the Lord for help. You see, on our own we are constantly falling down, but the Lord is constantly raising us up and leading us toward goodness. This is our state if we devote our lives to doing good. If we spend our lives doing evil, then too we are constantly falling down and the Lord is constantly lifting us up, but the result is only that we are steered away from falling into those most serious evils to which we instinctively tend with all our might.

If we are practicing self-examination in order to repent, it is important that we examine our thoughts and the intentions of our will, and note what we would do if we could get away with it - that is, if we had no fear of the law or of losing our reputation, our job, or our wealth. Our evils live in our will; that is the source of all the evil things we do physically. Therefore if we do not search out evils in our thoughts and our will, we will be unable to repent, because afterward we will have the same thoughts and intentions as we had before; and intending evils is the same as doing them. This therefore is what self-examination entails. (HD 161-164).

Unless a man searches out and sees his sins, he remains in them; for from his birth all evil is delightful to him. It is delightful to him to take revenge, to commit fornication, to defraud, to blaspheme and especially to domineer over others from the love of self. This delight blinds you to the fact that they are sins; and if you are told they are sins, it prompts you to make excuses for them. You strive by false argument to show that they are not sins, and thus you continue in them more than before, until you no longer know what sin is, or whether there is such a thing. But it is otherwise with the man who actually repents. He recognises and acknowledges his evils and calls them sins, and begins to shun them, and at last loses all pleasure in them. He then sees and loves good, and at length feels the same delight in it, as do the angels of heaven. In short, when one casts the devil behind him, he is adopted by the Lord, and then he is taught, led, withheld from evil and kept in good by him. This is the only way that leads to heaven. (TCR 567)

We are born into sin, which is accumulated in a long series by our great-grandparents, grandparents and parents and becomes hereditary, so that it passes on to the next generation. Every human born is born

into all the inherited evil that has steadily grown this way. That is why we are nothing but sin. Unless we are reborn, then, we remain totally immersed in sin.

If we are to be reborn, we first have to reform, and the means to reformation is religious truth. We need to learn about goodness from the Word or from teachings based on the Word, and this knowledge of goodness from the Word or from teachings based on it is called religious truth. All religious truth wells up out of goodness and flows toward goodness, because it considers goodness to be the ultimate goal. (AC 5280:2)

There are two primary faculties of man's life, namely, the will and the understanding. The will is the receptacle of all things pertaining to good, and the understanding of all things pertaining to truth from that good. A man can be re-formed only by means of these two faculties of his life, and by their being filled with goods and truths. Reformation is effected in the following order. First, a man must fill his memory with the knowledge and cognitions (awareness) of truth and good, by means of which he will acquire the light (lumen) of reason; and especially must he learn that God is one, that the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, that there is a heaven and a hell, that there is a life after death and that the Word is holy.

He must learn what evils are sins; first from the Ten Commandments, and afterwards from the Word throughout. And he must think that they are sins against God, and that therefore they keep back and separate man from heaven, and condemn and sentence him to hell. This is why the first thing in reformation is to desist from sins, to shun them, and at length to become averse to them; but in order to do this he must ask the Lord for aid. He must also shun and hold them in aversion, because they are opposed to the Word, thus to the Lord, and consequently to heaven, and because they are in themselves infernal.

So far as a man shuns evils and is averse to them because they are sins, and thinks of heaven, his salvation, and eternal life; so far he is adopted by the Lord, conjoined to heaven and gifted to the same extent with spiritual affection; which is such that he not only desires to know truths, but also to understand them and to will and do them. (AC. 8374-6)

When we battle against what is evil, we cannot help but fight using what seems to be our own strength, because if we are not using what seems to be our own strength, we are not doing battle. We are standing there like an automaton, seeing nothing and doing nothing, while constantly thinking on the basis of evil and in favour of it, not against it.

However, we need to be quite clear about the fact that it is the Lord alone who is fighting within us against the evils, that it only seems as though we are using our own strength for the battle, and that the Lord wants it to seem like that because if it does not, no battle occurs, so there is no reformation either.

This battle is hard only if we have given free rein to our cravings and indulged in them deliberately, or if we have stubbornly rejected the holy principles of the Word and the church. Otherwise, it is not hard. We need only resist evils in our intentions once a week or twice a month and we will notice a change. (D of Life 96 - 97).

The more we are regenerated, the more our sins are laid aside, because the process of being regenerated is a matter of restraining our flesh so that it does not control us, and taming our old self and its cravings so that it does not rise up and destroy our intellectual faculty. Once our intellectual faculty is destroyed we can no longer be reformed; this reformation cannot take place unless our spirit, which is above our flesh, is instructed and perfected.

Surely everyone can see that this sort of process cannot be completed in a moment. It happens in stages, much the way we are conceived, carried in the womb, born and brought up, as was presented above. The traits of the flesh or the old self are embedded in us from the day we are born. They build the first home for our mind. Cravings live in that home like predatory animals in their dens. At first they live in the entryways. Then bit by bit they move by stealth into levels of the house that are below ground. Later on they go upstairs and make bedrooms for themselves there. This takes place gradually as we grow up from

our childhood through youth to young adulthood, when we begin to have thoughts that come from our own understanding and perform actions that come from our own will.

All this cannot happen in a moment. Every wise person can see the truth of this just from the fact that each evil is composed of countless cravings. Every evil is like a piece of fruit that under its skin is full of worms with black heads and white bodies. There are a great number of such evils and they are joined to each other, like a spider's offspring when they first hatch out of its belly. Therefore unless one evil after another is taken away until their confederation is broken up, we cannot become a new person.

The more we are regenerated, the more our sins are laid aside. (TCR 611)

Every created thing in the world, both animate and inanimate, has an inner level and an outer level. The one level does not exist in the absence of the other, any more than an effect can exist without a cause. Every created thing is considered valuable if it is inwardly good, and worthless if it is inwardly bad, even where inner badness lies within outer goodness. Every wise person in the world and every angel in heaven evaluates people and things in this way.

What a person who has not been regenerated is like and what a person who has been regenerated is like can be illustrated through comparisons. People who have not been regenerated but who present themselves as moral citizens and "good Christians" can be compared to a corpse that has been embalmed with fragrant oils but nevertheless gives off a reek that overpowers the fragrances, assaults your nose and hurts your brain.

They can also be compared with a mummy that has been gilded and placed in a silver coffin; as you look inside, your eye is met with a deformed, blackened corpse.

They can be compared with bones and skeletons in a tomb that has been decorated with lapis lazuli and other precious stones.

They can also be compared with the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, whose inner level was nonetheless hellish (Luke 16:19-25).

They can be compared with poison that tastes sweet; with hemlock in bloom; with fruit that has gleaming skin but whose flesh has been eaten away by worms; and with a wound that is carefully bandaged and has recently developed a thin layer of new skin, but inside is still full of infectious pus.

In our world, of course, the inside is sometimes valued highly on the basis of what is outside, but only by people who themselves have no inner goodness and who therefore judge things by appearances. This is not how it works in heaven, however. The body that can be turned this way and that around the spirit and can be bent from evil to good is removed by death, and then only the inner self remains, which constitutes the spirit. Then even from far away such people look like a snake that has shed its skin, or rotten wood whose shiny bark has been removed.

It is different, though, for those who have been regenerated. Their inner level is good and their outer level, which appears to be like anyone else's, is actually as different from that of the people just mentioned as heaven is from hell, since it has a soul of goodness inside.

After death it means nothing any more whether people in this world were of high rank and lived in a mansion and walked around with an entourage, or lived in a hut and were waited on by a child. It does not matter if they were an archbishop who wore a scarlet robe and a two-tiered tiara, or a shepherd tending a few sheep in the woods, who wore a loose-fitting country coat with a hood for his head.

Gold is still gold whether it shines next to the fire or its surface is blackened with smoke. Gold is still gold whether it has been poured into a beautiful shape like that of a little child or an unpleasant shape like that of a rat. The rats made of gold and placed next to the ark were still found acceptable and pleasing ([1 Samuel 6:3-5](#), and following), because gold symbolizes inner goodness. Diamonds and rubies that have

been kept in their matrix of limestone or clay are just as valuable as diamonds and rubies set in a queen's necklace, because they are valued for their inner goodness. And so on.

This makes it clear that what is on the outside derives its value from what is on the inside and not the other way around. (TCR 595)

(The Writings teach that Repentance, Reformation and Regeneration are of the utmost importance to everyone and that these things must take place (or commence) in this life, if we wish to enter heaven after the death of the material body. It is therefore suggested that the reader make a thorough study of Chapters 9 and 10 of TCR, where these three things are carefully defined and it is shown how they can be applied to daily life. D. of Life will also be found most helpful to all who sincerely want to go the Lord's way and to do His will).

Suppose someone keeps a leopard and a panther in an apartment and, as the one who feeds them, is able to live safely with them. No one else can visit unless their owner first removes these wild animals. Guests invited to the table of the king and queen would not forget to wash their faces and hands before attending. Anyone must first purify ore with fire and remove slag before getting pure gold or silver. Everyone separates the tares or weeds from the harvested wheat before taking it into the barn. Everyone cooks some of the juice out of raw meat before it becomes edible and is set on the table. Everyone knocks the grubs and caterpillars off the leaves of a tree in the garden to prevent them from devouring the leaves and causing a loss of fruit. Does any man love a young woman and propose to marry her if she is riddled with malignancies or covered all over with pustules and varicose veins, no matter how much she puts makeup on her face, wears gorgeous clothing, and makes an effort to be attractive by saying nice things and paying compliments?

The need for us to purify ourselves from evils, and not to wait for the Lord to do it without our participation, is like a servant coming in with his face and clothes covered in soot or dung, approaching his master and saying, "Lord, wash me. " Surely his master would tell him, "You foolish servant! What are you saying? Look, there is the water, the soap, and a towel. Don't you have hands? Don't they work? Wash yourself!"

