

ESCAPE FROM EGYPT

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Chapter 1 Israel in Bondage to Egypt

Why is it, that of all the young people who graduate from our day schools, high school and college, some continue in the way of the Lord and enter more and more interiorly into the Church, while others are captivated by the world? Why do they not all come into the Church? And why is it that of all the adult enquirers who begin to learn something of the teaching now revealed for the New Church, only some continue in the way, while others return to the world or to the Christian Church?

Part of the answer, a very important part lies within the whole story of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, into the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. In this chapter we will begin a study of the internal sense of this story, showing some to the infernal influences that make it difficult for people to enter more and more deeply into the Church. What is meant by the Church we shall see in a moment.

There can be no doubt that these stories from the Book of Exodus in the Old Testament are really parables. The earthly story of the exodus, the wandering in the wilderness and the entry into the land of Canaan is true history. But it is not merely history. Within every syllable of these incidents in the life story of a nation there is concealed an internal, heavenly meaning whose subject is the life of the regeneration of the mind.

If anyone has difficulty in convincing someone outside the Church about this, let him refer to Psalm 78. The Psalm begins with these Words: "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old" (Psalm 78:2). When we read or hear these words, we are prepared for a parable, something full of dark sayings. But instead of some made up history, what is presented in the remaining seventy verses of the Psalm is an account of the actual history of Israel from the time of its exodus out of Egypt until the reign of King David. For example, part of the Psalm reads: "They kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law... Marvelous things did He in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through; and He made the waters to stand as a heap. In the daytime also He led them with a cloud and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as out of the great depths... They trusted not in His salvation: though He had commanded the clouds from above and opened the doors of Heaven and had rained down manna upon them to eat and had given them of the corn of Heaven. Men did eat angels' food; He sent them meat to the full... He rained flesh upon them as dust and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea" (Psalm 78:10, 12-15,22-25). The

Psalms continue in this way, giving the highlights in the life story of Israel. What more convincing proof could there be than these literal statements in the Word of God that the whole story is to be regarded as a parable also, although true history.

The Book of Exodus begins at the time in the history of Israel following the death of Joseph, who had reigned supreme in Egypt and had brought his father, Jacob and his brothers to live in his adopted country. During the lifetime of Joseph all had been well with the sons of Jacob (or the sons of Israel, as he was also known). But after the death of Joseph, there arose a king of Egypt, who it is said, "knew not Joseph" (verse 8) -- a king, who in fact was alienated from the Israelites and increasingly opposed to them.

Fear gripped the heart of this new king when he observed how rapidly the Israelites or Hebrews, a nation within a nation, were growing. He was afraid that when some invading enemy came to Egypt, it would receive help from this alien people, the Hebrews. In order to keep them under control, the king of Egypt set task masters over them, who treated them very cruelly as slaves.

But despite these afflictions the Hebrews continued to prosper and multiply. In fact it is said that the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied (verse 12). They were cruelly treated, being obliged to build in clay and in brick and to perform "all manner of service in the field" (verse 14).

Eventually the king of Egypt, seeing that the rigorous treatment of the Hebrew slaves was still of no avail, sought to have the Hebrew midwives kill any sons that were born to the Hebrew women, so that the increase would be stemmed and the nation eventually die out. But even this measure failed; because the "midwives feared God and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the boys alive" (verse 17). Finally, the Pharaoh, as the king of Egypt was called, made a general proclamation that every son born to the Israelites was to be cast into the river, while every daughter was to be saved alive (verse 22).

What do the "sons of Israel" represent? In the Arcana Coelestia it is explained that Israel represents the Church. In number 6637 it is said: "As Israel represents the good of truth, or spiritual good and his sons spiritual truths in the natural, therefore the sons of Israel represent the Church; for the Church is the Church from spiritual good and from the derivative truths. He who is not in spiritual good, that is, in the good of charity and in spiritual truths, that is, in the true things of faith, is not of the Church, in spite of his having been born within it. For the whole Heavenly Kingdom of the Lord is in the good of love and faith; and unless the Church is in the same, it cannot be the Church, because it is not conjoined with heaven, for the Church is the Lord's Kingdom on earth" (AC 6637).

In that number we see what the Church essentially is -- The Kingdom of the Lord on earth. What is spoken of here is the ideal Church, or the Church in the Lord's sight. Who the people are who constitute the membership of the Lord's Church, that is, of the Lord's Kingdom on earth, is known only to the Lord. We cannot say, "Lo here, lo there!" The Lord's Kingdom cometh not with observation (Luke 17:21). We are in the Church only to the extent that the Church is in us. Consequently, no earthly organization can claim that it is the Church. It may embody the Church or it may not. Some of its members may be truly members of the Church and some not. The Lord alone can tell who are His own in any given church organization.

But the principle by which He judges is revealed in the same number from the Arcana Coelestia from which we have already quoted. It goes on to say: "It's being called the Church is not from the fact that the Word is there and that there are doctrinal things therefrom, nor from the fact that the Lord is known there and that the sacraments are there; but it is the Church from the fact that men live according to the Word, or according to doctrine from the Word and so that the doctrine is the rule of life. Those who are not of this character are not of the Church, but are outside of it; and those who live in evil, thus those who live contrary to the doctrine, are further outside the Church than the Gentiles who know nothing whatever of the Word, of the Lord and of the sacraments; for the former, because they know the goods and truths of the Church, extinguish the Church in themselves, which the Gentiles cannot do because they do not know them. Be it further known that everyone who lives in the good of charity and of faith is a Church and Kingdom of the Lord and from this is called a Temple and also a House of God. The Church in general is constituted of those who are Churches in particular, however far apart they may be. This then is the Church which is meant here and in what follows by the 'sons of Israel'" (AC 6637:2).

At the point in history when Israel was in Egypt in a state of slavery, Egypt was the center of the world. It was famous for its magnificent culture, for its magnificent architecture and engineering achievements, its wealth, but especially for its learning. Egyptian scholars were renowned; so too were Egyptian magicians, those crafty, cunning perverters of the science of correspondences, for magic is nothing else than the abuse of correspondences.

Egypt, because it pandered so strongly to the love of the world and because it was so famous for its worldly learning, could well serve the Lord to represent in His Divinely revealed Word, learning or science.

Now, the term science or scientific as used in the Heavenly Doctrine is not limited to what we know as science in the world. In common usage the term science means everything that is known by means of sense observation, or conclusions or laws that have been abstracted from things seen and otherwise sensed. All the laws of science are conclusions or generalizations based on sense perceptions. In the Heavenly Doctrine the term "science" includes all that and something more. It includes in addition any moral laws that are arrived at or concluded on the basis of our experience of the world. It includes any of the generalizations made from observing human behavior, laws formulated into such sciences as anthropology, sociology and psychology.

But the Heavenly Doctrine even speaks of the "the scientific of the church" (AC 6004). The scientific of the church are all the external things, the knowledge of the representatives and significatives of various things used in rituals, the science of correspondences and even doctrinal things that we may have committed to memory but not to life. These doctrinal things are of the same quality as other scientific in our memory. In quality they are just the same as the conclusions we have formed from observing things that are external to us. Doctrinal things, even though they be about the most spiritual and celestial imaginable, are still natural in quality until we live according to them and can therefore think from them. Until we live according to them, we merely think about them. In that case they are merely scientific.

Now, science in both senses is what is meant by Egypt and the King of Egypt. We learn, however that Joseph was in Egypt, together with his father, Jacob or Israel and his brothers and their children. In other words, there was something heavenly, something spiritual, something of the Church, some good things of love and charity and from them, some true things of wisdom and faith, present in the natural mind, dwelling together with the scientific of the Church and of the world. Truth from the good of love and charity was present in the natural, conscious mind.

It is important to understand what is meant by this truth that comes from the good of love and charity. It is not the same thing as mere knowledge. It does not come into our minds only by reading the Word and the Writings. By reading we acquire the necessary doctrinal things and knowledges, things known. By reading we learn what we should believe, which are called the truths of faith and also we learn what we should do; we learn about the goods of charity. But while these things known are merely known and lodge only in our memory, they may be described as truths from a book. They are from outside of us. It is only as we live according to these doctrinal things and put them into practice, that we really see for ourselves the truth that is in them -- and the good. This insight into the truth and the good of the things we have learned from the pages of Divine revelation is what is meant by truth from good. It is the truth that has been lived; it is either truth from the good of obedience, or from the good of charity, or from the good of love to the Lord. Since the subject here is the spiritual church, whose good is spiritual good or charity towards the neighbor, the truth from good that is meant, is the sight of truth (or faith) that is the offspring of charity towards the neighbor, charity's faith.

This truth from good has had a profound influence on the natural mind, in particular, on its intellect or understanding. It has begun to rule the understanding and reign supreme there, enlightening the scientific of the natural mind, so that deeper truths, deeper implications, deeper applications, are seen in them. This truth from good ruling in the intellect of the natural mind is what is meant by Joseph ruling in Egypt.

But while a man is being regenerated, he is continually being led by the Lord into and through new states of mind, more interior states. The regenerating man cannot stand still; he can go either forward or backward; he cannot stand still, but must be either regenerating or degenerating

Hence a new state arises. Joseph dies, "and all his brethren and all that generation" (verse 6). This does not mean that the heavenly internal died, because to the angels, who are in the internal or heavenly sense of the Divine Word, "death" does not mean the end, but the beginning of a new, more interior and thus more elevated state of mind. When "death" is mentioned in the Word, they think of resurrection.

The new state consists of an increasing growth of good affections, on the natural plane and of true thoughts from those good affections. The spiritual advancement involved is that now the internal man has gone beyond merely enlightening the intellect or understanding on the natural plane, so that uses are seen in everyday situations. It is now inspiring the will side of the mind on the natural plane. It is now moving the will to do these useful things that have been seen by insight. This is meant by the children of Israel, the offspring of Israel, multiplying and becoming more numerous.

Up to this point, there has been no opposition on the part of the natural man to the increase of the Lord's kingdom from within. The Egyptians had served Joseph well and were quite content to have him in a position of authority.

This is the state of any young person coming into the Church, or of any adult, for that matter, entering more deeply into the Lord's Kingdom. For a while the natural man is, as it were, quiescent, making no objection to the Heavenly goods and truths that flow in from the internal man, from what seems like an alien source. These heavenly things do not seem to pose any threat to the security and safety of the natural man. The natural mind is not asked to give up anything very considerable; it is not called upon to make any self denial that hurts. The things of Heaven and of the Church seem to be naturally interesting and useful. It seems possible to serve both God and Mammon. This is the case while only the intellect is involved.

But the time comes when this state is dramatically changed. A new quality appears in the natural mind. "There arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." The inherent opposition of the natural to spiritual is at last recognized. For the first time the natural is seen to be opposite to the spiritual. It is seen to be quite alienated from the spiritual, quite alienated from what is heavenly. The will of the natural man is touched. The human proprium of the natural mind feels threatened. It begins to recognize with alarm that these heavenly affections and thoughts, if allowed to increase unchecked, will eventually over run the whole natural mind. Egypt will have lost its supremacy.

From this point onward heavenly things begin to be regarded as enemies, as disturbers of the peace, as obstacles to the great desire of the natural mind to do exactly as it pleases. Although we are not aware of what has happened, still the natural mind fears for its freedom. Therefore it determines to subjugate and control these heavenly delights of love and charity and the resulting true thoughts and insights, subjugate them and make them serve its own natural ends. In this way the true things of the Church are gradually falsified. This affliction of what is heavenly in the natural mind is meant by the cruelty of the Egyptian task masters set over the Israelites.

This is a state of spiritual temptation for the man entering the Church, that is, the Lord's kingdom. This state of temptation, or to speak more accurately, infestation, is brought on by false ideas, opposed to the teaching of the Lord's Word, falsities that afflict the heavenly things with great burdens. These all arise from the scientifics that are in the natural degree of the mind, both the worldly conclusions based on sense experience and also those scientifics of the Church whose goodness and truth, whose relevance, has not been personally seen. From these scientifics of both kinds false ideas rise up and oppress the good affections and true thoughts of the Lord's kingdom.

Yet, the Lord brings good even out of these afflictions. He preserves a balance between what is good and what is evil and between what is true and what is false, ever controlling the inflow of evil and falsity so that it never at any time is more than man can bear, never such that he could not avoid being overwhelmed despite his most valiant efforts. This is brought out in the Arcana Coelestia 6663. The purpose of this is that the man of the Church may fight against the false ideas infused by infesting evil spirits, meant by the Egyptian task masters.

Just as the severity of the Egyptian task masters must have caused the Israelites to fight against and oppose them at every opportunity, so does spiritual affliction, the severity of infesting falsities, cause what is heavenly in the mind to be strengthened in its determined opposition to what is merely natural and thus alienated from the spiritual. We are reminded in the number from the Arcana just referred to that this is "also plain from common experience; for he who defends his opinion against others who attack it, confirms himself the more in his opinion and then also finds other confirmations of it which he had not before observed and also others which deny the opposite; and in this way he strengthens himself in his opinion and also illustrates it with further considerations" (AC 6663). From that example we can see how the true things grew according to the severity of the infestations, which is what is meant by the words, "as they afflicted them, so did they multiply and grow" (verse 12).

Of course, it is not quite so easy when the opposition comes from within our own mind, from our own natural mind. When somebody outside of us attacks our beliefs or ridicules the Lord and His Word, our loyalty is immediately aroused and we contend against him. But when the same hostile arguments arise in our own minds, we tend to identify ourselves with them. We forget that they have inflowed from hell, that the Egyptian taskmasters are afflicting us with great burdens. We tend to entertain these ideas as if they were our own and wonder about the truths of the Lord's Word. If only we would reflect at such times that these false ideas are as much outside of us as they are when some person standing in front of us speaks them, then we could detach ourselves from them and oppose them and thus be strengthened in our belief in the truth.