The Lord God is going to say, "The means of being purified come from me. Your willingness and power come from me. Therefore use these gifts and endowments of mine as your own and you will be purified." (TCR 436)

None of us can purify ourselves from evils by our own power and our own force. On the other hand, neither can we purify ourselves without having power and force as if they were our own. If we did not have apparent power, none of us could fight against the flesh and its cravings, although we have all been ordered to do so. In fact, we could not even think about battling them. We would let our mind go into evils of every kind. We would be held back from actually doing evils only by the laws of justice that have been passed in the world and the penalties they prescribe. Inside we would be like tigers, leopards, or snakes that utterly fail to reflect on the cruelty that their hearts enjoy.

Clearly then, because we are rational in a way that animals are not, we have to resist evils using the powers and abilities the Lord gives us, although as far as we can tell, those powers and abilities appear to be our own. The Lord gives us all this illusion in order to regenerate us, attribute goodness to us, forge a partnership with us, and save us. (TCR 438)

In the world, the process of being regenerated is represented by various things. For example, by the flowering of all things on earth in springtime and the ensuing stages of growth to the point of bearing fruit. Likewise, by the stages of development that every type of tree, bush and flower goes through from the first to the last warm month.

The process of being regenerated is also represented by the development of fruits of all kinds from initial stem to ripe fruit. It is represented by the morning and evening rains and the falling dew that cause flowers to open, as they also close themselves to the darkness of night. It is represented by the fragrances of

gardens and fields; and by the rainbow in the cloud ([Genesis 9:14-17](#)). It is also represented by the radiant colours of sunrise.

The process of being regenerated is also represented in a general way by the constant renewal of all things in the body by chyle and animal spirits and then blood. Blood is constantly being purified of worn-out elements and renewed and in a sense regenerated.

If we look even to the lowliest creatures on earth, we see an image of the process of regeneration in the miraculous transformation of silkworms and of many other grubs and caterpillars into nymphs and butterflies and of other creatures that in time are embellished with wings.

To these we might add a lighter example: the desire of some songbirds to splash in the water in order to wash and cleanse themselves before returning to their singing.

In brief, the whole world on every level of existence is full of symbols and emblems of regeneration. (TCR 687)

## **7. LOVE TOWARD THE NEIGHBOUR, CHARITY AND USE**

Charity is an inward affection, consisting in a desire which springs from a person's heart to do good to the neighbour, which is the delight of his life. And that desire involves no thought of reward. (AC 8033)

People governed by the genuine affection identified with charity and faith believe that none of their desire for good and none of their understanding of truth originates in themselves, but that a will which desires good and an understanding which sees truth come from the Lord. (AC 8035)

People in the church should be very aware of the different categories of the neighbour. The category to which particular neighbours belong depends on which type of goodness they have devoted their lives to. And since every type of goodness comes from the Lord, in the highest sense and to the utmost degree the Lord himself is our neighbour, and is the source [of what makes others our neighbours]. It therefore follows that people are neighbours to us to the extent that they have the Lord in themselves; and since no two people are receptive to the Lord (that is, the goodness that comes from him) in the same way, no two people are our neighbour in the same way. With respect to the particular good they do, all the people in the heavens and all good people on earth are different. It never happens that exactly the same goodness is found in any two individuals. The goodness needs to vary so that each kind of goodness can persist independently.

However, none of us can know all these distinctions and all the consequent distinct kinds of neighbour that arise in accordance with the different ways the Lord is received - that is, the way the goodness from him is received. Not even angels can know this except in a general way, by genus and species. Therefore the Lord requires no more of people in the church than that we live by what we know.

Since the sort of goodness in every individual is different, it follows that the nature of each person's goodness determines both the level at which and the way in which that individual is "a neighbor." We can see that this is the case from the Lord's parable about a man who fell among thieves, whom both a priest and a Levite passed by, leaving him half dead, while a Samaritan, after he had bound up his wounds and poured in oil and wine, lifted him onto his own beast and brought him to an inn and made arrangements for his care. The Samaritan is called "a neighbor" because his actions were those of a caring person ([Luke 10:29-37](#)). We can tell from this that the people who are "a neighbour" are the ones whose lives are devoted to doing good. In fact, the oil and the wine that the Samaritan poured into the wounds mean goodness and the truth that it shows us.

We can see from what has been said thus far that in the broadest sense goodness itself is one's neighbor, since people are neighbors according to the nature of the good that they do, which they get from the Lord. Further, since goodness is one's neighbour, love too is one's neighbor, because everything good that we do

is inspired by love. This means that any individual is a neighbor according to the nature of her or his love, which comes from the Lord.

The fact that love is what makes someone a neighbour and that we fulfill the role of a neighbour depending on the nature of our love becomes clear in the case of people whose lives are devoted to loving themselves. Such people recognize as neighbours those who love them the most - that is, those who are most closely connected to them. These they embrace, these they kiss, these they benefit, and these they call family. In fact, because [people devoted to self-love] are evil, they consider the types of people just mentioned to be their neighbours more than others are; only if others show them love do they consider them too to be their neighbours. They accept someone else as their neighbour, then, to the extent that they receive love from that person and depending on the kind and amount of love they receive. People like this start with themselves to determine who their neighbour is because the determining and deciding factor is whatever one loves.

People who do not love themselves above all, though (and this is true of all who are in the Lord's kingdom), start in determining who their neighbour is with the One whom we should love above all - that is, with the Lord - and they consider an individual to be their neighbour depending on the love that individual has for and from the Lord. (HD 86 - 89)

Not only is an individual person one's neighbour but also a group of people; for the community whether small or large is one's neighbour, as is one's country, the Church, the Lord's kingdom, and above all others the Lord. All these are meant by the neighbour whom one should be moved by charity to benefit. They are also ascending degrees of the neighbour, for a community composed of a group of people is the neighbour in a higher degree than an individual person, one's country in a still higher degree than the community, the Church in a still higher degree than this, and the Lord's kingdom in a still higher degree than that. But the Lord is the neighbour in the highest degree. These ascending degrees are like a flight of stairs which have the Lord at the top.

The community is the neighbour over the individual person because it consists of a group of people; therefore the same charity ought to be exercised towards it as towards the individual person, that is to say, in keeping with the kind of good that resides there. Thus it should be exercised towards a community of upright people in a way altogether different from that in which it should be towards a community of people who are not upright.

One's country is the neighbour over the community because it is like a parent, for being the place where the person is born, it nurtures him and protects him from all harm. One ought out of love for one's country to do good to it according to its needs, which have regard primarily to its sustenance, its public life and its spiritual life. Anyone who loves his country and out of goodwill does good to it will in the next life love the Lord's kingdom, for there the Lord's kingdom becomes his country. And anyone who loves the Lord's kingdom loves the Lord since the Lord is the All in all of His kingdom, for strictly speaking the Lord's kingdom is the goodness and truth which reside with the inhabitants of that kingdom, and which they receive from the Lord.

The Church is the neighbour over one's country, for one who cares for the Church does so by caring for the souls and the eternal life of people living in his country; the Church is cared for when a person is led by him to good. If he does it out of charity he loves the neighbour since he desires and intends that heaven and the happiness of the life that lasts forever should be the other's. Good can be inculcated in another by any citizen, but truth only by those who are ministers that teach it. If others teach it, heresies arise, and the Church becomes confused and is torn apart. Charity is exercised when a truth that the Church possesses is used to lead the neighbour to good; and if in the Church something is said to be true and yet it leads away from good, it should not be repeated, for it is not the truth. Everyone must first obtain truth from the teachings of the Church, then after that from the Word of the Lord; and this must serve him as the truth composing his faith.

The Lord's kingdom is the neighbour in a higher degree than the Church in which anyone is born, for the Lord's kingdom is made up of all those who are governed by good both on earth and in heaven. This means that the Lord's kingdom consists in good, which includes all kinds of good in their entirety. When this good is loved so are individual persons who are governed by good.

Such are the degrees of the neighbour, and it is in accordance with them that charity ought to increase in scale. But these degrees are those of consecutive order, in which a prior or higher degree always takes precedence over a posterior or lower one; and since the Lord occupies the highest degree and one should look to him in each specific degree as the End to which they all rise, He must be loved above all people and all things. (AC 6819 - 6824)

Use is the fulfilling of one's duty and doing one's work, rightly, faithfully, honestly and justly. The proper meaning of "goods of charity" in the Word, also called "works" and "fruits," and here called "uses" is known to many in only a vague way. On the basis of the literal sense of the Word, uses are believed to consist in "giving to the poor," "assisting those in need," "doing kindness to widows and orphans," and things of that kind. These uses, however, are not what is meant in the Word by "fruits," "works" and the "goods of charity". What is meant is carrying out one's duty, whether in the public service, business or other employment rightly, faithfully, honestly and justly. When this is being done, then the welfare of the "general body of people, or mankind" is being cared for, and thus, the welfare of one's country too, as well as societies larger or smaller, and one's fellow-citizen, companion and brother.

These are the neighbour in its broad and narrow senses. For every one, whether priest, ruler or official, merchant, or workman, is then doing uses every day - the priest by his preaching, the ruler and official by their administering, the merchant by his trading and the workman by his labour. Take, for example, a judge who passes judgment rightly, faithfully, honestly and justly. He is performing a use to the neighbour every time he passes judgment. Similarly, a minister, every time he teaches, and so with all others.

That such uses are meant by "goods of charity" and "works" is clear from the Lord's government in the heavens. There, just as in the world, everyone must be in some function and service, that is, in some administration or work; and proportionate to the faithfulness, honesty and justice they exercise in it, are the distinction, splendour and happiness they enjoy. Sluggards and idlers are not admitted into heaven, but are cast out, either into hell or into a desert place, where they live in misery and want of everything.

Such are the things that in the heavens are called goods of charity, works and uses. Furthermore, everyone who is faithful, honest and just in his occupation or employment in the world, is also faithful, honest and just after departing from the world and is welcomed in heaven by angels; moreover, everyone's heavenly joy is in accordance with the quality of his faithfulness, honesty and justice. The reason for this is that the mind, when devoted to its occupation or employment from a love of use, is kept knit together, and so, kept in spiritual delight, which is a delight in faithfulness, honesty and justice, and is withheld from delight in fraud and dishonesty, as well as from delight in mere gossiping and feasting, which is, moreover, delight in idleness which, in turn is the devil's couch. Everyone can see that the Lord cannot dwell in a love for these latter things, whereas He can dwell in a love for the former.

There are general uses which are also uses of charity. The proper and genuine uses of charity are those connected with one's function and administration, as has been shown. When anyone carries these out from spiritual faithfulness and honesty (and all do this who love their uses because they are uses, and who believe that all good is from the Lord), then their uses become goods of charity in which love to the Lord has existence, or with which that love is conjoined.

But in addition, there are other general uses, namely faithfully loving one's married partner, duly bringing up one's children, managing one's domestic affairs with prudence and dealing equitably with those in our service. These become works of charity when they are done from a love of use, and in respect of a married partner, when they are done from mutual and chaste love. These are uses of charity in connection with the household.



There are also other general uses; such as making suitable and due contributions toward the functioning of the Church, which good works become uses of charity in so far as the Church is loved as neighbour in a higher degree. Among general uses too, is the expenditure of money and labour in the building and maintaining of orphanages, hospitable lodges, educational establishments and other institutions of the kind, but not all of these are obligatory. (D of Uses 133 - 135)

Many people believe that love for their neighbor is giving to the poor, providing means to the needy and doing good to just anyone. In fact, true caring is acting prudently and with the intent that some good will come of it. If we provide resources to evildoers who are poor or needy, we are doing harm to our neighbors through the resources we provide, because those resources will empower the evildoers to do more evil and supply them with greater means of harming others. The situation is the opposite when we provide resources to good people. (HD 100)

(See also DOCTRINE OF CHARITY, which explains many other aspects of charity and how it should be applied, both to communities and individuals. It also shows the need for relaxation and recreation of body and mind, after performing one's work or employment. This gives a balanced life and outlook without which we become dull and listless, and this, in turn, effects the quality of our work or use. The comparison is made of a bent bow, which, unless it is unbent after use, loses its power. It then goes on to explain how clean and healthy diversions, recreations and delights can all be forms of charity. All of which shows that we don't have to be miserable kill-joys to live a Christian life and get to heaven. Incidentally, in TCR. 745 an interesting light is thrown on the recreations of the angels. These include beautiful musical performances (both instrumental and vocal) various sports and feats of strength, foot races, games played with rackets and balls, as well as many other pastimes. Also dramatic performances on stages, depicting the various graces and virtues of the moral life. An excellent and detailed study of the meaning of charity and love is also given in TCR. Chapter 7, under the heading of "Charity, or Love Toward the Neighbour and Good Works".)

## **8. THE GREAT ERROR OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE**

Believing that the Lord's suffering on the cross was redemption itself is a fundamental error on the part of the church. That error, along with the error about three divine Persons from eternity, has ruined the whole church to the point that there is nothing spiritual left in it anymore. There is no topic that fills more books by orthodox theologians today, that is more intensely taught and aired in lecture halls, or that is more frequently preached and pronounced from the pulpit than the following: God the Father was angry at the human race, so he not only moved us all away from himself but locked us into a universal damnation and cut off communication with us. Nevertheless, because he is gracious, he either convinced or goaded his Son to come down to take a limited damnation on himself and ritually purge the Father's anger. This was the only way the Father could look on the human race with any favour. So this was in fact done by the Son. For example, in taking on our damnation, the Son let the Jews whip him, spit in his face, and then crucify him like someone accursed of God ([Deuteronomy 21:23](#)). After that happened the Father was appeased, and out of love for his Son he retracted the damnation, but only from those for whom the Son would intercede. Therefore the Son became a Mediator to the Father for all time.

These ideas and others like them, resound in churches today and reverberate off the walls like an echo from a forest, filling the ears of all who are there. Surely though, everyone with decent reasoning enlightened by the Word can see that God is compassion and mercy itself. He is absolute love and absolute goodness - these qualities are his essence. It is a contradiction to say that compassion itself or absolute goodness could look at the human race with anger and lock us all into damnation and still keep its divine essence. Attitudes and actions of that kind belong to a wicked person, not a virtuous one. They belong to a spirit from hell, not an angel of heaven. It is horrendous to attribute them to God.

If you investigate what caused these ideas, you find this: People have taken the suffering on the cross to be redemption itself. The ideas above have flowed from this idea the way one falsity flows from another in an unbroken chain. All you get from a vinegar bottle is vinegar. All you get from an insane mind is insanity.

Any inference leads to a series of related propositions. These are latent within the original inference and come forth from it, one after the other. This idea, that the suffering on the cross was redemption, has the capacity to yield more and more ideas that are offensive and disgraceful to God, until Isaiah's prophecy comes to pass:

The priest and the prophet have gone astray because of beer; they stagger in their judgment. All the tables are full of the vomit they cast forth. ([Isaiah 28:7-8](#)) (TCR 132)

The exposure of twelve fallacies:-

It is a fallacy -

- (1) that faith which is merely a matter of thought, saves, - when in reality a man is such as is the quality of his life.
- (2) that faith which is merely a matter of thought is spiritual, - when the truth is that, to love the Lord above all things and the neighbour as oneself, is what is really spiritual; and to love is to will and to do.
- (3) that faith is also given instantaneously, - when the truth is that a man must be purified from evils and from the falsities therefrom, and be regenerated by the Lord (which is a process of long continuance) and in proportion only as he is purified and regenerated does he receive spiritual faith.
- (4) that man can receive faith and be saved at the hour of death, whatever his life has been, - when the truth is that the life of a man remains and he is judged according to his deeds and works.
- (5) that faith is communicated to children by baptism, - when the truth is that faith must be procured by the knowledge of truth and good and by a life according to that knowledge.
- (6) that by faith alone the church exists in man, - when the truth is that it is by the faith of charity that the church exists in him; and charity pertains to the life and not to faith separated from the life.
- (7) that man is justified by faith alone, and that when he is justified, the Lord's merit is thereby imputed to him, and that afterwards nothing can condemn him, - when the truth is that faith without the life of faith, which is charity, is sometimes said to be living without a soul, but which in itself is dead; for charity is the soul of faith, because it is the life thereof. Therefore a man is not justified by a dead faith, much less is the Lord's merit thereby imputed and salvation effected; and where there is no salvation there is condemnation.
- (8) that love and charity are implanted in faith alone, - when the truth is that love and charity are to will and do; for what a man loves, this he not only thinks, but also wills and does.
- (9) that where doing is spoken of in the Word and where deeds and works are mentioned, is meant thereby to have faith, because these are implanted in faith, - when the truth is that they are distinct like thought and will; for a man can think many things which he does not will, whereas what he wills, this he thinks when left to himself and to will is to do. The will also and thought therefrom is the real man, and not the thought separate from the will. Deeds and works belong to the will and thence to the thought; but faith alone belongs to the thought, separate from deeds and works which belong to the will.
- (10) that faith must be separated from good works because a man cannot do good of himself, and if he does good that he places merit therein, - when the truth is that man does not do good from himself, but from the Lord, when he does it from the Word, because the Lord is in the Word and also is the Word; and a man does not do good of himself when he does it "as of himself," and yet does it from the Lord, because from the Word. Also because he believes that the good which he does is from the Lord, he cannot place merit in acts.

(11) that the understanding must be held captive under obedience to faith, and that faith seen in the understanding is not spiritual faith, - when the truth is that it is the understanding which is enlightened in the things of faith when the Word is read. The understanding shut out from enlightenment does not know whether a thing be true or false; consequently faith in such a case does not become a man's own, but the faith of another in him; and this is a mere historical faith, which can see falsities as truths and truths as falsities. Hence comes the faith (so called) characterising heresies of all kinds.

(12) that the confidence which is called saving faith, conceived without understanding, is spiritual confidence, - when the truth is that confidence without understanding is the result of persuasion by another, or of confirmation by passages scattered here and there in the Word, which are collected together, and by reasonings from the natural man applied to a false principle. Such confidence is a blind faith, which because it does not consider whether what it conceives be true or false, is merely natural. Moreover, all truth desires to be seen because it is of the light of heaven; but the truth which is not seen may be falsified by various means; and truth falsified is falsity.

Such are the fallacies connected merely with faith separate from good works. There are still various others which have reference not only to faith, but also to good works, charity and the neighbour; and especially to their conjunctions with faith, which are artfully devised by the learned. (AE. 781:5-10)

It is supposed that faith consists in believing that the Lord suffered on the cross for our sins and thereby redeemed us from hell and that a faith in these things is what principally justifies and saves. It is also supposed that faith consists in believing that God is triune (three); also in believing those things that are in the Word, believing in eternal life, a resurrection on the day of the Last Judgment and other things which the church teaches. Now, because they separate faith from the life of charity (which is to do good works) most people at this day suppose that to know these things and to speak of them, is the faith which saves. They therefore pay no attention to willing and doing them; nor do they even know they ought to will and do them. Neither does the church teach this, because the doctrine of the church is that of faith alone and not a doctrine of life. The doctrine of life they call moral theology which they regard as of little account, because they believe that the virtues of a moral life, which in themselves are good works, contribute nothing to salvation. (AE 789:2)

(See also AE. 789:3-9 which explains the following:-

It is possible for a man to know, think speak and even understand many things that he neither wills nor does, because he does not love. On the other hand whatever a man wills and does from love, he also thinks and speaks of from faith, if not before the world, yet when left to himself. Love produces faith as good produces truth, consequently faith alone does not produce the good of love, as a tree does fruit. To know, think and speak from the memory only, and not from the life, does not constitute faith).