There is also another effect of the multiplication of truths from good in the natural mind. At the same time it increases the fury and loathing of the natural mind with regard to spiritual things and causes the natural to want all the more to subjugate everything that is from the Lord in the mind. That is why a man of the Church entering in finds to his dismay that he is sometimes not as interested in spiritual things as once he was; that he is becoming more and more apathetic with regard to the Lord, the Word and the things of Heaven and the Church. Sometimes he may not be aware of this increasing lack of interest. If he is aware of it, he begins to wonder whether he will ever make any spiritual progress at all. This apathy arises simply because he has lapsed into the natural and the opposition to what is heavenly on the part of his natural or conscious mind has increased. It has increased because the good things and true things with him have been strengthened. A temptation is an attack upon a love. The stronger the love, the stronger is the attack upon it permitted to be.

So it is, as we read in verse thirteen of this chapter, that "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with cruelty" (verse 13). Here the determination to subjugate and over rule is manifest. With regard to this intention, this determination, the Lord has revealed in the Arcana Coelestia, that "it exists with the evil who are from hell" (AC 6666:2) and the passage goes on to explain: "Such is their endeavor and intention to subjugate those who are in good and truth that it cannot be described; for they make use of all malice, all cunning and fraud, all deceit and all cruelty, so great and of such a nature that if these were told in part only, hardly anyone in the world could believe it; so cunning and artful are their devices and so execrable. In a word, these infernals are of such a nature that they cannot possibly be resisted by any man, nor even by any angel, but by the Lord alone. The reason why they are possessed with such an endeavor and intention is that all their delight of life, thus their life itself, consists in doing evil; and therefore nothing else occupies their thoughts, consequently they intend nothing else. They are quite unable to do what is good, because this is repugnant to them; if they do what is good, it is for the sake of self, thus it is done to self. From such spirits the hells are at this day immensely increased" (AC 6666:2,3).

In that passage and in others describing the burning hatred of those in the hells and their incessant desire to destroy everything good and true in others, the Lord has provided a very important part of the answer to the question of why it is that not everyone who is at first imbued with the good things and true things of the Church endures to the end. Sooner or later opposition to the Lord's Heavenly Kingdom becomes implacable in the natural man, because it comes to regard the Lord and all things that come forth from Him as being an enemy. This implacable enmity against the goods of charity and the true things of faith is stirred up in the natural mind by spirits from hell, whose great power (as we have seen) is in their secret

operation. It is this influx that causes defections from the Kingdom of Heaven and collaboration with the real enemy, that is, hell.

Imagine how the Hebrews would have felt during their slavery if one of their number had yielded to the Egyptian task masters and in order to avoid hardship, in order to obtain a rather dubious peace of mind, had collaborated with them, the enemy. How despicable the collaborator would have been in their eyes. In order to avoid becoming an unwitting collaborator with our spiritual enemies, it is most important that we be able to recognize in our own mind the Egyptians and the Israelites that dwell there. We need to be able to distinguish the one from the other. And we need to be able to stand firm in our resolve never to cooperate with the enemy, those infernal delights and their falsities that would draw us away from Heaven and the Lord.

What we must do can be seen from the King of Egypt's further measures with a view to destroying the Israelites. He wished to kill the sons, the boys. He first sought the cooperation of the Hebrew midwives, whom he commanded to kill any Hebrew son the moment he began to come forth.

The Hebrew midwives in Egypt represent, in general, the things of the Lord's Kingdom in the natural mind, where the scientifics also are. The proper use of the natural mind is that it should receive what inflows from the internal, heavenly mind and help to bring forth its delights and insights as effects in the natural world. In this way the natural mind acts the part of a midwife to the spiritual, heavenly part of the mind. Now, if the false scientifics or things known can get possession of the whole natural mind, then the moment any thought from Heaven made its appearance in the natural conscious mind, in that moment it would be stifled, killed. The Hebrew sons are here called "boys" to represent heavenly or spiritual truths that have a certain innocence about them, a certain willingness to be led by the Lord. These are what are meant to flow into the natural mind and come forth there.

It is quite plain, however that if the natural mind "fears God," that is, if it protects what is of Divine order in the mind, if it fears to do harm to what is from the Lord, then the whole plan of the hells is thwarted and their machinations are brought to nothing. Hence we learn the important lesson that we need at all times to keep our natural, conscious mind in a state of heavenly order, so that it can serve what is heavenly, be a midwife to what is heavenly and so prevent the hells from succeeding in stamping out the Lord's Kingdom.

But why does the Pharaoh urge that the sons be killed? Why does he want the boys to be killed and not the daughters also?

In the literal story, the fact is that he did not need to kill the daughters. If he could destroy the sons, the daughters would all eventually die out, childless, or else they would intermarry with the Egyptians and so lose their identity. He needed only to destroy the sons, in order to destroy the Israelites.

It is similar in the spiritual sense. If the falsities of the natural mind can but destroy every vestige of truth from good in the natural mind, then all is over with the Lord's Kingdom in that mind. The reason is that truths lead the way to good affections and good works; one must know and understand what is good in particular and in detail before one can do it. Only let truth disappear from the natural mind and spiritual and celestial good will eventually die out also.

Here then is the second lesson we may learn from the Pharaoh's further efforts at destroying the Hebrews. In addition to making our natural mind an orderly receptacle for what is heavenly, we must never allow the truth, the enlightenment from the internal man, to be swamped with falsities, because then all of the Lord's Kingdom would perish. Not only must we resist the tendency to ignore and stifle what flows in from above and vivifies our conscience, but we must also fight against the natural tendency to let the truth die with us, by neglect, by apathy, by lack of reflection and study, by lack of rigorous application. Unless truth that is lived is kept alive in our conscious mind, all the good of the Lord's Kingdom, which means all its delights and happiness, will be childless and die out also.

How, then, are we to be set free from this wretched state of being infested with falsities? We surely need to be set free from that state of spiritual bondage where arguments against the truth of the Word, doubts

about the genuineness of the Word and the Writings, ideas that conflict with and stifle the Divine truth, infest and afflict what is of the Lord with us.

We can be delivered from this state of infestation only by means of enlightenment from above. Truth from the Divine, enlightenment from the Lord by means of our internal man, this alone can cause us to see falsity as falsity and so be set free from it. Only as falsity is seen as false and as a manifestation of evil does it lose its appeal. When it loses its attractiveness, then we are set free from it.

Truth from the Divine, the deliverer from the falsities of the world and the love of the world, is represented by Moses, the law giver. We will make a beginning of that subject in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Moses in the Bulrushes

In the second chapter of the Book of Exodus we are introduced in the literal sense to the character who dominates not only the remainder of the book but also the Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The figure of Moses, the Divinely inspired deliverer of the Hebrew nation from their bondage to Egypt and from the perils of the wilderness journey to the land of Canaan, predominates over all others in this great narrative. The chapter before us, the second chapter of the Book of Exodus, tells us about his origins, his birth, how he was nourished and protected and his education.

There is of course, a general lesson to be learned from the literal sense itself. It is particularly appropriate for us in these days of small beginnings, because we can so easily feel defeated and hopeless when we consider the task that has to be done in the name of the Lord, whether we are considering our own individual regeneration or the growth and development of the Lord's Kingdom on the earth. But the literal facts of this historic account remind us that small things can grow to become greater than those that seek to destroy them. It would have been very difficult indeed for any Egyptian living at the time of the birth of Moses (for example, one of the maidens attending the Pharaoh's daughter) to believe that the Hebrew babe found in the ark of bulrushes was destined to become far more famous, even in the eyes of the world, than the Pharaoh who decreed his death. There is considerable doubt even as to the name of that Pharaoh; while the name of Moses will be renowned as long as the Word of God is read. It would have been incredible to Egyptian ears to hear it foretold that the magnificent Pharaoh would one day be eclipsed by the insignificant little Hebrew babe.

Whenever we lapse into feelings of despair at the insignificance of whatever spiritual goods or truths we may have received from the Lord or at the insignificance of the New Church compared with the magnificence of the reigning potentates, let us recall the life story of Moses and his insignificant beginnings.

We are also reminded of the similarity of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Moses into this world and those surrounding the birth of the Lord Himself when He took on a Human form. He too, was born into a Hebrew family under humble circumstances, being placed in a manger, just as Moses was placed in the little ark of bulrushes. Also the Lord's life was in danger immediately after His birth and He had to be protected from the fury of Herod the King, just as Moses had to be protected from the fury of the Pharaoh of Egypt. In both cases protection came from Egypt. The reason for this similarity between the birth of Moses and the birth of the Lord on earth is that Moses represented, in the supreme or inmost sense, the Law Divine and the Lord on earth was Himself that Divine Truth, that Law Divine, the Word made flesh.

That is the representation of Moses in the supreme or inmost sense. In that sense the subject is always the way the Lord glorified His Human from Mary or made it Divine. Moses then represents the Law Divine that flowed into the Lord's Human part and delivered it, we are taught, from "every falsity that cleaved to His Human from the mother and this until He became the Divine Law, that is, the Divine itself and afterward when glorified became the Divine Good; which is the very being of Divine Truth" (AC 6753).

But we are concerned here not with the supreme or inmost sense, but the spiritual sense itself, which always relates to the regeneration of the natural, human mind of man. When the subject is the process of regeneration, by which the natural mind from being merely natural in quality becomes spiritual, Moses represents truth from the Lord or enlightenment from the Lord. It is the birth and growth of this truth that

comes from the Lord, this spiritual kind of truth that is set forth in the second chapter of Exodus before us now. In the first ten verses we learn about three stages by which the light of Heaven or Truth Divine (or what is the same thing, truth from the Divine) grows in the natural mind with a view to becoming a deliverer from infestation by the falsities of evil.

These stages are: (1) that in its origin it comes forth from the truth of Doctrine in the Church conjoined with goodness of life; but at first it is surrounded by falsities and evils and is thus obscured and very feeble. It has itself to be delivered from this state so that it may grow up to become a deliverer; (2) it is nurtured by the good of the Church, that is, the good of charity; (3) it is brought up to near maturity by means of instruction in the scientifics of the Church.

As we have seen, the first chapter of the Book of Exodus deals, in the internal, spiritual sense, with the tyrannical slavery imposed upon spiritual things, the true things and good things of the Lord's Kingdom, by false ideas and false philosophies, or scientifics separated from anything spiritual. This is pictured by the enslavement of the Hebrews or sons of Israel by the Egyptian Pharaoh. The determination of false ideas to destroy the true things of faith is meant by the last thing said in the first chapter, namely, the determined effort on the part of Pharaoh to destroy the sons, the male children, of the Hebrews. If spiritual truths (the sons) die out in our minds, then the goods (the daughters) to which they lead will also be unproductive and die out.

This was the reason that Pharaoh needed to kill only the male children. But it is remarkable that he actually commanded the daughters to be left in peace. This illustrates the spiritual law that falsity may indeed attack and destroy truth, but it cannot in any sense directly harm good affections themselves, which are meant by the daughters. It can only harm them indirectly by destroying their brothers -- truths from good.

The only deliverer from this situation is truth from the Divine, enlightenment from the Lord. So it is that Moses, who as a son of Israel, represents this spiritual kind of truth from good that sets man free from being infested by the falsities of evil, makes his first appearance in the second chapter, which we are now considering.

Let us remind ourselves again that this spiritual kind of truth is not the same as mere knowledge from the Word. The truth that is a deliverer comes by an internal way. It is the light of truth. True, this light from within, this insight into the truth, cannot be given apart from instruction, apart from scientifics. A beginning must be made with learning what is true and what is good. But it is only as we are affected by these things learned and live according to them, that they become spiritual truths, true things from the spiritual man. The reason is that a life according to them causes the good of love and of charity, which are in the internal or spiritual man, to fill them and make them live (AC 5951). We are taught that "the truths that are represented by the sons of Jacob are truths not yet spiritual, because not yet made of the life. But the truths that are represented by them as sons of Israel are spiritual, because from having been made of the life they have been filled with the good of love and of charity. These latter truths are here meant" (AC 5951).

Let us return now to the three stages in the development of this spiritual kind of truth, or truth from the Divine, represented by Moses and examine them in more detail.

We see first how truth from the Divine or enlightenment originates in the mind. This is shown by the fact that Moses' parents were both from the Tribe of Levi, the Tribe that represents the good of charity or love towards the neighbor, the Tribe from which the priesthood came. The conjunction or marriage of this man from the Tribe of Levi and this daughter of Levi represents the conjoining or marriage in the mind between the truth of Doctrine learned in the Church and a certain goodness of life. If these two are present in the mind and are conjoined, then some enlightenment, some Truth Divine, some truth flowing in from the Lord through the internal man is conceived and brought forth even in the conscious or natural mind. This is the birth of Moses, who is described as "a goodly child."

Here we see the vital importance of teaching our children to conjoin whatever principles of life they have learned from the Word, from their religion lessons or instruction in the home or from the Church, -- conjoin it to their life as best they can. It is only when they are shown that what they learn in the way of

Doctrine must be lived and only as they do live according to what they are taught, that there can be any enlightenment from above in their minds. This applies not only to children and young people, but to us all. How often we need to be reminded that Doctrine is all for the sake of life, for the sake of being conjoined with our will!

At first Truth Divine or enlightenment appears in a very lowly form in the mind. We need to understand that this story, like every story in the Word, describes the human mind. The whole scene is the human mind and everything said refers to what transpires in it. When therefore, we read that Moses was placed in a little ark made of bulrushes, we are to understand that this is telling us something about the light of truth in the human mind. It is telling us how Truth Divine first manifests itself to the sight in the mind. It is first seen in the midst of the literal stories of the Word. These are what are meant by the bulrushes, which are vegetation of very low value, just as the stories of the Word are considered by many to be of but little worth.

The word usually translated "ark" means "a boat or vessel," and is the same word used in the original for Noah's ark. The stories of the Word provide the first little vessel, receptacle, or repository for the light of truth and surround and protect it.

It is said that the ark is daubed with "bitumen and with pitch" (verse 3). By this is represented the fact that at this stage the Truth Divine that is in the mind is obscured because it is surrounded by good mixed with evils and falsities. "Bitumen" signifies good mixed with evils and "pitch" good mixed with falsities.