Those who confirm themselves in doctrine and in life, that faith alone justifies and saves without good works, close heaven against themselves by making excuse for evil works. And they do this by saying and believing that evils are not seen by God; or that they are remitted in the case of those who have faith, or (according to some) with those who have the confidence of faith and (according to others) with those who are justified by faith. Many of them, therefore, think insanelly in this way: 'Of what importance is it to do good when good does not save me, and what does it matter if I do evils, when evils do not condemn me? I am in grace because I have faith.' And so they live to themselves and the world, neither abstaining from evil because it is evil, nor doing good because it is good. If they do abstain from evil, it is from fear of the civil law and loss of reputation, and not from any fear of the Divine Law and the loss of eternal life. If they do good it is from the love of reward, and not from the love of God; when yet according to the quality of the life, such is the man. For the Lord says (in Matt 7:16): "*Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?*"

Such a man does not know the difference between a good and an evil life. If he lives as a citizen of the world, he believes that he lives a good life, although if he does not live such a life as a citizen of heaven, it

is an evil life. Neither does he distinguish one from the other, because they both appear alike in externals. The reason why he cannot distinguish them is, that good works, which make the life, are regarded as of no account. It now follows, therefore, that those who confirm themselves in doctrine and life, that faith alone without good works justifies and saves, shut heaven entirely against themselves. (AE 797:5)

It is true that God works good in a man, and also for the most part while man is ignorant thereof; but still God gives man the power to perceive those things that are necessary to salvation. For God works in order that a man may think and speak the things which belong to faith, and may will and do those things which pertain to love. When a man thinks, speaks, wills and acts in this way, he does so "as of himself," for God operates upon those things in a man that are from Himself in the man - into the truths of faith and the good of love. Therefore, when God causes the former to exist in the understanding and the latter in the will, they appear to a man as his own, as it were, and as his own he brings them forth.

If man were not conscious of thinking truths and doing good, lest they might be regarded as his own good and truths, he would be like either an animal or a stock, and so would not be able to think and will anything of God or from God; consequently he could not be conjoined with God by faith and love and live forever. The difference between animals and men is that animals cannot think and speak truths and will and do good from God, but that man can. Thus they can believe the things they think and love the things they will, and this "as if from themselves." Were this not so, the Divine influx and operation would pass through them and would not be received; for a man would be like a vessel without a bottom which retains no water. Man's thought is the receptacle of truth, and the will is the receptacle of good and there can be no reception unless a man is conscious of it.

Because all works, both those that are done from God, as well as those that are not done from Him, can be performed only by man, as if it were by himself, it is evident why works, deeds working and doing, are so frequently mentioned in the Word. These things would not have been mentioned and commanded at all, if they were done by God without a man being aware of it, according to the interior meaning of the doctrine of those who separate faith from good works. (AE 802:5)

(See also AE. 803:2-5 which shows how a man may be enlightened so as to learn the truths which must constitute his faith and live a life of love and good. Also, why abstaining from evils for any other reason than that they are against the Word, does not purify the internal man.)

All the apostles preached faith, specifically a faith in the Lord God our Savior Jesus Christ. What would be the point of all this if we were supposed to stand waiting for something to flow in, with our arms hanging down as if we were statues with movable limbs? In that case our limbs, unable to move themselves into a position to receive faith, might be moved from within toward something that was not faith.

Yet this is what is taught by the modern day orthodoxy in the Christian world that separated from the Catholics:

As far as goodness is concerned, we are so totally corrupt and dead that after the fall but before regeneration not even a spark of spiritual force remains extant in our nature that would enable us to prepare ourselves for the grace of God, or to take it if it were offered, or to be open to his grace on our own and by ourselves, or in spiritual matters to have our own ability to understand, believe, embrace, think, will, start, finish, act, operate, co-operate or adapt and accommodate ourselves to grace, or to have the power for a complete conversion or half a conversion or the least part of a conversion on our own. When it comes to spiritual things related to the salvation of our soul, we are like the statue of salt that Lot's wife became; we are like a log or a stone devoid of life, which lacks the benefit of eyes, or a mouth, or any senses. Nevertheless we have the ability to move and control our external limbs in order to go to public gatherings and hear the Word and the Gospel.

These statements appear in the book put out by the Lutheran church called the Formula of Concord. When priests are inaugurated they swear on this book and therefore swear to this faith. Calvinists have a similar faith.

Anyone with reason and religion would hiss at these absurd and ridiculous statements. People would say to themselves, "If this were the case, what would be the point of the Word? What would be the point of religion? What would be the point of the priesthood? What would be the point of preaching? They would be pointless - they would be sounds that mean nothing. "

Take some non-Christians who have good judgment whom you are hoping to convert and tell them that this is Christianity's approach to conversion and faith. Surely they will think of Christianity as a container with nothing inside it. If you take away all apparent human autonomy, how could they think of Christianity as anything else? (TCR 356)

(See also TCR 367 which explains how a man in faith alone, without charity is like light separated from heat and how such a man becomes like the earth in winter when everything dies. This state is also compared to the separation of flesh and blood).

Goodwill and faith are transient and exist only in our minds unless, when an opportunity occurs, they culminate in actions and become embodied in them. We have both a head and a body. They are joined by the neck. The mind that wills and thinks is found in our head, and the power that acts and carries out is found in our body. If therefore we had only benevolence, or thoughts based on goodwill, but we did not do anything good or produce anything useful as a result, we would be like a head by itself or a mind by itself, which could not continue to exist on its own without a body. Surely everyone can see from this that goodwill and faith are not goodwill and faith when they are only in our head and our mind but not in our body. (TCR 375)

Goodwill and faith are not goodwill and faith before they exist in actions. If they exist only up in the sky or in the mind above actions, they are like images of a tabernacle or a church in the air that are just strange aerial phenomena that spontaneously disappear. They are like paintings on paper that bookworms are chewing through. They are like our living on a roof with no bed rather than in a house.

From all this you can see that goodwill and faith are transient entities when they are merely mental - unless, when there is an opportunity for us to do them, they culminate in actions and become embodied in them. (TCR 376)

(See also TCR 377, which shows that neither charity nor faith alone can produce good works, any more than a husband alone, or a wife alone can produce offspring; there must be the combination of charity and faith together).

All who come from the earth into the spiritual world are known as to their quality, from their ability or inability to resist evils "as if from themselves." Those who can do so are saved, but not those who cannot. The reason is that man cannot resist evils of himself, but from the Lord; for it is the Lord Who resists evils with man, causing him to feel and perceive as if he did this from himself. Those therefore, who in the world acknowledged the Lord, confessing that all good and truth are from Him, and nothing from man, and who thus believe that they have power against evils from the Lord, and not from themselves, resist evils as if from themselves. But those who made no such acknowledgment in the world, cannot resist evils "as from themselves," for they are in evils, and in the delight of them from their love; and to resist the delight of their love is to resist themselves, their own nature and their own life. (AE 1165)

*"Thou are neither hot nor cold."* (Rev 3:15). That this signifies that the life is between heaven and hell, because without charity, is evident from the signification of cold, as being not in spiritual but infernal love, and from the signification of hot as denoting to be in spiritual love. It is therefore evident that by being neither cold nor hot is signified to be in neither infernal nor spiritual love, but between both; and he who is between both is between hell and heaven.

That such are those who are in faith alone, or in faith separated from charity, has not hitherto been known; but that it is so is clear from each of the things written by the angel of this church (Laodicea); also from this consideration, that those who are in faith separated from charity live to themselves, to the world and to a natural disposition, and those who so live are in infernal love. Yet by reading the Word and by having

discourses therefrom, by receiving the Holy Supper and by many things which they retain in the memory from the Word, they look toward heaven; but still because they have not any heat or spiritual love, since they do not live according to the Word, therefore they are neither hot nor cold. Thus too they divide the mind into two parts; namely by means of the things of the Word they turn themselves to heaven, and by means of the things of life they turn themselves to hell, so that they halt between both.

When those who are of such a character come into another life, they desire to go to heaven, saying that they have faith and have read the Word, heard sermons and frequented the Holy Supper, and that by these things they expect to be saved. But when their life is examined, it is seen to be entirely infernal; that is, that they made no account of enmity, hatred, revenge, craftiness and deceitful stratagems; that when they did what was right, sincere and just, it was only in external form, for the sake of appearing such to the world, while inwardly, or in their spirit, they thought other things and many opposite things, believing that thoughts and intentions are of no account providing they do not openly appear before the world. This is why the spirit of such when loosened from the earthly body, is of such quality.

These are they who are meant by the Words of the Lord in Matthew 7:22, 23:- *"Many will say to me in the day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? But then I will say unto them: I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

And also by these words in Luke 13:25-27:- *"When ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door saying: Lord, Lord, open unto us, He shall answer and say unto you: I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say: I tell you I know you not whence ye are. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."* (AE 231)

With those who are in the doctrine of faith alone, there is indeed no faith, by which is meant no spiritual faith, or no faith of the church; yet such possess natural faith, which must also be called persuasive faith. They believe that the Word is Divine and they believe in eternal life, also in the remission of sins and many other things; but such faith with those who are without charity is a persuasive faith, which does not differ from a faith in things unknown heard from others in the world and believed, although neither seen nor understood, because they are said by someone thought to be worthy of credit; thus, it is only the faith of another in themselves and not their own. And this faith which is not made by their own sight and understanding is not unlike the belief of one born blind about colours and objects of sight in the world, who has also a dullness of touch, concerning which things he has strange ideas, which no one knows but himself.

This faith is called historical and is by no means a spiritual faith, such as the faith of the church ought to be. Spiritual faith, or the faith of the church, is entirely from charity. Also, things spiritual which are believed, appear in light to those who are in charity. This I declare from experience; for everyone who has lived in charity during his abode in the world, sees in the other life, his own truth which he believes, whereas they who have been in faith alone, see nothing at all.

Nevertheless, faith merely historical, by means of thought of God, heaven and eternal life, has some degree of conjunction with heaven, but only by obscure thought and not by the affection of charity, which it does not have; therefore by the affection which such persons have, which is the affection of the love of self and the world, they are conjoined to hell. Hence it is evident that they are between heaven and hell, because they look with their eyes to heaven and in their heart to hell. To do this is to profane, and the lot of profaners in the other life is the worst of all. To profane is to believe in God, the Word, eternal life and many other things taught in the sense of the letter of the Word, and yet to live contrary to them. (AE 232)

The doctrine of the churches in the Christian world at this day insists that faith alone saves and that the life of love is of no account. Also that when a man receives faith he is justified, and that when he is thus justified, no evil can afterwards be imputed to him; consequently, that every man is saved, even a wicked one, if only he has faith, although it may be in the last hour of his life. Those, therefore, who think and live

from such doctrine omit good works, because they do not believe that good works affect man, or are efficacious to salvation. They also have no concern about the evils of their thought and will, whether those evils consist in contempt of others in comparison with themselves, or whether they consist in enmity, hatred, revenge, craft, deceit and other similar evils. This is because they believe that such things are not imputed to those who are justified by faith. They say in their hearts that they are not under the yoke of the law, because the Lord has fulfilled the law for them, nor under the curse, because the Lord took it upon Himself.

This then is why those who think, live and believe from the doctrine of faith alone and justification thereby, have no regard to God in their lives, but only to self and the world; and they who look only to self and the world in the course of their life conjoin themselves to the hells, for all those who are in the hells make no account of either good or evil. In a word, for men to live from that doctrine is to confirm themselves in the life that it is of no consequence to think, to will or to do good, because salvation is not from that source. Also, that it is of no consequence to will, and so far as the fear of the law does not restrain, to do evil, because damnation is not from that source, providing they only have confidence and trust, which is called saving faith.

From these considerations it is evident that by the lukewarm are meant those who say in their heart: "To what purpose is it if I think, will and do good, for there is no salvation by such means? It is sufficient that I have faith. And also what does it matter if I think, will and do evil, since there is no damnation in consequence?" Thus they give rein to all their thoughts and intentions, and so to their own spirit; for it is the spirit which thinks and intends; and they become altogether according thereto. It must be known that there are very few who thus live from doctrine, although it is believed by the preachers that all who hear their sermons are under their influence; for it is from the Divine Providence of the Lord that there are but very few such. The reason for this is that the lot of the lukewarm is not unlike that of profaners, and the lot of profaners is, that after their life in the world, all that they have known from the Word is taken away from them and they are afterwards left to the thought and love of their own spirit. And when the thought which they had from the Word is taken away, they become of all others the most stupid. They also appear in the light of heaven like burnt skeletons covered over with some skin. (AE 233)

## **9. THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD**

The whole natural world is responsive to the spiritual world - the natural world not just in general, but in detail. So whatever arises in the natural world out of the spiritual one is called "something that corresponds." It needs to be realized that the natural world arises from and is sustained in being by the spiritual world, exactly the way an effect relates to its efficient cause.

By "the natural world," I mean all that extended reality that is under our sun and that receives its light and warmth from it. All the things that are sustained in being from that source belong to that world. The spiritual world, in contrast, is heaven and to that world belong all the things that are in the heavens.

Since a human being is a heaven and a world in least form in the image of the greatest there is a spiritual world and a natural world within each of us. The deeper elements, which belong to our minds and relate to our intelligence and volition, constitute our spiritual world, while the outer elements, which belong to our bodies and relate to our senses and actions, constitute our natural world. Anything that occurs in our natural world (that is, in our bodies and their senses and actions) because of our spiritual world (that is, because of our minds and their intelligence and volition) is called something that corresponds. (HH 89,90)

In a word, absolutely everything in nature, from the smallest to the greatest, is a correspondence. The reason correspondences occur is that the natural world, including everything in it, arises and is sustained from the spiritual world, and both worlds come from the Divine. We say that it also is sustained because everything is sustained from that from which it arose, enduring being in fact a perpetual arising; and since nothing can endure independently, but needs something prior, it therefore needs a First, and if it were separated from that First, it would utterly perish and disappear.

Everything is a correspondent that arises and endures in nature according to the divine design. What makes the divine design is the divine good that emanates from the Lord. It begins from him, emanates from him through the heavens in sequence into the world, and there comes to a close in things most remote. Things there that are in accord with the design are correspondences. The things that are in accord with the design are everything that is good and is perfected for some use, for everything good is good according to its usefulness. Its form reflects what is true because the true is the form of the good. This is why everything in the whole world and in the world of nature that is in the divine design goes back to what is good and what is true. (HH 106,107)

(See also HH 87-115, which explain the significance of the correspondence of all things in the heavens, with all things on earth, not only regarding man, but also in connection with the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms).

When we arrive in the other life, we are first taken up by angels who do everything for us and also tell us about the Lord, heaven and angelic life and offer us lessons in what is good and true. However, if we as spirits are the kind of people who have been familiar with things like this in the world but have denied or rejected them at heart, then after some conversation we want to get away from them and try to leave. When the angels notice this, they leave us. After spending some time with various other people, we eventually take up with people who are devoted to similar evils. When this happens, we are turning away from the Lord and turning our faces toward the hell we were united to in the world, where people live who are engaged in a similar love of evil.

We can see from this that the Lord is leading every spirit toward himself through angels and through an inflow from heaven, but that spirits who are absorbed in evil resist strenuously and virtually tear themselves away from the Lord. They are drawn by their evil - by hell, that is - as though it were a rope; and because they are drawn and want to follow because of their love of evil, it follows that they freely cast themselves into hell. (HH 548)

The reason spirits who are in touch with hell are attached to us as well is that we are born into all kinds of evil, so that our first life is made up of nothing else. Unless spirits of the same kind were associated with us, then, we could not live or be led out of our evils and reformed. So we are kept in our own life by evil spirits and restrained from it by good spirits. Through the two kinds, we are kept in a balance; and since we are in a balance we enjoy an appropriate measure of freedom and can be led out of our evils and turned toward good. This good can be sown in us as well, which could never happen except in our freedom; and the freedom could not be granted us unless spirits from hell were acting on the one side and spirits from heaven on the other, with us in the middle. (HH 293)

(See also HH 589-603, where it is shown that there is a perpetual equilibrium between heaven and hell and how this is perfectly maintained by the Lord. It is then explained how the world of spirits is in this equilibrium, because every man after death enters first into the world of spirits and is kept there in the same state as he was in the world. By this means the character of everyone is disclosed, as they then remain in the same freedom they had in the world).

## **10. THE WORLD OF SPIRITS**

The world of spirits is neither heaven nor hell but a place or state between the two. It is where we first arrive after death, being in due time either raised into heaven or cast into hell from it depending on our life in this world. (HH 421)

The world of spirits is a place halfway between heaven and hell, and it is also our own halfway state after death. I (Emanuel Swedenborg) have been shown that it is a halfway place by seeing that the hells were underneath it and the heavens above it, and that it is a halfway state by learning that as long as we are in it, we are not yet in either heaven or hell.



A state of heaven for us is the union of what is good and true within us, and a state of hell is a union of what is evil and false within us. When the good in a spirit-person is united to the true, then that individual arrives in heaven, because as already stated that union is heaven within us. On the other hand, when the evil is united to the false within us, then we arrive in hell, because that union is hell within us. The process of union takes place in the world of spirits because then we are in a halfway state. It amounts to the same thing whether you say the union of intellect and will or the union of the true and the good. (HH 422)

There is a vast number of people in the world of spirits, because that is where everyone is first gathered, where everyone is examined and prepared. There is no fixed limit to our stay there. Some people barely enter it and are promptly either taken up into heaven or cast down into hell. Some stay there for a few weeks, some for a number of years, though not more than thirty. The variations in length of stay occur because of the correspondence or lack of correspondence between our deeper and our more outward natures.

After we die, just as soon as we arrive in the world of spirits, we are carefully sorted out by the Lord. Evil people are immediately connected with the hellish community their ruling love had affiliated them with in the world, and good people are immediately connected with the heavenly community their love and thoughtfulness and faith had affiliated them with in the world.

Even though we are sorted out in this way, we are still together in that world and can talk to anyone when we want to, to friends and acquaintances from our physical life, especially husbands and wives, and also brothers and sisters. I have seen a father talking with his six sons and recognizing them. I have seen many other people with their relatives and friends. However, since they were of different character because of their life in the world, they parted company after a little while.

However, people who are coming into heaven from the world of spirits and people who are coming into hell do not see each other any more. They do not even recognize each other unless they are of like character because of a likeness in love. The reason they see each other in the world of spirits but not in heaven or hell is that while they are in the world of spirits they are brought into states like the ones they were in during their physical lives, one after another. After a while, though, they settle into a constant state that accords with their ruling love. In this state, mutual recognition comes only from similarity of love, for likeness unites and difference separates. (HH 426-427)

(See also HH 422-431) for a further description of the world of spirits and how the gates and doors of heavenly societies are visible only to those who are prepared for heaven, and those of hellish societies, only to those who are prepared for hell).

After this separation, our spirit stays in the body briefly, but not after the complete stoppage of the heart, which varies depending on the cause of death. In some cases the motion of the heart continues for quite a while, and in others it does not. The moment it does stop, we are awakened, but this is done by the Lord alone. "Being awakened" means having our spirit led out of our body and into the spiritual world, which is commonly called "resurrection." (HH 447)

(See also HH 445-460 for a detailed account of the resuscitation of man in the world of spirits after death, where the form of his spirit is the human form).

Repeated experience has witnessed to me that when we move from the natural world into the spiritual, which happens when we die, we take with us everything that pertains to our character except our earthly body. In fact, when we enter the spiritual world or our life after death, we are in a body as we were in this world. There seems to be no difference, since we do not feel or see any difference. This body is spiritual, though, so it has been separated or purified from earthly matter. Further, when anything spiritual touches and sees something spiritual, it is just like something natural touching and seeing something natural. So when we have become a spirit, we have no sense that we are not in the body we inhabited in the world, and therefore do not realize that we have died.

As "spirit-people," we enjoy every outer and inner sense we enjoyed in the world. We see the way we used to, we hear and talk the way we used to; we smell and taste and feel things when we touch them the way we used to; we want, wish, crave, think, ponder, are moved, love and intend the way we used to. Studious types still read and write as before. In a word, when we move from the one life into the other, or from the one world into the other, it is like moving from one [physical] place to another; and we take with us everything we owned as persons to the point that it would be unfair to say that we have lost anything of our own after death, which is only a death of the earthly body.

We even take with us our natural memory, since we retain everything we have heard, seen, read, learned or thought in the world from earliest infancy to the very end of life. However, since the natural objects that reside in our memory cannot be reproduced in a spiritual world, they become dormant the way they do when we are not thinking about them. Even so, they can be reproduced when it so pleases the Lord. I will have more to say soon, though, about this memory and its condition after death.