The Arcana makes a very interesting comment on this early state of enlightenment. In number 6724:2 we read: "As regards the thing itself -- that encompassing the Truth Divine there is good mixed with evils and falsities, no one can understand this unless he knows how the case is with the reformation of man. When a man is being reformed, he is kept by the Lord as to his internal in good and truth, but as to his external he is let into his evils and falsities, consequently among infernal spirits who are in these evils and falsities. These hover round him and endeavor by every method to destroy him. but the good and truth that flow in through the internal render him so safe that the infernal spirits cannot do him the least harm; for that which acts inwardly prevails immeasurably over that which acts outwardly; because what is interior, in consequence of being purer, acts upon each and every individual particular of the exterior and thus disposes the externals to its will. But in this case there must be good and truth in the external, wherein the influx from the internal can be fixed; and in this way good can be among evils and falsities and yet be in safety. Everyone who is being reformed is let into this state and in this way the evils and falsities in which he is, are removed and goods and truths are inserted in their place" (AC 6724:2).

That same number goes on to explain that the good is not however, conjoined with evils and falsities, for the reason that they are opposites and shun each other, one is from heaven and the other from hell, so they are kept separate from each other. Yet inmosty in this little ark in the mind, in this little repository, there is this truth beginning to flow in from the Lord and enlighten the mind. This is what is represented by the babe Moses being placed in the ark.

Let us keep in mind all the time that this whole story takes place in Egypt, that is, in a state of mind where there is a great deal of false science, knowledge that is separate from what is spiritual and therefore materialistic and natural. There is always the danger that this will pour in upon the mind. This is the significance of the ark being placed among what is called in the Authorized or King James translation, "the flags by the river's brink." The word used here means "weeds" of the river and the same word is used in the book of Jonah for "seaweed". The Egyptian river represents false philosophy.

From all this we can see how vulnerable is truth from the Divine or enlightenment at this stage in our reformation. It could easily be snuffed out altogether, just as Moses could easily have drowned in the Egyptian River. There is a need for some protection, something to watch over this light of truth in the natural mind. This is provided by the light of truth that is already on the rational plane of the mind, the light of truth from the good of intention -- that makes the rational degree, which is above the natural. This rational truth watching over the light of truth that is in the natural degree below is pictured in the story by the sister of Moses standing afar off with the purpose of knowing what would be done to Moses.

This is the first stage in the growth of Truth Divine in our mind; that it is among falsities and evils and is thus obscure and very feeble in its beginnings.

The next stage in its development is that it is nurtured by the good of the Church -- by feelings of charity towards the neighbor or love to the Lord. These loves are the genuine good of the Church itself.

We can easily understand this if only we consider the fact that the light of heaven can come only from heavenly love. No matter how much natural loyalty we may have for the people in the Church organization or for the organization itself, these natural feelings do not cause us to see the truths of the Word in spiritual light but rather in natural light. Natural light compared with spiritual light or the light of heaven is like a phosphorescent light compared with the light of the sun. We therefore need something more than natural loyalty or feelings of friendship for people in the Church if Truth Divine or the light of heaven is going to grow in our natural mind and enlighten it so that we may be delivered from falsities. If this kind of an enlightenment is to survive and indeed to grow, it must be nurtured or suckled by the genuine good of the Church, that is, by heavenly loves. Let us recall

that we have only as much of faith as we have of charity, no more, no less. In the story in Exodus this spiritual principle is acted out by the fact that Moses is suckled by his own mother.

This cannot be done openly, however. It can only be done secretly and under the auspices of Egypt. As we have seen, if the light of heaven comes forth into the conscious mind where the falsities of evil reign, it is immediately put to death. If Moses had remained at home, he would have been thrown into the river by the Egyptians.

This leads us to consider the representation of Pharaoh's daughter, who is the means of saving Moses from certain death.

The "daughter of Pharaoh" is said to represent "a religiosity from false scientifics" (AC 6729). We must see what this means, as the role of Pharaoh's daughter in this story is crucial.

In the Writings a religiosity is always contrasted with a genuine church. Usually, a "daughter" represents a church; but here, since it is Pharaoh's daughter, she represents a religiosity -- a form of worship and religious belief derived from false scientifics and therefore a false or mistaken kind of belief. The false scientifics are false conclusions of some kind and since the subject has to do with religious belief, we can safely assume that the conclusions are drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word or from some substitute for the Word. There is also the possibility that these false scientifics mean mistaken ideas of the externals of the Church -- the rituals, the science of correspondences, etc. The girls who served the daughter of Pharaoh are said to represent "ministeries of the religiosity". These would be natural affections serving that religiosity, such as mere personal loyalties or mere loyalty to an organization.

Bearing in mind that this daughter of Pharaoh must represent something that saves Moses or Truth Divine from destruction and bearing in mind that later Moses becomes her son and taking together all that is said about her representation, it would all seem to add up to describing the kind of worship and religious belief that arises from natural affections and loyalties -- what is elsewhere described in the Writings as historical faith or the faith of authority, which nonetheless consents to the good and the truth of the Church. This natural kind of religion is, after all, what is prepared to adopt Truth Divine when it presents itself.

There is also another helpful aspect of this natural affection, this daughter of Pharaoh. It has within it a certain curiosity. It is curiosity that keeps this natural affection alive and leads it on to further discoveries. We read that Pharaoh's daughter, when she saw the ark in the middle of the flags or weeds, sent her handmaid and took it. This is obviously an act of curiosity -- natural curiosity. It represents the fact that there is something about the literal Word, religion and worship that appeals even to the natural mind; it arouses wonder and curiosity. This leads us to inquire further -- to go deeper. Even though to the natural mind the things of religion do not seem (to all outward appearance) to be of any great value, even as the ark made of bulrushes would not have appealed to Pharaoh's daughter as an object of great beauty, nevertheless something in us, some curiosity, makes us wonder whether perhaps there may be something in it. So Pharaoh's daughter took the ark and opened it.

The opening signifies very obviously an investigation of its quality. When we investigate the quality of something, we are doing what the Writings call reflecting. Then it is that for the first time Pharaoh's daughter sees the child.

"Seeing", of course, means a perception in the mind, here a perception that this is Truth Divine, truth of Divine origin, for this, as we have seen, is what Moses represents. The fact that the babe wept and that Pharaoh's daughter had compassion on him is quite affecting in the literal story. But it is equally touching in the spiritual sense, when we understand that it means an inflow of charity flowing in from the Lord, causing us to see how Truth Divine in our minds is being neglected and needs to be helped, that at this stage of its reception in our mind it is quite helpless and needs to be nurtured. Concerning this the Arcana says: "When anyone from charity sees another in misery (as here Pharaoh's daughter saw the child in the ark of rush and weeping), compassion arises; and as this is from the Lord, it is an admonition. Moreover, when those who are in perception feel compassion, they know that they are admonished by the Lord to give aid" (AC 6737). We know that this feeling is heavenly, that it belongs to the Lord's Kingdom. That is why Pharaoh's daughter said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children" (verse 6).

Then something else comes to the aid of truth Divine something related to it, something that also belongs to the Lord's Kingdom. Moses' sister, by whom, as we have seen, is meant the spiritual truth on the rational level of the mind, this sister of Moses perceives a specific need that must be filled. In the literal story the sister of Moses offers to take the babe to a nurse among the Hebrew women so that she may nurse the child for Pharaoh's daughter. In the spiritual sense this means the perception that the good affections of the Church need to be insinuated into the mind -- such things as a love and reverence for the Lord and for His Word and a love for the life of His Kingdom in the heavens and on earth. It is seen that these good affections need to be insinuated because they are spiritual milk for the new—born recognition of truth from the Divine in the mind.

It is quite ironic in the literal story that Moses in this way should be taken back to his own mother in order to be suckled! Pharaoh's daughter did not know that the little girl was the sister of Moses nor that the woman to be used as a nurse was in fact the mother of Moses. By this we are taught in the spiritual sense that the natural does not distinguish between its own affections and those that flow in from above. The daughter of Pharaoh was simply content to have the babe nursed by a Hebrew woman.

We would note in passing that the natural was capable of recognizing truth from the Divine when it saw it, but was not capable of distinguishing between natural and spiritual affections. This is a most important lesson for us to learn. The understanding can indeed be raised up into the light of heaven. The light of heaven can be seen. But it is very difficult to distinguish between feelings aroused by the influx from heaven and those of our merely natural will. These things cannot be seen; they can only be felt. And, as we all know, ever since the Fall of man our feelings are notoriously unreliable as a standard of judgment. Our natural will is opposed to heavenly things and so would readily lead us away from the Lord. What we feel about anything is not necessarily what we should feel. This is why we must be guided by the understanding side of the mind.

Another important lesson from the suckling of Moses by his own mother is that it is only from the things of the Lord's Kingdom, represented by the Hebrew woman, that Truth Divine or the light of truth can be nourished and fed. Only from the remains of heavenly good and truth lodging secretly in the mind and to all appearances playing the role of the underdog, only from these things of the Lord's Kingdom can the light of truth be suckled and nourished. Only as we shun our evils as sins against the Lord can there be inflow of charity from the Lord that is spiritual milk and drink for this spiritual kind of faith. It can grow only from what flows in from the Lord through heaven. In this part of the story we have a very touching picture of the way the Lord implants and activates the remains of good and truth in the mind of the man of the Church, even while he knows it not.

This suckling of Moses, which represents, as we have seen, the insinuation or implanting of good in the Truth Divine that has begun to grow in the mind, is the second state of its life-story. The first state was one in which it was immersed among evils and falsities, represented by the ark being placed among the weeds by the bank of the Egyptians' river.

But a third state appears. The growth of the child is the growth of enlightenment from the Lord in the mind and the state is reached where it can no longer be nourished simply by good affections. The time comes when instruction is needed. If Truth Divine is ever to grow up to be a deliverer, it will need to learn the scientifics of the Church. This third state is one in which there is a desire to learn, not only worldly scientifics but also what are called "the scientifics of the Church" (AC 6750:2). The passage where this expression is used also goes on to give this explanation: "Moreover, scientifics are what those who are being regenerated must first learn, because they are a plane for the things of the understanding and the understanding is the recipient of the true things of faith and truth of faith is the recipient of the good of charity. Hence it can be seen that science is the first plane when man is being regenerated" (AC 6750).

So Moses then becomes the son of Pharaoh's daughter. In this third stage the representation of Pharaoh's daughter is slightly changed. She is said to represent now the natural affection of learning, the desire to learn. This means Truth Divine is cared for, nourished and educated by a love of learning. From this natural love of learning, this curiosity, the primary truths or general truth of the Church are acquired. Unless this is done, truth from the Divine will remain as an infant and have no great influence upon the mind as a whole.

It is important to realize once again that we are speaking of the first truths of the Church rather than the first knowledge of it. Truth is not the same as knowledge. The knowledges or scientifics of the Church are vessels in which truth may be seen. Only when we see that they are true, only when we see the truth in them, do knowledges become true things of faith. In the words of the Arcana Coelestia: "When he is being regenerated, a man advances in the things of faith almost as he advances in the truths not of faith when he is growing to maturity; in this growth, sensuous things are the first plane; then scientifics; and upon these planes judgment afterwards grows, with one person more, with another less. During man's regeneration, the general things of faith, or the rudiments of the doctrine of the Church, are the first plane; then the particulars of doctrine and of faith; afterward successively things more interior. These planes are what are enlightened by the light of heaven; hence comes the intellectual and the power of perceiving faith and the good of charity" (AC 6751). Note particularly that "these planes are what are enlightened by the light of heaven." Without these planes or levels of development, there would be nothing in the mind upon which the light of heaven could fall, the light of heaven being the same as this truth from the Divine represented by Moses. It is therefore essential that these planes of knowledge or of doctrine be built up in the mind in order for truth from the Divine to grow. All this is represented by Moses growing up in the house of the daughter of Pharaoh.

The state of mind that has here been reached is one in which the light of Truth Divine has begun to grow in the mind. It has been rescued from the falsities that surrounded it in the beginning and is therefore not so much in danger of being extinguished. It has been "drawn out from the waters of the river of Egypt." That is why it is said that the daughter of Pharaoh "called his name Moses and she said, Because I drew him out of the waters" (verse 10). Whenever someone is named in the Word, the quality of the state described there is what is meant. This is because "a name" in the Word always means a quality. To know what kind of name or reputation a person has we need to know what kind of person he is, or what his quality is. So it is that "a name" means quality.

In the original language the name Moses means "drawn out". That is why, in the literal story, Pharaoh's daughter adds, "because I drew him out of the waters". Spiritually, the deliverance in question is deliverance from being drowned by the false teachings of the world, that is, of the natural man; such as the idea that the Bible or Word of God is only a collection of the myths and legends and history of the Jews, that religion may be a help to those who need it but that the intelligent do not need it, that there is no heaven or hell or life after death because no one has come back to tell us about it, that there are no absolute truths or goods but they are all relative to the situation in which one finds oneself, that if we feel like doing or saying something, that is sufficient reason for doing so, that love alone is all that is needed by way of a guide in life, that freedom is to do what one likes, that marriage is only a human institution for the sake of society and that worship and the Church are now irrelevant. The light of heaven or truth from the Divine has been drawn out from these falsities in the natural man and this by means of the remains of

good and truth implanted by the Lord and by means of its loyalty to the faith in which it was instructed and brought up and by means of instruction from the Word of the Lord.

This Truth Divine, which is in this way delivered, is itself to become a deliverer, the means by which the Lord delivers the whole mind from bondage to sensual appearances and to the imposing philosophies built upon them.

Yet it can operate in the mind only according to the strength of its reception. If it is strongly received, it can work wonders. If it is only weakly received, it has its limitations. In the remaining verses of this chapter we learn of three more incidents in the life of Moses, which tell us spiritually of three further states of the development of this enlightenment in the natural mind. These incidents, you will recall, are: 1) that Moses kills an Egyptian who is attacking one of the Hebrews; 2) that he finds himself unable to be an adjudicator between two Hebrews who are quarreling; 3) and that he flees to the Midianites in order to escape punishment by the Egyptian Pharaoh. But the spiritual meaning of these incidents in the life of Moses will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Moses Flees to Midian

Deliverance is the main theme of the book of Exodus, even in its literal sense. It is the story of how the sons of Israel and their families were delivered from bondage to the Egyptians and how they were delivered from many dangers in their journey out of Egypt into Canaan.

In the inmost sense, in which the subject is always the Lord and the way He made His Human part Divine while on earth, the book of Exodus tells us how the Lord delivered His Human from every falsity, falsities being represented by Egypt and the King of Egypt. In regard to this we read in the Arcana Coelestia: "The

Lord in order that He might become the Law Divine as to the Human, delivered it from every falsity that cleaved to His Human from the mother and this until He became the Divine Law, that is, the Divine truth itself and afterward when glorified He became the Divine good, which is the esse of Divine truth, that is, Jehovah" (AC 6753).

In the internal sense itself, which has to do with the regeneration of the human mind of man so that it becomes spiritual in quality, the deliverance meant is the deliverance of the individual man from the false ideas and principles of worldly knowledge, separated from anything spiritual. This is represented by Egypt and Pharaoh.

But in the sense nearest to the sense of the letter, which is called the internal historical sense and deals with the internal history of the various churches that have existed in different ages in the history of mankind, the subject is the way every new church has been delivered from the falsities of the church that preceded it and which came to its end. For example, the internal historical sense of the book of Exodus tells us about the way the Christian Church was delivered from the falsities of the Jewish Church, when the latter had come to its end. It also tells us about the way the New Church, the Church of the New Jerusalem, is to be delivered from the falsities of the Christian Church at its end.

The second chapter, in the internal sense, introduced a ray of hope. It began to show us how we can be delivered from this bondage to Egyptian darkness. Although the literal story has to do with the birth of Moses, his placement in an ark made of rescue and preservation by the daughter of real scene here is not the land of Egypt, nor is the era thousands of years ago. The scene is our own, individual, human mind; and the time is our own lifetime. The real subject in the internal sense is our own exodus out of Egypt into Canaan, our own deliverance from the falsities of materialism and our subsequent spiritual journey into the bliss of heavenly happiness, into the Holy Land that the Lord promises us.

The means used to deliver us from being infested by false ideas is the light of Truth Divine, the enlightenment that comes from the Lord in proportion as we live according to what we know. In the second half of the second chapter, which is before us now, three more stages in the development of enlightening truth to the point where it may become a deliverer are described. The first one follows on naturally from the third one discussed in the previous chapter and is really the fourth in the whole series. It

is the conjoining of enlightenment with the true things of the Church, represented by Moses seeing his brother Hebrews and by his dealings with them.

The next stage, the fifth, is the separation from falsities in the natural man and the beginning of a new state of being adjoined with what the Writings call the "truths of simple good." This is signified by Moses fleeing from Egypt to Midian.

The final stage treated in this series, the sixth, is the stage of being adjoined to good. This is signified by the marriage of Moses with Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel, the Midianite, later known as Jethro.

Let us now retrace our steps to look a little closely at these last three stages in the development of enlightenment in the natural mind, which is the means of our being freed and delivered from the falsities of materialism. Let us try to see how these things relate to our life here and now. As was said a moment ago, the first stage that we are to examine is involved in the part of the story that deals in the literal sense with Moses' relations with his brethren, his fellow Hebrews. The sacred narrative tells us that "Moses grew and he went out unto his brethren and saw their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian man smiting a Hebrew man, one of his brethren" (verse 11).

Now, what is meant by Moses going out unto his brethren?

It signifies quite obviously that truth from the Divine is beginning to enlighten and in this way be conjoined with, the true things of the church -- represented by the Hebrews. The fact that he saw their burdens, that they were being oppressed by the Egyptians, describes the awareness that falsities are oppressing the things of the Church. When the mind is being infested with false ideas arising from worldly knowledge, the mind of the man of the Church feels greatly oppressed and burdened. He does not know what to think. The strenuous attempts of falsity to destroy the truth of the Church in our mind is seen in particular by the next thing that is said, namely, that Moses saw "an Egyptian man smiting a Hebrew man, one of his brethren" (verse 11).

This particular Egyptian man represents a particular scientific, in this case a particular false conclusion. For example, it could be the falsity that there is no Creator, that nature created and formed itself. This false principle attacks and smites the first and most fundamental of all truths of the Church, that "in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). Here we have an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew man.

Now, it is said of Moses that "he looked first this way and that and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (verse 12).

Moses looked around to see whether it was safe to do what he intended to do; in other words, whether it was safe for Truth Divine to do battle with this particular falsity. Truth from the Divine had sufficient power, or there was sufficient enlightenment, to destroy this particular idea originating from what was not of the Church. That Moses buried the Egyptian in the sand signifies that he banished this falsity to where falsities are, this being evident when we know the signification of "sand" as being false science. "Sand" has this signification because it is from stone, which signifies, in a good sense, truth; and in the opposite sense, as here, falsity. We are reminded at this point of the Lord's parable about the man who did not obey the Divine commandments and was described as a foolish man, who built his house on sand -- which could not withstand the storms of temptation.

Then it is said that Moses went out again and this time he saw two Hebrew men quarreling. He tried to rebuke one of them, but his authority was rejected. The one who was rebuked taunted him with the words, "Who set thee for a man, a prince and a judge, over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared and said, Surely, this thing is known" (verse 13).

Here we have a situation that shows the limitations of enlightenment from the Divine at this fourth stage in the development of the man of the Church. It has sufficient power, sufficient truths from good to feel perfectly safe in tackling false principles and teachings from those outside of the Church. It can be successful in destroying, in particular, the false principles put forth by the adherents of materialism. But it does not at this stage have sufficient truths to feel safe in making a judgment about the various doctrinal

matters within the Church. It is not capable of seeing where the truth lies in the doctrinal controversies within the Church itself.

We are primarily considering here the internal sense itself of this incident. But it may perhaps be easier to understand what is involved if we illustrate it by matters from the internal historical sense, that is, from controversies relating to the various churches that have existed on the earth. In the inner history of the Christian Church at its beginning we had several instances of Moses being able to vanquish an Egyptian but being unable to adjudicate between two Hebrews. The early Christians were well able to overcome the arguments of the Greeks, of the Romans and of the leaders of the consummated Jewish church. They were able to answer them with assurance and authority and expose the falsities of their teachings. Moses could smite the Egyptian and bury him in the sand.

But there was not sufficient enlightenment in the Church at that time to discern between good and evil and truth and falsity within the Christian Church itself. As we learn from the documents of church history, soon after the establishment of the Christian Church there began to be heresies and divisions among the members of the Church, represented in this story by the Hebrews fighting among themselves. Truth Divine was not received in the Church with sufficient power to be acknowledged as a ruler, even as Moses was not acknowledged as a judge and ruler at this stage.

We can see similar things, too, in the New Church, which has followed on from the Christian church. Especially in the early days of the establishment of the New Church there was great ability to vanquish the avowed opponents of the new revelation. The early New Church missionaries and scholars were outstanding in their success whenever they sought to defend the Church -tc_ainst the attacks, not only of skeptics, but also of the stalwarts of the consummated church. They could bury them in their own sand.

But there was not sufficient enlightenment, not sufficient truths from the Divine in the Church, to act as a judge and ruler when the members of the Church began to fight among themselves, when various heresies arose and were strenuously defended. Rather than enlightenment prevailing in the Church in this state, there was gross confusion, the confusion and obscurity of controversy. There was not sufficient truth from the Divine, sufficient enlightenment, to settle differences within the Church.

What was needed was to return to the simple, basic, fundamental truths of the literal sense of the Word and apply them to life, together with continual study in depth of the truths of Divine revelation, so that there might be a deeper understanding of the Lord's will. This is what is represented by Moses fleeing to the well in Midian; the well being an obvious correspondent of the Word of God in its literal sense, which is like a deep well of truth, the Land of Midian representing those who are in the truths of simple good. The truths of simple good are the general, basic, teachings of the literal sense of the Word, such as the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, the doctrine of genuine truth which can lead to a life of simple goodness.

These illustrations from church history may serve to give us some idea of what is meant by Moses being able to smite an Egyptian but being unable to settle differences between the Hebrews, his brethren.

In regard to this the Arcana Coelestia says: "In the internal sense the subject treated of now is the progress of Divine Truth with a man who is being regenerated. This progress is such that the man is for the first time enabled to discriminate between falsity and truths; for from the truth in which he is he can see falsity, because it is opposite; but he cannot at this time settle differences between the true things of faith within the Church; in order to be able to do this, he must make further progress, for man is enlightened successively. This is very evident from youths and young men, who believe the doctrinal things of their Church to be truth itself and from these judge falsities, but as yet are not able to settle differences between matters of faith in the Church. This ability comes by degrees: and therefore a man to whom this is possible must be of a more advanced age and must have the interiors of his understanding enlightened" (AC 6766:2).

The danger is that gross materialism and naturalism will prevail over the things of the Church and extinguish Truth Divine or enlightenment from the Lord. This is clearly meant by the fear of Moses that Pharaoh would learn of his action and seek to kill him and by the fact that Pharaoh did seek to do this.

Moses felt unsafe. "That he is not in safety," we read, "is because he is not in truths; for those who are in truths are in safety wherever they go, even in the midst of the hells. That those who are not yet in truths are not in safety is because things not true communicate with evil spirits" (AC 6769).

When it is said that Moses was "not in truths," the meaning is that enlightenment from the Lord did not reign in the mind. There was some enlightenment, as we have seen. But it did not prevail. What reigned was a state of confusion and controversy within the mind with regard to what is true. In this state of frustration, it is very tempting to give up on spiritual things altogether; to turn to the world, to merely natural conclusions as the guide to life and the basis of decision-making. There is a great danger of mere naturalism destroying what is spiritual in the mind.

The triumph of materialism and naturalism was, in fact, the final result as far as the Christian Church was concerned. Although in many cases there may have been a return to the truths of simple good, there certainly was not an increasing depth of understanding of the Word of the Lord. Dating from the early Councils of the Church there was a steady increase in naturalism within the Church, an increase in merely natural explanations of the literal sense. There was no general fleeing to the well in Midian.

The same danger exists in the New Church. Materialism and mere naturalism can engulf us unless there is a constant, a ceaseless, study in depth of what the Lord has revealed. The secularization of the Church and of its schools will be the inevitable consequence if ever we cease as a body to go to the Lord in His Word for deeper and deeper instruction for the sake of a greater enlightenment from Him.

As we have seen, the flight of Moses to the well at Midian represents the deeper study of the Word in its literal sense.

This is the fifth state in the development of enlightenment or of truth from the Divine. It represents an advance to a state where there is some simple goodness of life according to a literal understanding of the Word. This is what is meant by the Land of Midian.

But when it is realized that the study of the Word is for the sake of life, when the tendency to learn just for the sake of faith without regard to charity is repelled, there is conjunction with the simple good of the Church and a new state -- the sixth state of enlightenment -- begins.

The simple good of the Church -- the goodness of life that results from applying the basic fundamentals of the Word to life -- this simple good is represented by the priest of Midian, Reuel and the affections or delights of this good are meant by his "seven daughters." The fact that these daughters drew from the well and filled the trough signifies an important truth --that they were instructed from the Word and from this instruction they were able to enrich the doctrine of charity. "To draw from the well" means to be instructed and a "trough," from which the flock is given to drink, means the doctrine of charity or the teaching concerning charity.

Moses stands up and helps the daughters drive away the hostile shepherds who would deprive their flocks of their drink. The shepherds of the flock usually represent those teachers or teachings that look to charity or goodness of life as the end in view. But these hostile shepherds represent the opposite --teachings that do not look to life or have not been applied to goodness of life. This is the case when we subconsciously think that we are of the Church because we have been born within it or because we have come into it. Truth from the Divine is easily able to drive away that doctrinal falsity and as a result is brought to the simple good of the Church -- meant by the Priest of Midian, Reuel. The further adjoining to good is meant by the marriage of Moses to Zipporah, the daughter of the Priest.

Enlightenment from the Lord or Truth Divine has now been set free from the danger of being extinguished. But it must now be prepared to deliver the mind as a whole from Egyptian darkness. Let us remember that while Moses was indeed in Midian, the other Hebrews were still in bondage to Egypt. They sighed and groaned by reason of their bondage. At last they cried out unto God to be released.

This entreaty to be delivered marks a turning point in our deliverance from this state of spiritual slavery. From the moment we admit our need for Divine aid and beg to be delivered, a new phase begins. The fact

that "God heard their groaning" signifies that the Lord provides and brings aid. He will now be conjoined with the Church and the period of preparation for deliverance will soon be brought to a close.

The Lord can deliver the natural mind from these infestations only to the extent that He is acknowledged in His Divine Human. Conjunction with the Church is always and only through the Divine on the human level, that is, the Divine Human. This is the meaning of the words towards the end of this chapter, "And God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob" (verse 24).

Abraham represents the Lord as to the Divine Itself, Isaac represents the Lord as to the Divine rational and Jacob as to the Divine natural (AC 6894). The Divine must penetrate down even to the natural if there is to be conjunction with the Church or the man of the Church. The Writings point out that "it is known in the Church that the Lord as to the Divine Human is the mediator and that no one can come to the Divine Itself, which is in the Lord and is called the Father, except through the Son, that is through the Divine Human. Thus the Lord as to the Divine Human is the conjunction. Who can comprehend the Divine Itself by any thought? And if he cannot comprehend it in thought, who can be conjoined with it in love? But everyone can comprehend the Divine Human in thought and be conjoined with it in love" (AC 6804:4).

If, then, it is vitally important that the man of the Church approach the Lord in His Divine Human and not approach either the Divine in Itself or the Holy Spirit directly, if we are to focus our whole attention on the Lord in His Divine Human as being the fullness of the Godhead bodily, then the process of being delivered cannot possibly go forward until this acknowledgment of the Lord is made. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that in the next chapter Moses comes into the presence of the Divine Human. This is the meaning of the Lord speaking to Moses out of the burning bush in chapter three of the Book of Exodus.

We will take up that subject later.