Sense-centred people are quite incapable of believing that our state after death is like this because they do not grasp it. Sense-centred people can think only on the natural level, even about spiritual matters. This means that anything they do not sense - that is, see with their physical eyes and touch with their hands - they say does not exist, as we read of Thomas in [John 20:25, 27, 29](#). The quality of sense-centred people has been described above in [267](#), and in notes there. (H & H 461)

(See also HH 462-469 where the great difference is shown between man's life in the spiritual world with that of the natural world. In the spiritual world there can be no deception or hypocrisy, but everyone is known for what he really is.)

## **11. HEAVEN AND HELL**

All the spirits who are in the world of spirits are in communication with heaven or with hell, the evil ones with hell and the good ones with heaven. Heaven is differentiated into communities, and so is hell. Every spirit is a member of some community, is sustained by an inflow from it, and therefore acts in harmony with it. This is why we are united with heaven or hell just as we are united with spirits. We are actually united to some community there, the community we belong to in respect to our affection or our love; for all heaven's communities are differentiated according to their affections for what is good and true and all hell's communities according to their affections for what is evil and false. (HH 294)

(For a description of the three heavens and the numerous societies contained in them, see HH 29-72)

We can see from this that the good gathers everyone together in the heavens, and that angels are differentiated by what good they do. Still, it is not the angels who gather themselves, but the Lord, the source of all that is good. He leads them, unites them, differentiates them and keeps them in freedom to the extent that they are engaged in what is good. So he keeps every individual in the life of his or her own love, faith, intelligence and wisdom - and therefore in happiness. (HH 45)

Further, people of similar quality all recognize each other there just the way people in this world recognize their neighbors and relatives and friends, even though they may never have seen each other before. This happens because the only relationships and kinships and friendships in the other life are spiritual ones, and are therefore matters of love and faith. (HH 46)

I (Emanuel Swedenborg) spoke with some spirits who thought heaven and heavenly joy consisted in being greatest. But I told them that the greatest in heaven is the one who is least. Whoever wants to be least has the greatest happiness. Since the person with the greatest happiness is the person who is least, it follows that such a person is the greatest. What is being greatest if not being happiest? Happiness is what the powerful seek in power and what the rich seek in riches.

I added that heaven does not consist in the desire to be least for the purpose of being greatest, because then the hope and longing is to be greatest. Heaven is wishing better for others than for ourselves with all

our heart and serving others for the sake of their own happiness, not for any selfish goal but for love. (AC 452)

The angelic state is such that everyone conveys his or her own blessings and happiness to others. In the next life there is a communication and keen perception of all feelings and thoughts, so that in the sharing of joy each communicates to all and all to each, which essentially makes every individual the centre of all the rest. This is how heaven is set up.

As a result, the more people there are to make up the Lord's kingdom, the greater the happiness is; it increases as the numbers increase. This is why heavenly happiness is inexpressible.

Such a sharing of all with one and one with all exists whenever we love another person more than ourselves. But when we wish better to ourselves than to another, self-love takes control. Self-love shares nothing of its own with others except its self-conception, which is actually something extremely filthy. When this conception is perceived by others, we are immediately cut off and rejected. (AC 549)

Each and every part of the human body cooperates with the others in both the overall functioning of the whole and the specific functioning of each part. It is the same in the Lord's kingdom, which is like a single human being and is also named the "universal human;" everyone there works together, whether at close quarters or more at a distance, and by many different means. This takes place in accord with the plan established and constantly reinforced by the Lord alone for the sake of everyone's happiness. (AC 550)

(For a comprehensive study of the significance of the Grand Man and how the heavens are constituted in the form of a Man, see Vols. 4 to 7 of AC, where the concluding section of each chapter is devoted to this remarkable subject).

Those who are in mutual love in heaven, are continually advancing to the springtime of their youth, and to a more and more gladsome and happy spring, the more thousands of years they live, and this with continual increase to eternity, according to the advance and degree of mutual love, charity and faith. Women who have died in old age and enfeebled with years, and who have lived in faith in the Lord, in charity toward the neighbour, and in happy conjugal love with their husbands, after a succession of years come more and more into the bloom of youth and early womanhood, and into a beauty which surpasses all idea of beauty, such as is ever perceptible to the natural sight. This goodness and charity forming and presenting their own likeness, and causing the delight and beauty to shine forth from every feature of the countenance, so that they are the very forms of charity. Some have seen them and been amazed.

The form of charity, as seen to the life in the other world is such that it is charity itself that portrays and is portrayed, and this in such a manner that the whole angel, and especially the face, is as it were, charity, the charity both plainly appearing to the view and being perceived by the mind. When this form is seen, it is unutterable beauty that effects with charity the very inmost life of the beholder's mind. Through the beauty of this form the truths of faith are presented to view in an image, and are even perceived from it. Such forms, or such beauties, do those become in the other life who have lived in faith in the Lord (in the faith of charity. All the angels are such forms, with countless variety and of such is heaven. (AC 553)

In the spiritual (or second) heaven there are magnificent palaces, in which everything within shines with precious stones and decorations, in forms such as cannot be equalled by any painting in the world, nor described in words. For art there is in its own art, especially that of architecture. From that heaven several arts in the world derive their laws and harmonies and this is the cause of their various forms of beauty. The silver found among those who dwell beneath those heavens, is given by the Lord from that Heaven, but gold is given from the celestial (or third) heaven. For silver corresponds to spiritual good, which in its essence is truth; and gold corresponds to celestial good.

The spiritual angels are clothed in garments of fine linen and silk, which, in general, are shining. And because the spiritual heavens correspond to the eyes, there are also in many places paradise-like scenes, rainbow-coloured and also appearances of ineffable beauty. They do not know anything there about the sense of the letter of the Word, but only about its spiritual sense, in which they possess the Word, which is

read by everyone. In that heaven, justice, sincerity, verity, chastity and the several praiseworthy virtues of moral life prevail. Those heavens constitute the royalty of the Lord, but the higher heavens, where the celestial angels dwell, constitute the priesthood of the Lord; for His royalty is Divine Truth and His priesthood is Divine Good. (AE 8316)

It can never be said that heaven is outside anyone. It is within; because every angel accepts the heaven that is outside in keeping with the heaven that is within. We can see, then, how mistaken people are who think that getting into heaven is simply a matter of being taken up among the angels, regardless of the quality of their inner life, who believe that heaven is granted merely because of [the Lord's] mercy. On the contrary, unless heaven is within an individual, nothing of the heaven that is outside flows in and is accepted. (HH 54)

Every community in heaven is growing in numbers daily, and the more it grows, the more perfect it becomes. In this way, not only is the community perfected, but heaven in general is perfected as well, since the communities constitute heaven.

Since heaven is perfected by its numerical growth, we can see how mistaken people are who believe that heaven will be closed to prevent overcrowding. Actually, it is just the reverse. It will never be closed, and its ever increasing fullness makes it more perfect. So angels long for nothing more than to have new angel guests arrive there. (HH 71)

There are so many offices and departments in heaven, so many tasks, that there are simply too many to list. There are relatively few in the world. No matter how many people are involved, they are all caught up in a love of their work and tasks out of a love of service - no one out of selfishness or a love of profit. In fact, there is no love of profit for the sake of livelihood, since all the necessities of life are given them gratis. They are housed gratis, clothed gratis, and fed gratis. We can see from this that people who have loved themselves and the world more than service have no place in heaven. In fact, our love or affection invariably stays with us after our life in the world. It is not uprooted to eternity. (HH 393)

(See also HH 213-220 and 387-394, where we read how the angels are employed in heaven).

Other aspects of heaven are described in the following numbers of HH:-

The correspondence of heaven with man. (87-102).

Where the angels dwell. (183-190).

The form of heaven. (200-212).

The wisdom of the angels. (265-275).

The state of innocence of the angels. (276-283).

The state of peace in heaven. (284-290).

The conjunction of heaven with the human race. (291-302).

The heathen in heaven. (318-328).

Little children in heaven. (329-345).

Marriages in heaven. (366-386).

Heavenly joy and happiness. (395-414).

Since the relationship of heaven to hell and of hell to heaven is like that of two opposites that act against each other, with the action and reaction yielding the state of equilibrium within which everything exists, in order for absolutely everything to be kept in this balance, it is necessary that the ruler of the one be the ruler of the other as well. That is, unless the same Lord controlled the attacks of the hells and restrained their madness, the balance would be destroyed; and if the balance were destroyed, everything else would go. (HH 536)

Like heaven, hell is differentiated into communities. In fact, there are just as many communities in hell as there are in heaven, since each heavenly community has an opposite number in hell, for the sake of the balance.

However, the communities in hell are differentiated according to their evils and consequent falsities because the communities in heaven are differentiated according to their good will and consequent truths. We may be sure that there is some evil opposite to everything good and some falsity opposite to everything true from the fact that nothing exists without a relationship to its opposite. The opposite enables us to know its actual nature and level. Opposition is the source of all perception and sensation.

This is why the Lord is constantly taking care that every community of heaven has its opposite in some community of hell and that there is a balance between them. (HH 541)

How the hells are ruled by the Lord will be briefly explained. Overall, the hells are governed by a general impingement of divine good and divine truth from the heavens through which the general effort that flows out of the hells is restrained and controlled. There is also a specific impingement from each heaven and from each community of heaven.

Specifically, the hells are governed by means of angels who are given the ability to look into the hells and check the insanities and riots there. Sometimes angels are sent there, and their very presence brings matters under control.

In general though, all the people in the hells are governed by their fears, some by fears sown and still in place from the world. However, since these fears are not adequate and gradually weaken, they are governed through fears of punishment, which are the primary means of preventing them from doing evil. There are many kinds of punishment there, milder or more severe depending on the evil [they are restraining]. Most of the time, the relatively malevolent spirits are in power, having gained control by their experience and skill; and they are able to keep the rest in servile obedience by punishments and the fears that these give birth to. These dominant spirits do not dare go beyond fixed limits.