Let us now review what we have seen in these three chapters on the internal sense of the first two chapters of the Book of Exodus. We began with the question of why it is that of all the people, both young people and adults, who begin to come into the Church -- into the Lord's Kingdom -- not all of them endure to the end, but return to the world or to the Christian Church. We saw part of the answer, an important part, in the spiritual sense of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt, which represents a spiritual kind of slavery. The Israelites represent what is of the Lord's Kingdom in the natural mind -- truth from good. The Egyptians are the falsities of evil, the false conclusions based upon the evidence of the senses and the fascination of those worldly philosophies that are separated from anything spiritual and thus opposed to the Church.

We saw that it only needs truth on the natural plane to die out and goodness and delight in what is true and good will also die out. Hence Pharaoh had only to kill the Hebrew boys and the Hebrew nation would have disappeared as a nation.

The only way for us to be delivered from this kind of spiritual slavery when false ideas infest our minds, is to see these Egyptian falsities in the light of heaven. The light of heaven or truth from the Divine must flow in by an internal way and cause us to see falsity as falsity and consequently, truth as truth. This is the only way by which we can be set free from being captivated by these falsities. This Truth Divine or enlightenment from the Lord is what is represented by Moses, the law-giver and deliverer.

We have seen the growth of this light from the Lord. It begins by being seen in the sense of the letter of the Word, represented by the ark of bulrushes. There is always the constant danger that this heavenly light will be destroyed before it can develop, because it is surrounded by evils and falsities.

It is rescued by the natural love for people in the Church and for the organization itself and its externals. This seems to be the representation of the daughter of Pharaoh, who rescues Moses. The good natural affections, by which we are kept in the sphere of the Church, are the means by which the light of Truth Divine is preserved from extinction in our minds at this stage in its development.

By being in the sphere of the Church we can be nourished by the genuine good of the Church -- the good of charity. It is quite necessary that this good be insinuated so that Truth Divine can be nurtured and this is what is meant by Moses being nourished by a Hebrew woman, his own mother.

The natural curiosity and delight in learning the scientific things of the world and the doctrinal things of the Church is what next helps in the growth of this redeeming enlightenment whose progress we are following. Moses is brought up and educated by the daughter of Pharaoh, by the daughter of the man who had decreed his death.

At this stage there are certain things which the light of Truth Divine is capable of doing and some which it cannot do. It is capable of recognizing falsity when those who are outside of the Church present it; it is quite capable of striking down their arguments. But there is not yet at this time sufficient power in this enlightening truth to settle disputes within the Church. For this, greater maturity is needed. We have seen in this chapter that this is what is meant by the inability of Moses to be a judge and adjudicator between two quarreling Hebrews, while yet he was quite capable of destroying an Egyptian who was attacking a Hebrew.

What is needed if Truth Divine is going to be the leading quality in the mind, the leading quality that leads all the things of the Church out of its state of being infested by falsities rising up from the natural man, is that it flee to that well of truth which is the Word of God in the sense of the letter. It must bend its energies toward leading the life of simple goodness, a life of obedience to the basic and obvious principles of life that are taught in the pages of Divine

Revelation and it must draw from the well; it must make a continually deeper study of the Word in order to see more and more applications to life. This is what is meant by Moses escaping from Pharaoh, fleeing to the well of Midian and becoming a member of the family of Reuel, the Priest of Midian and of his marriage with Zipporah, the daughter of the Priest.

Then there is a humble, heartfelt entreaty to the Lord to be set free from infestation, for the Hebrews are still in bondage to Egypt. But there is now hope for deliverance, because Moses, the light of Truth Divine in the mind, is about to be prepared to be the deliverer. It is true that Midian is not Egypt, but neither is it Canaan. Greater happiness than what results from a life of simple goodness is promised by the Lord.

Chapter 4 Moses at the Burning Bush

In the third chapter of Exodus, (which is before us now), the literal sense recounts the experience of Moses while tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the wilderness near the "Mountain of God," called Mount Horeb. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire coming out of the midst of a bramble bush, which, however, was not consumed although it was burning with fire.

The Lord then explained to Moses that He intended to release the Israelites from their bondage to Egypt and set them free, bringing them to the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey. The Lord next commanded Moses to act for Him by going to Pharaoh and securing the release of the Israelites from Egypt. When Moses expressed his feelings of inadequacy for this task, the Lord reassured him by explaining that He Himself would be with Moses. Moses then wished to know by what name the God of the Israelites was to be known. "And God said unto Moses, I AM I WHO AM and He said, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14).

The Lord next explained that the King of Egypt would not allow them to leave the country until He had performed many wonders that would frighten the Pharaoh into releasing them. Finally the Lord prophesied that the people would not leave Egypt empty handed, but that every woman should ask for vessels of silver and vessels of gold and garments from her neighbor, so that they would spoil or plunder the Egyptians.

In the internal or spiritual sense of this third chapter of the Book of Exodus the subject treated of is the first step in the liberation of the man in the spiritual Church. The first thing that happens is there is a certain enlightenment as to who the Divine Redeemer or Liberator is, that it is the Lord; there is for the first time a clear perception that He will not only set free the natural mind from being infested by falsities but will also introduce it into a beautiful, heavenly state that is full of true things and good things or delights (AC 6825). All this is represented by the Lord appearing to Moses and the Divine promise of deliverance.

We always need to know where an event takes place, if we are to understand the spiritual sense of any story in the Word of God. The reason is that place signifies state of mind. Where a person is in a biblical story indicates where he is spiritually -- what state of mind he is in.

Now, Moses was feeding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian (Exodus 3:1). Moses, as we have seen, represents the light of the law from the Divine; enlightenment from the Lord. The Midianites represent those who are in a state of simple goodness from having followed the basic commandments of the literal sense of the Word. The priest of Midian specifically stands for the goodness of charity or love towards the neighbor that those have who are in a state of simple good. To feed the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian, means to enlighten and thus instruct this state of simple goodness, so that there is a little more enlightenment as to how the doctrine of charity taught in the literal sense of the Word applies to one's life. This is the general state of mind that is depicted in the opening verse of the third chapter.

However, it must be remembered that the mind is not yet completely free from being infested by evils and falsities; it is not yet by any means set free from slavery to materialistic ideas, false conclusion drawn from sense experience. The sons of Israel are still in bondage in Egypt. But the fact that Moses has escaped to Midian and is feeding the flocks of Jethro, means that the understanding formed by the basic principles of life revealed openly in the literal sense of the Word, that understanding is somewhat enlightened; it can momentarily, or in certain states, be raised up into the light of heaven and have a clearer perception of what has yet to happen in the deliverance of the mind from being infested by false ideas.

This enlightenment occurs, however, only after temptation, only after a wilderness state of barrenness in regard to heavenly things, only after a period in which it seems that one is in the wilderness and forsaken by the Lord. Thus it is said that "Moses led the flock behind the wilderness" (verse 1). The flock, in the Sacred Scriptures, always means the good feelings of charity that come as one lives according to even the simplest and most basic principles of the Word. These precious feelings of simple goodness had been led by means of enlightenment from the Lord, through the wilderness of doubt and temptation, so that all that misery is now behind them.

Then it is that the Lord, the Divine Human, the source of everything that is raised above the level of what is bestial, the source of everything that is thus truly human, the Lord God the Savior and Redeemer, is for the first time truly acknowledged. For the first time holy feelings of awe and reverence flow in, as consolation following the desolation of temptation. With these heaven—sent feelings there comes a new perception of the Divinity and Omnipotence of the Lord the Deliverer. It had indeed been known from doctrine that the Lord is Divine and Omnipotent and that He is the Deliverer. But now the truth of this teaching is seen and the good of it is somewhat felt. This is the appearance of the "Angel of the Lord to Moses" after Moses comes to Horeb, the "Mountain of God." The "Mountain of God" means the goodness of the Divine love, for as we read in the Psalms, "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God" (Psalm 36:6). In this blissful state of consolation there is a wonderful perception of the Divinity of the Lord, the Divinity even of what had been His Human Part. The Divine Love with its goodness for the first time makes its presence felt in the conscious mind -- a very moving experience.

We would notice in passing that the exact wording is that the "Angel of Jehovah" appeared, yet later it is Jehovah or God who speaks. This is because, as a matter of history, before the first advent of the Lord, before the Lord put on His own Human Form and appeared physically on the earth, He could contact the human race only by means of an angel whose mind He would fill with His spirit so that the angel spoke only what the Lord wished to be said. This is why it so often happens that in describing some appearance of the Lord to a man on earth -- such as a prophet -- the Word sometimes says that an angel appeared and spoke and sometimes, even in the same narrative, it is said that it was the Lord who appeared and spoke. In every case the man on earth who in this way received a Divine visitation did so because his spiritual eyes and ears were opened so that he could see and hear in the spiritual world. This was the case with Moses when the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and when he saw a bramble bush burning without its being consumed. The whole transaction took place in the spiritual world.

So much for the historical aspects of this event. But since this is relevant for us today and is above person, time and place, since it is a universal experience that is described in mundane language, let us consider what is meant in the internal sense by "the Angel of the Lord" or, as it really says, "the Angel of Jehovah."

In the Hebrew the word "angel" means "one who is sent." When we recall that the Lord Jesus Christ when on earth in His Human Form frequently said that He was one who was sent and often spoke of "Him who hath sent Me," we begin to understand what is meant by "the Angel of Jehovah." It means the Human of the Lord; this is what was "sent" into the world; This was the supreme messenger of the Divine Soul or Being, Jehovah. The basic teaching is: the "Father" or Jehovah means the Divine Soul, which no one has ever seen; the "Son of God" means the Divine Human of the Lord, which has been seen, even on earth and which has brought forth the Divine Soul to our view.

In other words, by means of what He did and said while in His Human Form on earth, the Lord revealed something of the nature of His Divine Soul that was within Him and was called Jehovah or the Father. This Human Body of the Lord on earth was supremely the "Angel of Jehovah," sent of Jehovah; and it is therefore of this Divine Human of the Lord that we should think when we read that Moses saw the "Angel of Jehovah." The state of mind being described, let us recall, is one in which there comes for the first time a personal perception of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, an inner recognition of the Divine in the Human.

This is a totally unexpected experience, one that produces feelings of awe and wonderment, even holy fear, or reverence of the deepest kind. The reason is that the man of the Church realizes for the first time that the very Esse or Being of the Lord is nothing but Divine love.

Note the emphasis on love. "The Mountain of God" is the goodness of the Divine love. To bring out the ardency of the Divine love, it is said that the Lord appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire." His Divine love is often called "fire" in the Word, as when John the Baptist, in preparing the way for the Lord, said that "He (the Lord) would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mark 1:8). This is meant to show the ardor of the Divine love, which reaches out to every man in order to be conjoined with him and make him eternally happy.

It is seen, this "flame of fire" in which is the Lord in His Divine Human, this Divine love, it is seen to come "out of the midst of a bush" (specifically, a bramble bush). We are instructed by the Lord in the Heavenly Doctrine that "the midst of the bramble" means the truth of scientifics and this, applied to the Church, means the truth in the sense of the letter of the Divine Word (AC 6832). Even in the tangled histories and intricate genealogies of the stories of the Word, even in those parts of it that seem outwardly to be no more appealing than a bramble bush, even there the Lord's Divine love within His Human can be seen, when, in the blessed state of consolation following temptation, we receive an inflow of enlightenment from the Lord. Moses (enlightenment from the Lord) causes us to perceive the Divine love that is within the Human of the Lord even when reading and reflecting upon the sense of the letter of the Word. This is, in fact, a turning point in our regeneration, as indeed it was in the life story of Moses.

But, of course, the Divine love, for all its burning ardor, does not consume the true things of the Word. The reason is that one of the chief characteristics of the Divine love is its willingness to adapt itself to the state of human beings so that it can be received. In other words, it is of the love and mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed (Lamentations 3:22). The Divine love is so ardent that unless it were tempered with coverings, coverings that adapt and accommodate it or step down its power, like a transformer, it would consume the human race. The Divine love is covered and tempered by the truths that appear in the sense of the letter of the Word, meant here by the bramble bush. It burns, but it does not consume.

In this state of confrontation with the Divine, when in simple goodness we see the Divine love and its merciful provisions (even in the sense of the letter of the Word), there comes a Divine admonition: "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (verse 5).

The shoes, the lowest part of our clothing, lower even than the heel, are "sensuous things" -- not only the fallacies of the senses, the unreal appearances that bewitch our sight and pervert it, but also the inordinate

love of sensuous pleasures. These are to be put off if enlightenment is to increase and draw us nearer to reality itself. The admonition is that we must elevate our thought above the teachings of our sense organs and above the fallacious reasonings derived from them; we must no longer think of the Divine from these materialistic things, because they are the cause of our doubts and consequent obscurity in temptation. Concerning this, the teaching of the Lord in the Arcana Coelestia is: "The things that are in the memory from sensuous things derive from the light and heat of the world all that belongs to them and but little from the light and heat of heaven and therefore they are the last things that can be regenerated, that is receive anything of the light of heaven. Hence it is that when a man is in these sensuous things and is thinking from them, he thinks no otherwise of the Divine than as he thinks about earthly things and if he is in evil he thinks from these sensuous things quite against the Divine" (AC 6844:2).

From that Divine teaching we can see why we have to put off our shoes from off our feet if we are to keep before us this vision of the Lord's Divine love and enter more deeply in to it, until this vision becomes an abiding conviction that rescues us from being infested by falsities.

If in this way we rise above the fallacious appearances of the sensuous level of the mind, there then comes the perception that the Lord does indeed know where we are and how grievous are our temptations. And with that comes the joyous realization that the Lord is He who will deliver us. We hear Him say in ringing tones: "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and broad, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites" (verse 8).

Deliverance is possible! Freedom from being infested by falsities is possible! Salvation and regeneration are POSSIBLE! That is the inner meaning of these words. We perceive that the Lord is; and that even His Human is Love Divine, burning with the desire to deliver us from misery and set us free. And in that same moment we perceive that we can be set free, because the Lord in His Divine Human is assuredly the Deliverer.

We also catch a fleeting glimpse of the beautiful, heavenly state of mind that the Lord promises, "the land flowing with milk and honey", with all its pleasantness and sweet delight, its spiritual goodness, the land "good" and "broad," where are the good of charity and mutual love and the truth of faith that gives such breadth of vision. We see some of the evils and their falsities that will have to be cast out -- the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

But no sooner do we see the feasibility of attaining this splendid goal that the Lord promises us than we are overcome by feelings of inadequacy. When we reflect upon the difference between the ideal and the actual, when we examine ourselves, we begin to wonder how we will ever have sufficient truth from the

Divine to accomplish this liberation. Moses asks, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (verse 11). Yet the Lord in His mercy quickly gives a Divine assurance, saying: "Certainly, I will be with thee: and this shall be a sign unto thee that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (verse 12). In turning the mind to the thought of the Lord, we can be assured of the presence of the Lord in His Divine love, by which we shall be certainly delivered.

How should we think of the Lord? The first idea of the Lord that should reign throughout all else is that He created the universe and that the created universe subsists continually every moment from Him (AC 6879). This is what is meant by the name or quality of the Lord here mentioned, "I AM I WHO AM" (verse 14). The first time I AM is said, it refers to the Divine Being in itself, the inmost of the Divine, the Divine Soul, called Jehovah or the Father. The second time I AM is said, it means the Divine standing forth or manifested, the Divine Body that has brought forth the Soul to view.

When Moses is commanded to say to the sons of Israel, "I AM hath sent me unto you" (verse 14), the meaning is that Truth Divine or truth from the Divine (meant by Moses) is to be received by the people of the Church, for the reason that it is nothing else than the light of truth that goes forth from the Lord in His Divine Human. This truth (or light) originating in the Lord, the Divine Human, is to be received because it is

the only means of delivering us from being infested by the falsities of evil, the only thing that will show us falsities for what they are and break their hold upon us.

This being the case, we can easily see now how important it is to look to the Lord as the Divine Human. Without that we will receive no light of Truth Divine into our mind. If we shut out that freedom-giving light, we will naturally fall into the snare of sensuous fallacies. The consequences of this are brought out by the story of the three signs or miracles shown by the Lord.

Without the light of Truth Divine it is fatally easy for our mind to be imprisoned at the sensuous level, so that we believe nothing is true unless it can be tested and "proved" by the evidence of the senses; or, we are convinced that feel in our bodies is our own and originates there; that there is no other world than this physical heaven or hell, because they cannot be seen with eyes or experienced by any of the other senses; or, the delusion that there is no God because He cannot the life we or, we think universe, no the physical we fall into be seen with the physical eyes nor His voice heard by the physical ears. When in this way the evidence of the physical sense is our only credo, then we are not really living, but merely existing in the land of bondage. The sensuous degree of our mind, the lowest level, is thus separated from the higher degrees -- from the rational, the spiritual and celestial degrees. This is meant by the rod in Moses' hand being changed into a serpent; because the repulsive serpent, even the serpent of the Garden of Eden, corresponds to the sensuous level when separated from the heavenly part of the mind. This repels the inflow of Divine light from the Lord, even as Moses recoiled in horror at the sight of the serpent on the ground. The "hand of Moses" represents the Divine Power of Truth Divine on the rational level of the mind; while "the rod of Moses" represents this same power coming down to the natural level. The rod being thrown to the earth signifies the inflow of the power of Divine truth from what is higher into what is lowest. In other words, if we allow ourselves to think in sensuous light, we cut off the influence of what is higher from the Lord and our mind becomes as repulsive as a snake or serpent.

But what happens if we do look to the Lord in His Divine Human -- the source of Truth Divine? In that case our sensuous is proper place, subjected to our rational, which is enlightened from above. Then power from the Divine can flow in. This is meant by the serpent, when grasped by Moses, becoming a rod once more.

Not only must we acknowledge and believe in the Risen Lord and look to Him for light, but we must continue in this spiritual kind of faith. This is the meaning of the next miracle. If we do not continue and endure to the end in our faith in the Lord, we will become a victim of one of the most hideous of all spiritual diseases -- the profanation of truth. There is but one evil that is worse than this and that is the profanation of good. The profanation of good consists in freely and spontaneously living the genuinely good life, that is, the life taught in the Word and then receding from it. The profanation of truth is to believe in the Divine Word and even begin to live within it and then to become unfaithful, to recede from this belief and give it up. This is the spiritual equivalent of leprosy, the spiritual evil or disease to which leprosy corresponds. That is why in the story it is said that Moses' hand became leprous.

If, however, we return to the Lord and continue in the way, we will be delivered from profanation or spiritual leprosy. The hand of Moses will be restored.

Unless this is done, though, there will be a further stage of degeneration. In this, all the true things we have learned but no longer believe or live, will be turned into falsities, outright denials and denunciations. This is meant by the waters of Egypt being turned into blood.

But there is another difficulty in the way of receiving this Divine Light that is meant to liberate us from the falsities of evil. The difficulty is that this truth from the Lord, this light that proceeds immediately from the Lord, is above all human comprehension. It does not even fall into human thought. As we read in Isaiah: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55: 8,9).

The consequence of this is that unless there were some Divine revelation, some description of the Divine law and order or way of operating, some explanation adapted and accommodated to human understanding, we would receive no light. That is why we find Moses -- who represents this infinite truth --

saying, "I am not a man of words...I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue" (verse 10). The Truth Divine proceeding directly or immediately from the Lord's love does not fall into human speech, not even into human thought. But it has a brother who speaks well -- Aaron the Levite. Aaron, whose name, significantly means "enlightened," stands for the Divine doctrine or teaching concerning good and truth, teaching brought down to the level of angels and of men, who need it if they are not to fall into a merely sensuous kind of life. This is where the Divine love -- meant by Jehovah or the Lord, speaks to the man of the spiritual Church and tells him what he is to do. The Divine love goes forth by means of the Divine truth itself (Moses) and this in turn is accommodated in the form of doctrine to the understanding of the various grades of angels and men. It passes down through each of the heavens, adapting itself to each level of understanding, until it reaches the level of even sensuous men.

When in this way we understand the representation of the main personages in the story -- the Lord or Jehovah as the Divine good or love itself, Moses as the Divine truth itself that goes forth from this good and Aaron the Levite as the doctrinal teaching of the Word showing us what we should do and what we should believe -- then we can understand why the Lord says to Moses: "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall be that he shall be to thee for a mouth and thou shalt be to him for God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (Exodus 4: 15-17).

Only in the pages of the Divinely revealed Word does the Lord speak to man and tell him what he is to do. All forms of the Word are meant by Aaron -- the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Writings. But, surely, since the Doctrine of good and truth is set forth in the utmost clarity in the Writings and is there presented in the most enlightened form, surely, the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem is to be understood pre-eminently (though not exclusively) by Aaron the Levite.

But it is not Aaron alone who is the spokesman for the Lord. Aaron must go forth and meet Moses, before he can have any message to convey. Aaron, when separated from Moses, became an idolator, as we learn from a later incident, when he led in the worship of the golden calf of externalism. Doctrine as doctrine, or for the sake of doctrine, is idolatry. Doctrine in the form of knowledges of facts lodging in the memory likewise brings no conjunction with the Lord. It is only living doctrine, doctrine in life, a living experience of what the doctrine teaches that brings us into a state where we can truly be enlightened --enlightened in the details of doctrine to the point where falsities can be completely overthrown.

In explaining this the Arcana Coelestia points out that the truth of doctrine from the Word represented by Aaron does indeed come forth from the Lord, but it comes directly or mediately; that is it proceeds from the Lord by means or by medium of others -- such as the angelic heavens, the prophets or writers of the Gospels, or Swedenborg. It does not come directly from the Lord or immediately from Him, but by medium of His servants, the prophets. This truth that goes forth from the Lord mediately and is represented by Aaron enters first into our understanding.

In the early stages that is as far as it goes. We simply know about the truth. We do not really understand the implications or its applications to life. We simply know about it as doctrine. So it is quite possible for this truth proceeding mediately or indirectly from the Lord to be in our minds and yet "it may not be conjoined with the truth which proceeds immediately from the Divine" (AC 7055).

Truth proceeding immediately or directly from the Divine is what is represented by Moses. As we have seen many times, this is the light of Truth Divine, the light that causes us to see the truth in what we have been taught from the Word. Only as this light proceeding immediately from the Lord falls upon the knowledges of doctrine that have come into our mind from outside and that we have lived, it is only then that knowledge of truth is transformed into spiritual truth -- truth seen in spiritual light.

This process is explained in a very illuminating number in the Arcana Coelestia, as follows: "The truth proceeding immediately from the Divine enters into the will of man, this is its way; but the truth that proceeds mediately from the Divine enters into the understanding of man; and therefore conjunction

cannot be brought about unless the will and the understanding act as a one, that is, unless the will wills good and the understanding confirms it by truth. When therefore there is conjunction, then the Lord appears as present and His presence is perceived" (AC 7056:3).

Note that the light of truth meant by Moses enters into the will. It is the new will that is meant here -- the new will that grows to the extent that we live according to the knowledge of truth that has come into our minds from outside and that is meant by Aaron. Only as we live the truths of the Word do we receive enlightenment. This is what is meant by the joyous reunion of Moses and Aaron. The same state of mind is what is meant by the Lord's first miracle, described in the Gospel of John, chapter 2 -- the miracle of the changing of the water of natural truth or knowledge into the wine of spiritual truth. It took place at a marriage feast. It is something that we must all have experienced at some time or other -- the experience of suddenly realizing the truth of some piece of doctrine that we have heard a thousand times. But suddenly, in a moment of great joy, we see that it is true -- and good!

Aaron was told to go forth into the wilderness to meet Moses. The attempt to live according to the doctrine of good and truth will inevitably lead us into the desolate, "Godforsaken," wilderness state of temptation, where there is but little spiritual life; but it is not there that the reunion with Moses actually takes place. It takes place in "the Mountain of God," that exalted state of love and good will. When the doctrine takes us through temptation to that state, then we are in order and have a perception of order, as it applies to us. The joyful reunion of Moses and Aaron is explained in the Writings to mean "instruction in the details of doctrine." What else can this mean than enlightenment as to the detailed application of the truth of the Word to our own individual situations? The doctrine is seen as being relevant. All the principles of wisdom contained in that doctrine seem to be gathered together in the mind. This is meant by the gathering together of all the elders of the sons of Israel.

The confirmation of the truth of doctrine by means of various scientifics is what is meant by Aaron speaking "all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses. And he did the signs before the eyes of the people" (Exodus 4:30).

Then there is real faith, genuine belief -- and with that there is real hope for the future; for, as we read in the Arcana, "when he who is in faith and obedience perceives confirmations, he has hope, for hope is thence derived" (AC 7065). The hope of deliverance is what is meant by the very moving and grateful words that conclude this fourth chapter of the book of Exodus: "And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped" (Exodus 4:31).

This humble acceptance of Moses and Aaron by the people represents the acknowledgment that the law of the Lord as revealed in His Word is indeed Divine, that it is to be obeyed and that it is in very truth a real deliverer. Without this acknowledgment no further progress is possible; just as, in the literal sense, Moses and Aaron could never have released the people from the clutches of the Egyptians unless they had been accepted by the people as messengers of the Lord and as having power from Him.

In this chapter we have seen the man of the spiritual church, who can be brought into heaven only by means of victories in spiritual temptations, we have seen him in a state of simple goodness, applying to his life the basic principles of common decency from, of course, a religious motive. As he does this and as he studies the Word in its letter for the sake of life, he is progressively enlightened from within. The light of truth flows in more and more from the Lord. For the first time he perceives that the Lord really is Love Itself; that even His Human made Divine is Love Itself, love that wishes everlasting happiness to him and to the whole human race; but above all, he realizes that the Lord the Creator and Redeemer can indeed deliver him from the incessant attacks of false principles, teachings and reasonings. He has a perception of how he can indeed be delivered by the Lord. He realizes that this will not be done without a struggle (the Pharaoh will not easily let him go); but for the first time he really is confident that the Lord, whose love and wisdom he has perceived, will be with him and will even enable him to plunder the Egyptians -- to separate true scientifics from falsified scientifics and use them in the service of the Lord. While he maintains this blessed perception of the true state of affairs, he is on holy ground. He also realizes that he must continue to look to the Lord in His Divine Human and not allow the fallacies of the senses to deceive him. He

recognizes his need to study the pages of Divine revelation in order to learn the path of life, for there only does the Lord enlighten him and speak to him. But he is most impressed with the absolute necessity of living the teaching; for only this brings true faith and trust in the Lord.

In our next chapter we will see what happens when there is a direct confrontation with the falsities of evil.

Chapter 5 Moses and Aaron Speak to the Pharaoh

Such is the confidence and hope that fills the mind of the man in the spiritual Church at this stage in his development that he feels sure that no falsity will ever enslave him again. He feels that he is practically liberated from being infested by falsities. He feels that he could confront any falsity with boldness and send it away. This is what is meant by the fact that Moses and Aaron, encouraged by the very moving acceptance of them by the children of Israel, "went in and told the Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness" (Exodus 5:1).

Despite the boldness of their attack, they were rebuffed --with cynical contempt. For this they had been somewhat prepared by the Lord. He had told them in advance that the Pharaoh would not willingly let them go. But imagine the bewilderment and perplexity of Moses and Aaron when the Pharaoh not only refused their request and accused the Israelites of idleness and of wishing to escape work, but also actually increased their burdens! The Lord's warning notwithstanding, Moses and Aaron must have expected the release of the people to be a comparatively simple matter that could be accomplished almost immediately. How dismayed they must have felt when they found that the Pharaoh had ordered the sons of Israel to gather their own straw for making bricks. No longer would straw be provided for the purpose by the Egyptians. But still the same daily tally of bricks was expected of them by their Egyptian task-masters under orders from the Pharaoh.

Moses must have wondered what had gone wrong with the Divine plan and returned to the Lord greatly perplexed, saying, "Lord wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to the Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Exodus 5: 22,23).

We can understand the perplexity of Moses. Why is it that, as soon as the desire and intention to be delivered is openly and explicitly declared, there is an increase in hardship?