We do need to realize that the only way of controlling the violent rages of people in the hells is through fear of punishment. There are no other means. (HH 543)

People in the world still believe that there is a devil who rules the hells and that he was created as an angel of light but was cast into hell with his gang after he led a rebellion. The reason for this belief is that the Word talks about the devil and Satan, and about Lucifer as well; and in these cases the Word is understood literally. However, in these passages the devil and Satan mean hell. The devil means the hell toward the rear where the worst people live, the people called evil demons; and Satan means the hell that is toward the front where the less malevolent people live, the people called evil spirits. Lucifer means the people who are from Babel or Babylon, the ones who extend their control all the way into heaven.

We can also see that there is no devil to whom the hells are subject from the fact that all the people who are in the hells, like all the people in the heavens, are from the human race (see [311-317](#)), that there are millions there from the beginning of creation to the present day, and that everyone there is the kind of devil he or she became by opposition to the Deity while in the world. (HH 544)

(The hells, their inhabitants and what takes place there, are described in HH 536-588).

God uses his omnipotence and also his omniscience to examine us all after death. He prepares the just, the sheep, for their places in heaven; by assigning them places he builds heaven. He prepares the unjust, the goats, for their places in hell; by assigning them places he builds in hell. He arranges heaven into communities and hell into hordes according to all the different loves their inhabitants have. In heaven there are as many varieties of love as there are stars in the sky above the earth. He unites the communities of heaven so that they are like one person before him. Likewise he brings the hordes of hell together so they are like one devil. He separates hell from heaven with a great chasm, so that hell will not inflict violence on heaven and heaven will not inflict torment on hell. (The more heaven flows in, the more those

in hell are tormented.) If God were not using his omnipotence in every moment to do all the above, so much wildness would come over people that they could never be restrained by the laws of any design and the human race would perish. This and more would happen if God were not the divine design and were not omnipotent in his design. (TCR 74 5)

I was once shown the way to heaven and the way to hell. There was a broad path leading off to the left or north. There seemed to be a great many spirits traveling along it. In the distance, though, I could see a fairly large boulder where the broad path ended. Then two paths led off from the boulder, one to the left and the other, on the other side, to the right. The path to the left was narrow and confined, leading around through the west to the south, and therefore into the light of heaven. The path to the right was broad and open, leading obliquely down toward hell.

At first, everyone was clearly following the same path as far as the large boulder at the fork; but at that point they parted company. The good turned to the left and started along the confined path that led to heaven. The evil did not even see the boulder at the fork but fell over it and hurt themselves. When they got up, they rushed along the broad path to the right that led toward hell.

Later, the meaning of all this was explained to me. The first path, the broad one where so many good and evil people were traveling together, chatting with each other like friends with no visible difference between them, pictured people who live similarly honest and fair outward lives, with no visible difference between them. The stone at the fork or corner where the evil people stumbled, from which they rushed along the path to hell, pictured divine truth, which is denied by people who are focusing on hell. In the highest sense this stone meant the Lord's divine human nature. However, people who acknowledge divine truth and the divine nature of the Lord as well were taken along the path that led to heaven.

This showed me again that both evil and good people live the same life outwardly, or travel the same path, one as readily as the other. Yet the ones who at heart acknowledge the Divine, especially those within the church who acknowledge the Lord's divine nature, are led to heaven; while those who do not acknowledge it are led to hell.

Paths in the other life picture the thoughts that flow from our aims or intentions. The paths that are presented to view there answer exactly to the thoughts of our aims, and our course follows the thoughts that flow from our aims. This is why you can tell the quality of spirits and of their thoughts from their paths. This also showed me the meaning of the Lord's words, *"Enter through the narrow gate, for broad is the gate and open the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who walk along it; confined is the path and narrow the gate that leads to life, and there are few who find it"* ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)). The way that leads to life is not narrow because it is difficult but because so few people find it, as stated.

The boulder I saw at the corner where the broad, common path ended and the two ways seemed to lead in opposite directions showed me the meaning of the Lord's words, *"Have you not read what is written, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner'? Whoever falls over this stone will be shattered"* ([Luke 20:17-18](#)). The stone means divine truth, and the rock of Israel means the Lord in regard to his divine human nature. The builders are the people of the church. The head of the corner is where the fork is, and to fall and be shattered is to deny and perish. (HH 534)

I have been allowed to talk with some people in the other life who had distanced themselves from the affairs of the world in order to live in devotions and sanctity, and also with some who had mortified themselves in various ways because they thought this was renouncing the world and taming the desires of the flesh. However, most of them had wound up with a gloomy kind of life from this and had distanced themselves from that life of active thoughtfulness that can be led only in the world, so they could not associate with angels. The life of angels is cheerful and blessed. It consists of worthwhile activities that are deeds of thoughtfulness. Particularly, people who have led a life withdrawn from worldly concerns are aflame with a sense of their own worth and constantly crave heaven. They think of heavenly joy as their reward, with no knowledge whatever of what heavenly joy actually is. When they are with angels and are

let into that joy - which has no sense of merit and consists of activities and public duties and in bliss at the good that is accomplished through them - they are as bewildered as though they were seeing something totally alien to their faith. Since they are not open to these joys, they move off and associate with people who have led the same kind of life in the world.

There are other people who have lived outwardly devotional lives, constantly in churches and at prayer there. They have mortified their souls while constantly thinking about themselves, how they are worthier and more estimable than others and will be regarded as saints after their death. They are not in heaven in the other life because they have done all this with themselves first in mind. Since they have polluted divine truths by the self-love they immersed them in, some of them are so deranged that they think they are gods. So they are with similar people in hell. Some of them are ingenious and crafty and are in hells for the crafty people who used their skills and wiles to construct outward appearances that would lead the masses to believe them possessed of a divine sanctity.

This includes many of the Catholic saints. I have been allowed to talk with some of them and have had their lives clearly described, both the lives they had led in the world and what they were like afterward.

I have mentioned all this to let it be known that the life that leads to heaven is not one of withdrawal from the world but a life in the world, and that a life of piety apart from a life of thoughtfulness (which is possible only in the world) does not lead to heaven at all. Rather, it is a life of thoughtfulness, a life of behaving honestly and fairly in every duty, every affair, every task, from our deeper nature and therefore from a heavenly source. The source of this life is within us when we act honestly and fairly because doing so is in accord with divine laws. This life is not hard, but a life of piety apart from a life of thoughtfulness is hard. Still, this latter life leads away from heaven as surely as people believe it leads to heaven. (HH 535)

We can gather from this that we do evil from hell and good from the Lord. However, since we believe that whatever we do comes from ourselves, the evil we do clings to us as though it were our own. This is why we are at fault for our evil, never the Lord. The evil within us is hell within us, for it makes no difference whether you say "evil" or "hell." Since we are at fault for our evil, it is we, not the Lord, who lead ourselves into hell. Far from leading us into hell, the Lord frees us from hell to the extent that we do not intend and love to be absorbed in our evil. Our whole volition and love stays with us after death (see [470-484](#)). People who have intended and loved what is evil in the world intend and love what is evil in the other life, and then they no longer allow themselves to be led away from it. This is why people who are absorbed in evil are connected to hell and actually are there in spirit; and after death they crave above all to be where their evil is. So after death, it is we, not the Lord, who cast ourselves into hell. (HH 547)

Evil spirits are punished severely in the world of spirits to keep them terrified of doing evil. This too seems to come from the Lord, but still no punishment there does come from the Lord. It comes from the evil itself, since an evil is so closely united to its punishment that they cannot be separated. The hellish mob craves and loves nothing more than inflicting harm, especially punishing and torturing, and they do inflict harm and punishment on anyone who is not being protected by the Lord. So when something evil is being done from an evil heart, since this rejects any protection by the Lord, evil spirits assail the evildoer and inflict punishment.

To some extent, this can be illustrated by evil deeds and their punishments in the world, where they are also united. The laws here set penalties for each crime, so anyone who plunges into evil is plunging into its punishment as well. The only difference is that in the world, evil can be hidden, which cannot happen in the other life.

We can therefore conclude that the Lord does not do harm to anyone. It is like this in the world as well. It is not the king or the judge or the law that is responsible for the punishment of the guilty, because they are not responsible for the evil of the criminal. (HH 550)

Having examined the misshapen forms of spirits in the hells, forms that as noted are all forms of contempt for others, of threats against people who do not respect and revere them, and of hatred and vengeance

against people who do not support them, it has become clear to me that in general they are all forms of love for oneself and the world, and that the evils that give rise to individual forms can all be traced back to these two loves. I have also been told from heaven, and it has been witnessed to me by an abundance of experience, that these two loves, love for oneself and love of the world, do rule in the hells and actually constitute the hells, and that love for the Lord and love for one's neighbor rule in the heavens and actually constitute the heavens. I have also learned that the two loves that are hell's loves and the two loves that are heaven's loves are absolute opposites. (HH 554)

## **12. THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

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

We can see from this that divine providence is universal because it attends to the slightest details, and that it is an infinite and eternal creation that the Lord has provided for himself by creating the universe.

We see nothing of this universal providence, and if we did see it, it would look to our sight like the scattered piles and random heaps that passers-by see when a house is being built. The Lord though, sees a magnificent palace constantly under construction and constantly being enlarged. (DP 203)

Concerning foresight and providence in general: What we view as foresight, the Lord views as providence. The Lord foresaw from eternity what the human race and every member of it would be like, and he foresaw that evil would constantly grow until at last humankind would voluntarily plunge into hell. So not only did he provide the means by which we could be turned from hell and led to heaven; in his providence he is constantly turning and leading us too.

He also foresaw that nothing good would ever take root in us unless we were free, since what takes root when we are not free dissolves as soon as evil approaches or we are tested. This the Lord foresaw, along with the fact that on our own, in our freedom, we would head for the deepest hell. So he provides that if we do not let ourselves be led freely to heaven, he will divert us to a milder hell, but that if we allow ourselves to be led freely toward goodness, he will take us to heaven.

This shows what foresight and providence are, and that what is foreseen is provided for.