The answer is that whenever we take a stand for the Lord and His Kingdom and make some new resolution to try even harder to walk in the ways of the Lord, infestation from the hells increases. This can be seen most clearly in the Word from the example of the Lord's baptism. It is a most striking fact that immediately after the Lord had been baptized by John the Baptist in the waters of the River Jordan, He was carried in the spirit to the wilderness where He was tempted. And many a disciple has since found that as soon as he takes such a resolute action as baptism and confesses his faith in the Lord, the hells attack with increased fury. This increase in infestation, accompanied by feelings of frustration and anxiety, are represented with great force by the plight of the Israelites following the first approach by Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh.

It is not difficult for a New Church man in the world today to understand what a state of infestation means in the spiritual sense. Everyone is familiar enough with the natural meaning of the word "infestation." We speak of farmland being infested with rabbits; we speak of certain parts of a city being infested by thieves and thugs. Such infestation is accompanied by feelings of frustration and anxiety for the future. So it is with spiritual infestation. The New Church man in the world today finds himself infested by false philosophies, false values. Many of the people with whom he comes in contact infest him with a merely natural idea of life -- often, indeed, a merely physical or mechanical idea of human beings. The deadly philosophies of materialism, of humanism, of determinism, all variations of the theme that the physical is the only reality, afflict and infest daily. It cannot truly be said that the mass media are entirely the servants of the hells. That would be an exaggeration. But certainly it can be said that our environment today is becoming increasingly a receptacle for the hells. More and more the New Church man is urged to make bricks, that is, he is urged to receive false and fictitious ideas and values. In the Word "bricks" consistently represent falsities, the falsities not of ignorance but of evil.

"Bricks" are contrasted with naturally-occurring stones, in particular, stones that have not been formed or shaped by iron at the hands of man. Bricks are man-made and so are falsities. It is therefore significant that the men who wished to climb to heaven on their own account without the Lord and built the great Tower of Babel built the tower of brick, not of stones -- which represent the truths of the Word. Man-made bricks are like self-derived intelligence -- the falsities of evil. Today the New Church man is under increasing pressure to make these bricks and build with them.

Of course, there is a great use served by infestations. They serve to strengthen the man of the Church in the good things and true things that he has received from the Lord. But this strengthening occurs only to the extent that he sees the bricks of falsity as false. If he passively accepts them, there is no good use served; but if he sees the enormity of the evil and falsity in man-made philosophies that are contrary to the Word or Wisdom of the Lord, then His resolution is strengthened to learn and live the true things and the good things that the Lord has provided.

There is a passage in the Arcana Coelestia, quoted once before, that brings this out. It reads: "That it is so is plain from common experience; for he who defends his opinion against others who attack it, confirms himself the more in his opinion and then also finds other confirmations which he had not before observed and also others which deny the opposite; and in this way he strengthens himself in his opinion and also illustrates it with further considerations" (AC 6663).

We have been considering only infestations by others in this world -- others obviously outside of ourselves. But what happens when those who infest us with falsities die and pass into the spiritual world? Do they cease to be as they were on earth? Do they cease to infest with false ideas?

No, they certainly do not. In fact, the infestation is all the more dangerous because all the more secret. We are not aware that they are doing it as we are with people in this world. The false ideas flow into our thought and we mistakenly suppose that they are our thoughts. We identify ourselves with them, even if only momentarily. In this way we are infested with doubts, difficulties and are held in merely natural thought. This is what is represented by the Egyptian task-masters driving the sons of Israel to make more bricks and refusing to lighten their burdens.

The whole object of the spirits from hell -- represented here by the Egyptian task-masters -- is to hold the man of the Church in a merely natural state, in a merely natural view of spiritual things and so retard his spiritual progress. While he is in natural things -- natural thoughts and affections -- they can control him and subjugate him to their will. This, as we shall see, is what is represented by the Egyptians giving the Israelites straw with which to make bricks.

Straw, in the spiritual sense, means the most general scientifics or things known, including the scientifics of the Church -- the general principles taught in the literal sense of the Word. These are scientifics of the Church. They come from a source outside of the man.

As we learn from the Arcana Coelestia these lowest and most general knowledges signified by "chaff" or "straw" are full of fallacies of the senses. Consequently the evil can make use of them for the sake of perverting good affections and true thoughts and so for defending evils and falsities. We read that "for this purpose they especially employ such things from the Word as are the most general of all and which without the internal sense of the Word can be drawn to favor any opinion whatever. Such are the things that they put before those who are of the spiritual Church; and by means of which they infest them; although they are nothing but chaff or straw for making bricks, for they exclude the most essential thing of all, namely, charity: (AC 7127:2).

The example given there of a general teaching from the Word used to infest the man of the Church is that of the teachings concerning faith. If the evil can only induce the man of the Church to believe that faith alone saves, then he is held in a merely natural state and makes no spiritual progress. They therefore strive to hold the thought in those passages in the Word which, without the spiritual sense or without a thorough comparison of passages, may be misconstrued to make faith seem to be the essential. It is true, of course, that without faith no one can be saved. But this is not the whole truth. The whole truth is that faith is not faith unless there is charity within it, unless it is the offspring of charity. We really believe only what we

live. That is the whole truth. But the infesters strive to hold the thought in only part of the truth. This is how they exert their power.

There are many other similar general teachings of Divine Revelation that can be twisted to favor merely natural loves. For example, the general truth that the Lord is merciful can be so abused. By emphasizing only half the truth, it can be made to appear that we need not trouble to examine ourselves and amend our lives, because, after all, the Lord is merciful and will forgive us if we ask Him. If we succumb to this falsified truth, we are like the Hebrews accepting straw from the Egyptians for the sake of making bricks.

Again, the true general principle that man should be neighbor first to himself can be used by the evil to destroy genuine charity and keep man in a natural state. For this is only half the truth: the full statement of the truth is that man should be neighbor first to himself so that he may be neighbor to others. To do good to others is the end in view and being neighbor to oneself is the means to that end. If a person does not procure for himself the necessities of life, he cannot act charitably towards others because he himself is in want of everything. This is the full statement of the case, but the evil do not love the whole truth. They love only half truths because they can use them for their own evil ends. They can use them to extinguish charity -- which is the essential of the Church. Now we are in a position to see why it is that the straw was withdrawn from the Israelites immediately after Moses and Aaron so boldly approached the Pharaoh and demanded freedom -- in the name of the Lord.

Moses and Aaron, as we have seen, represent respectively the Truth Divine and the Revelation of that truth in natural language. There has been a willing acceptance of the doctrine of good and truth from the Word and to some extent, there has been a life according to it. This has brought the man of the Church somewhat into the presence of the Lord. There has been some spiritual progress made in the matter of understanding what the Lord requires us to do and in actually doing it. This has led to a confrontation with the Pharaoh, with the hells, resulting in increased fury on their part.

But turning to the Lord in His Word and seeking a deeper understanding of it for the sake of life has had another inevitable effect. It has completely dissipated the merely natural view of spiritual things. The "straw" has completely disappeared. Partial truths can no longer be used. The whole truth must now be sought. This is the significance of the Hebrew's frantic search for stubble in place of straw.

In the internal sense "stubble" means the truth of science, the whole truth within any principle learned from the Lord's Word, the particulars within a general statement of doctrine that lead to a fuller grasp and application of it. Concerning this the Writings explain: "That 'stubble' means such truth is because it is the stalk in the top of which is the seed and by 'seed' in the Word are signified true things and good things; thus by the stalk which is beneath them is signified the general vessel of truth, consequently the truth of science; for the scientifics of faith and charity are indeed true things, but general truths, thus are the recipient vessels of particular and singular truths, as can also be seen by everyone" (AC 7131).

We would note in passing that in the literal story the

Egyptians speak of the Hebrews using straw in order to make bricks. But the Hebrews in general and Moses and Aaron in particular never refer to making bricks. They do indeed speak of the need to find stubble, but they never say that this is for the purpose of making bricks. The reason is obvious in the internal sense: the man of the spiritual Church does not wish to make bricks, does not wish to manufacture falsities, but he is interested in general truths.

The urgency of the Egyptians' task-masters in pushing the people to maintain their quota of bricks and the Pharaoh's heartless accusations of idleness, merely show the nature of the infesting spirits from the hells, how they are determined to control and subjugate every good affection.

Those most hurt by this were the officers of the sons of Israel. These were Hebrews, the ones who first received orders from the task-masters. They represent moral goodness, the moral virtues, which are the first to suffer when spiritual things are assaulted. When moral scruples are beaten into submission, all is over with the things of the Lord's kingdom in the mind. For now, since general truths that could be

perverted (meant by the straw) were no longer being injected, only things false and fictitious were flowing in from the hells.

This is a very realistic picture of the state of utter despair to which those who are striving to do what is good are reduced before they can be delivered from being infested by the hells. Near the end they are more severely infested than before, the reason being, as we have seen, that truths are taken away from them and mere falsities are permitted to infest them and this even to despair; for it is of Divine order that the last thing of infestation and of temptation should be despair (AC 7147, 7142). The end of the state of despair, which includes the fear of damnation, is meant by the fact that "the officers of the sons of Israel saw that they were in evil" (verse 19) -- evil here meaning damnation. Concerning this fear, the teaching is that "as those who are in despair suppose that they can no longer endure the assaults they think that they must needs deliver themselves up as captives, such being the state of despair; but then they begin to be relieved and to be led as it were out of thick darkness into light" (AC 7155).

Their relief is pictured in their meeting with Moses and Aaron coming forth from the Pharaoh, that is, as they turned their backs on Pharaoh and were separating themselves from him. This is a state of some relief -- when falsities do not so much infest, when the mind has turned away from what is represented by the Pharaoh and looks toward the Divine truth in the Word of the Lord, Moses and Aaron.

The words that they spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Jehovah look upon you and judge" (verse 21), signify leaving the matter for the Lord to dispose, as is evident from the words themselves. There is a perception that we cannot of ourselves be set free from infestation, but only as if of ourselves. It is really done by the Lord. Hence Moses refers the matter to the Lord and asks, in effect, for a Divine assurance that deliverance will in fact be accomplished.

Moses' words to the Lord appear somewhat in the form of a complaint, because it had seemed earlier, in the first states of enlightenment from the Lord, that deliverance from the infestation of false ideas would be a comparatively easy matter. Light from the Lord is indeed the light of truth, but it is refracted and twisted by whatever it falls upon. In the state here depicted, while infestation was still proceeding, the light of truth seemed to reveal that deliverance would be almost immediate. The reason for this is that relief is so ardently desired. But in reality the law from the Divine or the law of order is that in states of infestation by falsity, man must be reduced to despair. Otherwise the full use of being infested is not achieved. This, incidentally, is why the Lord's temptations were continued even to a state of despair (AC 7166).

The Divine purpose in allowing these infestations is that the man of the Church may be brought to his knees before the Lord and beg Him to deliver. Then follows the Divine consolation, the Divine assurance that while deliverance takes place only by little and little, it will surely be accomplished according to order.

This Divine consolation is set forth in chapter six of the book of Exodus, which will be the subject of our next chapter.

Chapter 6 Moses Comforted by the Lord

The good that can come out of utter despair is that man may come into a state of humility before the Lord and beg Him for aid. This is not to say that he will do this; it is not to say that good will certainly come from it, but only that it may come from it. Human free choice enters into this as into everything else. It is therefore only when man actually does submit totally to the Lord, only as he gives up his pride in his own understanding, in his own power, that he can receive the bliss of Divine consolation which always follows infestation and temptation.

The chapter opens with the words of the Lord when He comforted Moses and the Israelites by assuring them that deliverance would certainly take place, that they would definitely see the day when Pharaoh would gladly drive the Israelites out of his country. "Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand shall he let them go and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land" (Exodus 6:1).

The spiritual meaning of these words is in effect a statement about the Divine Order, an explanation of how the Lord in His love and wisdom always works for the redemption of the human race. The consolation takes the form of further instruction or further enlightenment from within concerning the Divine Order or way of working. When this is understood, the certainty of deliverance is perceived and established.

The first thing that must be recollected and understood is that the man of the spiritual Church cannot be liberated immediately from infestations. These cannot be made to cease in a moment -- though this is what the man of the Church is inclined to think is the case, for the reason that this is what he so ardently desires. The Divine Law or Order (represented here by Moses) is that the man of the spiritual Church should be liberated only by degrees, by little and little. Infestation is certain to cease and the man of the Church is certain to be set free from infesting falsities, but only when the time and state arrive when this is possible according to order (AC 7186).

The reason that those who are undergoing infestations can be liberated only gradually and not at once is, we are taught, "because the evils and falsities that cling to them cannot otherwise be removed and goods and truths be insinuated in their place; for this is done by many changes of state, thus successively by degrees. Those who believe that man can be immediately introduced into heaven and that this is solely of the Lord's mercy, are very much mistaken. If this were possible, all whatsoever who are in hell would be raised into heaven, because the Lord's mercy extends to all. But it is according to order that everyone carries with him his life which he had lived in the world and his state in the other life is according to this; and that the mercy of the Lord flows in with all, but is diversely received and by those who are in evil, is rejected; and as in the world they have imbued themselves with evil, they also retain it in the other life, nor is amendment possible in the other life, for the tree lies where it has fallen. From all this it is evident that it is according to order that those who have lived in good and with whom there are also gross and impure things which pertain to the love of the world and the love of self, cannot be associated with those who are in the heavens until these things have been removed. From all this it is evident that liberation from infestations is brought about successively by degrees" (AC 7186:3).

The same principle -- that man cannot have his evils and falsities uprooted immediately and goods and truths implanted in their place -- was taught by the Lord on earth by means of His parable of the wheat and the tares.

The second thing to be understood concerning the Lord's Divine Order is that to be set free from infestating falsities the man of the Church simply has to go through temptation—combats. There is no other way. There has to be resistance against these false ideas and combats against them. There must be in the mind a contest between the true things of faith from the Word and the falsities of evil rising up from the hells and infesting the natural mind. But the Divine Order is that following victories in these temptation-combats there is a wonderful period or state of consolation. "Comfortings follow the pains of temptation, just as morning and dawn follow evening and night" (AC 7193:3).