You can see then, how mistaken people are when they disbelieve that the Lord has foreseen and now sees the tiniest details of our life, and that he provides for and guides us in each of those details. The reality is that the Lord's foresight and providence concerns itself with the smallest possible aspects in human affairs - so small that we cannot in any way comprehend one out of millions. Every split second of our life carries with it a series of consequences that continues forever. Each moment is like a new starting point for another series, and this is true for each and every moment of life in both our intellect and our will. Since the Lord foresaw from eternity what we would be like now and forever, his providence must obviously be present in the smallest facets, governing us and (again) bending us in this direction by continually moderating our freedom. (AC 3854:2-3)

Spirits coming into the other life bring with them the opinion that the Divine Providence is universal, but not in the particulars. This is because they had seen the evil exalted to honours, and become rich and crowned with success, which such persons ascribe to their own sagacity; not knowing that the Divine Providence has for its end the eternal salvation of man, thus not his good fortune in this world, namely his opulence and eminence, wherein most persons during the life of the body make happiness itself consist, when yet the fact is not so. This is because eminence usually begets the love of self, and opulence the love of the world, thus what is contrary to love to God and charity toward the neighbour; therefore such things



are given to the evil and also to the good, if they are not unsuitable and do not withdraw them from heaven.

Moreover, the Lord provides for His ends through the evil equally as through the good; for He moves the evil through their very loves to do what is good to the neighbour, to their country and the Church; for the evil desire to be in eminence. They desire their own advantage, and for the sake of these things they desire to seem upright and zealous, and from this desire as from a fire, they are more strongly moved to do such things than are the well-disposed. It is also permitted the evil to believe that all things are of their own sagacity, and that there is no Divine Providence, or only one that is universal. As they are not willing to perceive otherwise, and in order that they may perform such things as are conducive to the public good, successes are also given them in accordance with their projects, which successes are greater incitements to them from the fact that they ascribe these to themselves. (AC 6481)

The Divine Providence is universal, that is, in the least details and they who are in the stream of Providence are continually being carried along toward happiness, whatever may be the appearance of the means. Those are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him, but those who trust in themselves alone and attribute all things to themselves, are not in the stream of Providence, for they are in the opposite, as they take away Providence from the Divine and claim it for themselves. So far as any one is in the stream of Providence, to that extent he is in a state of peace. Also, so far as any one is in a state of peace from the good of faith, to that extent he is in the Divine Providence. (AC 8478:4)

They who trust in the Lord, continually receive good from Him; for whatever happens to them, whether it appears to be prosperous or not, is still good, because it conduces as a means to their eternal happiness. But they who trust in themselves, continually bring evil upon themselves; for whatever happens to them, even if it appears to be prosperous and happy, is nevertheless evil, and hence conduces as a means to their eternal unhappiness. (AC 8480)

By means of the Truth proceeding from Himself, the Lord rules all things even to the most single, not as a king in the world, but as God in heaven and in the universe. A king in the world exercises only a universal care, and his princes and officers a particular care. It is otherwise with God, Who sees all things and knows and provides all things to eternity, and holds all things in order from Himself. Thus it is evident that the Lord exercises not only a universal care, but also a particular and individual care of all things, otherwise than does a king in the world. His disposing is immediate by Truth Divine from Himself, and also mediate through heaven; but the mediate disposing through heaven is also, as it were, immediate from Him, for what comes from heaven comes through heaven from Him. That this is so, the angels in heaven not only know, but also perceive in themselves. But this subject falls with difficulty into the idea of any man and least of all into the idea of those who trust in their own prudence, for they attribute to themselves all things that turn out prosperously for them, and the rest they ascribe to fortune or chance, and few ascribe them to the Divine Providence. Thus they attribute the things that happen to dead causes and not to a living cause. When things succeed happily, they indeed say that it is of God, also that there is nothing that is not from Him; but hardly any at heart believe it.

In like manner do those who place all satisfaction in worldly or corporeal things, namely in honours and riches, and believe that these alone are Divine blessings. So when they see many of the evil abound in such things, and not so the good, they reject from their heart and deny the Divine Providence in individual things, not considering that Divine Blessing is to be happy to eternity, and that such things as are momentary - as are relatively the things of this world - the Lord regards only as a means to things eternal. Therefore also the Lord provides for the good, who receive His mercy in time, such things as conduce to the felicity of their eternal life - riches and honours for those to whom they are not hurtful and a lack of them for those to whom they would be hurtful. Nevertheless to these latter He gives in time, instead of honours and riches, to be gladdened with a few things, and to be more content than the rich and honoured. (AC 8717:2)

See also the following numbers in DP:-

It is a law of the Divine Providence, that man should not be compelled by external means to think and will and thus to believe and love the things of religion, but should persuade and at times compel himself to do so. (129 - 153)

It is a law of the Divine Providence that man should not perceive and feel anything of the operation of the Divine Providence, but that he should nevertheless know and acknowledge it. (175 - 190)

The Divine Providence regards eternal things and not temporal things except so far as they accord with eternal things. (214 - 220)

The laws of Permission are also laws of the Divine Providence. (234 - 274)

The Divine Providence is equally with the wicked and the good. (285 - 307)

Every man may be reformed and there is no such thing as predestination. (322 - 330)

The operation of the Divine Providence for the salvation of man begins at his birth and continues right on to the end of his life, and afterwards to eternity. (332 - 334)

## **CONCLUSION**

Having read the foregoing quotations, you will perhaps have realized something of the tremendous potential of the Writings and how they reveal spiritual truths in an entirely new form. The twelve subjects covered are but a very few of the vital teachings given in these great books, but if your interest has been sufficiently roused to read more, this booklet will have fulfilled its purpose. If you have not previously read them, it is suggested you commence with:- HEAVEN & HELL, THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE and TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. These three books will give you a good general knowledge of what the Lord has now revealed in His Second Coming, to those who are willing to receive these Heavenly Doctrines with an open, receptive and humble mind. The Lord will enlighten all who approach these great books in this way, according to their capacity and willingness to receive and accept Divine truths and apply those truths to their lives.

When you begin to do this, you will become increasingly aware of a much broader and deeper conception of the Lord, His Word and the Divine purpose in all things, and you will come to know the answers to many spiritual problems and uncertainties which harass the minds of numerous people in this day and age. But this is not all. As you face up to each day with its particular problems, you will have a new assurance of the Divine leading in even the smallest things of your life. You will know what will happen when you leave this world and the wonderful joys and blessings in store for those who really love and worship the Lord and endeavour to keep His commandments. All this and much more will be given to you by the Lord as you study these books and gradually absorb the eternal revelations they contain.

Here is a list of the books of the Writings, each one of which has something distinctive and original to offer in the way of Divine truth concerning many things:-

HEAVEN & HELL

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

THE FOUR DOCTRINES (Doctrines of the Lord, Sacred Scripture, Life and Faith).

DIVINE LOVE & WISDOM

ARCANA COELESTIA (12 Vols.)

APOCALYPSE REVEALED

EARTHS IN THE UNIVERSE

CONJUGIAL LOVE

THE LAST JUDGMENT

THE WHITE HORSE

THE NEW JERUSALEM & ITS HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

## BRIEF EXPOSITION

CORONIS

DOCTRINE OF USES

CHARITY

APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED (6 Vols.)

As you may wish to know something of the life and preparation of Emanuel Swedenborg, the humble, devoted and brilliant instrument through whom the Lord wrote these great revelations, the following books are recommended:-

SWEDENBORG, LIFE & TEACHING By George Trobridge

THE SWEDENBORG EPIC By C.O. Sigstedt

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG By C. Th. Odhner

However it must be emphasised that Swedenborg the man, was only the means through whom the Lord gave these revelations to the world (as was the case with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John, Luke, Matthew and many others in former times) and although he was unique and in many respects a genius, Swedenborg was mortal like all other men and never claimed any honour or glory for himself, but always gave it where it belonged - to the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom he served so faithfully and effectively.

Since our inner and our outer self can go in opposite directions like this, and because our body is cast off but our spirit remains, it is clear then that a dark spirit can live behind a bright face, and a raging spirit can lie behind soothing words.

Therefore, my friend, know people for what they are, not by their mouth but by their heart - that is, not from what they say but from what they do. The Lord says, "*Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but are inwardly as predatory as wolves. Recognize them by their fruits*" ([Matthew 7:15-16](#)). (TCR 590)

The Lord perpetually wills that we receive what is true and do what is good and therefore become spiritual. That is what we were born for.

To become spiritual without having free choice in spiritual matters is as impossible as it is to shove a camel through the eye of a sewing needle [[Matthew 19:24](#); [Mark 10:25](#); [Luke 18:25](#)], or to touch some star in heaven with our hand. (TCR 481)

What is a name without the thing it stands for? It is pointless. It is the sound of an echo that bounces off the trees in the forest or off vaulted ceilings. It is the vague murmur people make sometimes when they are dreaming. It is the sound of the wind, the sea or machines, which have nothing useful to say.

Would it be anything but a pointless exercise to be given the title of monarch, commander, mayor, bishop, abbot or monk but not the position that goes with the title?

Our having the name of being Christian but living like a barbarian and breaking the commandments of Christ is like gazing at the sign of Satan instead of the sign of Christ, even though at our baptism Christ's name was woven into us with golden threads.

Surely, people who receive the identifying mark of Christ but then laugh at the thought of worshiping him, snarl at every mention of his name and declare him to be the son of Joseph rather than the Son of God, are rebels and assassins of the king. Their words are blasphemies against the Holy Spirit, which cannot be forgiven in this age or in the age to come [[Matthew 12:32](#)]. Like dogs, they bite the Word with their jaws and tear it to pieces with their teeth. (TCR 683)

We need to be led away from our evils in order to be reformed, since if we are given to evil in this world, we will be given to evil after we leave this world. This means that if our evil is not set aside in this world, it cannot be set aside afterwards. The tree lies where it falls; and so too our life retains its basic quality when we die. We are all judged according to our deeds. It is not that these deeds are tallied up but that we

return to them and behave the same. Death is a continuation of life, with the difference that then we cannot be reformed. (DP 277)

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