Temptations and the comfort or consolation that follows, are involved in the name of the Lord here used, "God Shaddai." The names of the Lord are always used in the Word with great precision, according to what aspect of the Divine is represented. Here the Lord says that He appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as God Shaddai (verse 3). This name refers to the Lord as a comforter following temptation. The names "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" are mentioned because, in the inmost sense, the Lord's own temptations when in the Human from Mary and the consolations that followed are meant by "God Shaddai," the names of the patriarchs signifying the various degrees of this Human. "Abraham" signifies the celestial in this Human, "Isaac" the spiritual and "Jacob" the natural.

In the internal sense the same names refer to the temptations of the man of the Church and the consolations that follow afterwards. This is because the regeneration of man, including his deliverance from infestations, is brought about by means of temptations and is an image of the glorification of the Lord (AC 7193:3).

Now, it is also according to order that those who are of the spiritual Church, when undergoing temptations, do not think, in fact, cannot think of the Divine things of the Church. These things are thought

of only with great difficulty in states of temptations because at that time the natural man and its affections and thoughts predominate over all else. The Divine things from the Lord in the Church seem as if they are unknown; they cannot be recalled to active thought except by a great effort of will and even if this is achieved, when we speak according to them we feel as if we are talking in our sleep.

This deprivation of the true things and good things of the Lord's Kingdom during temptation and infestations is what is meant by the Lord's concluding words in verse 3: "But by My name Jehovah was I not known to them". The name "Jehovah" means everything in one complex by which God is worshiped, in other words, everything Divine in the Church and in heaven. So the meaning is that the Divine things of the Church are not known in states of temptation.

This is also something that has to be understood if we are to see the Divine Order, the Divine way of operating. There is no way of knowing how many people have defected from the Church and even the Lord's Kingdom as a result of not understanding this. In this state of deprivation we experience apathy towards the good things and true things of the Church and are tempted to believe that they have gone forever and that we will never find delight in the things of the Church, that we have permanently lost interest in them. But if we understand that this is according to the Divine Order, we can hold on long enough to be consoled. What a consolation, what a comfort it is, when the good things and true things of the Church (meant here by Jehovah) return to the mind and are known or experienced once more!

We can understand, then, why the name "God Shaddai" is used here. It is used for the same of the internal sense. But an intellectual doubt may arise when we consider the statement that the Lord was known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob only as God Saddai but never as Jehovah. We may well recall reading in the Word that the Lord (Jehovah) appeared to these patriarchs and may wonder why it is said that He was not known to them as Jehovah. The Arcana Coelestia explains that in the historical things of the book of Genesis concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the Lord is called "Jehovah" because that Word was written by Moses, to whom the name "Jehovah" was made known. It is literally true then that the Lord was not known by His Name "Jehovah" to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The other reason, as we have seen, was that the name "God Shaddai" had to be used for the sake of the internal sense (AC 7194).

Another important truth concerning the Divine Order that needs to be well understood is that even in this state of temptation, when the man of the Church feels that he cannot even think about the Divine things that are the responsibility of the Church, still less feel any delight in them, even then there is some conjunction with the Lord. We need to understand and appreciate this fully because, as we are explicitly taught in many places in the Writings, "the Lord is more present in the state of temptation than out of this state, although it appears otherwise" (AC 840,1947,7195). This presence and conjunction with the Lord is meant by the words: "And I have also set up My covenant with them" (verse 4).

In the remainder of the instruction concerning the Divine Order, the Lord gives a solemn assurance that those of the spiritual Church will in fact be uplifted into heaven ("the land of Canaan"), that He is well aware of their sufferings at the hands of infesting spirits ("the burdens of the Egyptians") and that He will surely liberate and redeem them with great power. All this is meant by the encouraging words: "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you of their bondage and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments; and I will take you to Me for a people and I will be to you for a God and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (verse 6,7).

This is the way the Lord operates. This is the Divine Order. It is very important for man of the spiritual Church to be instructed concerning these things and to perceive how true they are; namely, that he can be delivered only gradually from falsities and fallacies that infest him; that this is done by means of temptation—combats; that during these states of infestation the Lord seems to be absent and unknown -- together with all His Divine things, but yet is most present in those states; that deliverance and conjunction with the Lord will take place when the time or the state is right according to the Divine Order.

This way of operating is fully described in the Word. But even then, the man of the spiritual Church does not always remember it. When falsities infest, he is apt to forget that this is but part of the Divine Order

and that consequently it is worse than useless to succumb to a feeling of hopelessness and thus give in to the falsities. If only he will live through this state of bondage, he will be given a Divine consolation.

The cause of these alternating states, this oscillation between states of light and states of darkness, is that we receive the Divine instruction from the Word in our memory and to some extent in our understanding, but we do not receive it fully in the heart and consequently in our life. It is like something outside of us. This is meant by the Israelites refusing to harken to Moses when he relayed the Divine instruction concerning the certainty of deliverance.

As we have seen, while being infested by falsities injected by evil spirits, the man of the spiritual Church cannot think of Divine things; he cannot see the true state of affairs; he cannot see his state of mind in the light of heaven. The infesting falsities prevent this. A Divine assurance of release seems as unlikely to a man of the Church infested with falsities as it must have seemed to the Israelites flinching under the whips of their Egyptian task-masters. How could they believe that Jehovah, whom they had never seen, would surely set them free? How foolish and even irrelevant Moses must have seemed to them when he came talking of a Divine assurance of freedom! It is the same with the man of the Church when he reads in the Word about the joys of heaven while he is still in the state of being infested with false ideas. It all seems improbable, remote, irrelevant. It seems to have no bearing on life in the present.

This is itself actually a state of infestation -- although at the time we do not realize it. We are being infested with the falsity that what the Lord says to us is impracticable or unimportant -- mere words, words, words. Or else, we are infested with the doubt as to whether this really is the Lord speaking. Unless we become aware that this is in fact a state of infestation, we will succumb to the falsity being injected. We will remain in bondage to Egypt.

What is the remedy for this situation? Is it really hopeless? Must the man of the spiritual Church always be a slave in Egypt and continue to be forced to think what is false and reject the very idea of a Divine deliverance from his state of bondage?

The Lord provides the remedy: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto the Pharaoh King of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land" (verse 10,11). We have to confront the Pharaoh; we have to face these false ideas head-on. They must be put down. We have to recognize that they are inspired by the spirits of hell and that we must separate ourselves from them. In other words, whenever a falsity, that is, something that is directly opposed to what the Lord has revealed, appears in our thought, we are to shun it as something contrary to the Lord. We are to recall that it is a form of evil. We are to recall that it is from hell, that in yielding to it we are yielding to the hells and that the hells are not in us but outside of us and are to be kept outside of us. This is what is meant by speaking to the Pharaoh and demanding release of the Israelites.

But this confrontation with the falsities of evil must be done from the Word and from a life according to the Word. It is not sufficient to say that a falsity is false. The thought simply must be there also that it is from hell and that it is therefore against the Lord, against the Lord's Word and against the life taught in the Word. The hells are always the inveterate enemies of the Lord. This is the meaning of Moses's complaint to the Lord that if the sons of Israel would not harken unto him, still less would the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh would surely think that he had unclean lips in making this request (verse 12).

The hells will flee away only in the presence of the sphere of heaven -- in the sphere of what is good; and the sphere of heaven can come into the mind only by means of the Word, that is, by means of a life according to the Word. So it is that the Lord then speaks to both Moses and Aaron -- the latter representing doctrine from the Word and gives them, both together, a mandate to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from the land of Egypt (verse 13).

We saw in the last chapter that Moses and Aaron must be together -- Moses being the Truth Divine that flows in from the Lord and touches the will and Aaron being living doctrine from the Word -- the doctrine that we have not only learned but also lived. This is what gives us a Divine mandate when we confront the falsities of evil. There is power -- Divine power -- only in the Divine law as revealed in the Word and a life according to it. From this we are to speak to the Pharaoh King of Egypt.

In the literal sense of this chapter there next follows a series of verses that seem to have little or no bearing on the story -- except that they do give the parentage and ancestors of Aaron and Moses. However, as the Writings observe, for this purpose it would have been necessary to give only the name of the sons of Levi (AC 7231). Why then were the sons of Reuben and Simeon included first?

This can be answered only by the internal sense of the Word. In that sense what is here presented in the guise of a genealogy is a recapitulation of the way the man of the spiritual Church is regenerated. This is important for us today because we also are of the spiritual Church rather than the celestial Church.

The celestial were regenerated by an influx or inflow of good into the natural will -- which was in a state of order in the days of the celestial Church -- the Most Ancient Church. In those days they really could trust their affections, their feelings. They could give full expression to them and communicate them to others without fear of doing harm. They enjoyed a spontaneity and freedom that we can only envy.

But the fall of man changed all that. By choosing to be led by himself rather than by the Lord, mankind originated evil. Evil came into existence when men confirmed as the reality the appearance that they had life in and from themselves. Once man begins to think that the life that is in him is his own and originates in himself, he soon lapses into the grievous falsity that he is free to do what he likes with his life. This is the source of many evils and is in fact the fall of man.

The Most Ancient Church, being celestial, was such that the will and the understanding functioned together as one. They were not divided. The good that they felt and willed produced true thoughts and a true sight of the truth of their understanding. As they willed, so did they think. It was impossible to will or love one thing and to think and say the opposite.

It is quite obvious, then, that when the natural will became corrupt in the way already described, that the understanding would at the same time become corrupt also. When the people of the Most Ancient Church began in general to will evil, they could think only what was false. They could not think independently of their will. So firmly conjoined was their understanding to their will that they could think and believe only falsities that were the offspring of their evil lusts. Thus it was that the Most Ancient Church perished in a flood of falsities.

For the salvation of the human race it was necessary then that a change be made in human psychology and human physiology. It became quite imperative that the understanding should be released from the dominion of the corrupted natural will. It had to be separated from it for the sake of being lifted up into the light of heaven so that mankind could at least see the truth. Even though, from his corrupted will, man did not love and will the truth that he saw in his understanding, (his understanding being uplifted into the light of heaven by means of the Word), he could nonetheless see the truth of it and at least theoretically believe it. This had been impossible while his understanding was tied to his will. But by releasing the understanding so that it could function separately from the natural will (which was nothing but evil), the Lord made it possible once more for the human race to be saved.

Mankind could now be saved and regenerated in a new way. It was no longer possible to regenerate man by means of an inflow of good affections into the natural will. Since this was now corrupted, it would only pervert whatever good affections flowed in from the Lord through heaven. So it was no longer possible to rely on the feelings; they might be good or they might be evil. The new method of regeneration consisted of this: that man could learn the truth, the reality and see this in his uplifted understanding -- uplifted above the evil influences of the natural will. As the truth that was understood and theoretically believed was acted upon, a new will could be formed that was in accordance with that understanding of truth, a new will that was above the corrupted, natural will. In other words, by acting according to the truth, man could gradually come to love it and that love constituted his new will. He could become more and more moved, touched and affected by the truth. That affection of truth was the seed of the new will, the seed -- plot of love towards the neighbor or charity. Charity, rather than love to the Lord, which had been the mark of the celestial Church, charity now became the characteristic of the Church that followed on after it - the Ancient Church.

The Ancient Church was the first of what are called in the Writings spiritual Churches. Ever since the fall of man there have been nothing but spiritual Churches; that is, Churches whose members could be regenerated only by means of truth in an uplifted understanding, an understanding which could contain a new will consisting of charity. This new will must always be separated from the old, natural will; in fact, it must always be kept above it.

When, therefore, we read in the Writings of the spiritual Church in contrast to the celestial Church, we are to understand that the reference is to a method of regeneration, rather than a degree of regeneration. It does not mean that the man is necessarily of a spiritual quality, but rather that he can be regenerated only according to the spiritual method, namely, by means of the understanding.

The three stages by which a man of the spiritual Church can be regenerated are meant by the sons of Reuben, Simeon and Levi. They are mentioned here in that order because of what they represent. Reuben represents the first step toward regeneration -- faith in the understanding, or the knowledge of truth in the understanding. This is the indispensable first step. Until this is taken no progress can be made. The sons of Reuben are the thoughts derived from this knowledge, or truth in the understanding.

Simeon, whose name comes from the Hebrew verb "to hear" or "to hearken", represents faith in the will and in act, that is, obedience to the truth that is understood. But it is obedience from duty rather than delight. This is, however, an advance from the mere knowledge of faith that Reuben represents. The sons of Simeon are the thoughts and affections derived from this obedience to command.

The next stage in the development of the spiritual Church is obedience to the Word from delight rather than duty. When man has advanced to doing what is good and true from feelings of charity, so that he wills to do what is good, not as before from faith, but from charity toward the neighbor, then he is really of the Church -- of the spiritual Church. He comes into the state represented by Levi and those derived from him.

From this state of charity toward the neighbor the acknowledgment of the Word in its letter, represented by Aaron and the acknowledgment of the Law Divine or the Divine Order within the Word represented by Moses, comes forth. Only when man has reached the third stage in the development of the spiritual Church does he really acknowledge the Word in its internal and external form -- Moses and Aaron.

It is from this kind of acknowledgment of the Word that the man of the spiritual Church has a Divine mandate when he "speaks to the Pharaoh King of Egypt," and demands to be set free. Hence we see why in the Word there is introduced at this point a genealogy of Moses and Aaron. In the internal sense there is involved an explanation of why the acknowledgment is obtained: first by the knowledge of the truths of faith, then by obedience to those things commanded in the Word and finally by charity toward the neighbor, which is developed by constant and free obedience to the Lord's Word seen as the Lord's Word.

Here, then, is the remedy for the state of servitude to false ideas -- "Speak to the Pharaoh King of Egypt." If we are infested with false ideas so that we cannot even think of the Divine things of which the Church is the custodian and steward, then we have to face these false ideas boldly and tell them to their face, as it were, that they are from hell and that we wish to be separated from them -- in fact, that we are determined to be separated from them.

As already seen, this does not produce the desired effect immediately. It is necessary for it to be done repeatedly, over and over again. The reason is that only by a constant holding to what is good and true from the Lord can we receive from Him the sphere of heaven; and only as we receive this can the sphere of hell be driven away and infestation made to cease. The various stages by which this is done are presented in the following chapters, which, in the literal sense, treat of those curses and plagues upon the Egyptians that finally made them release the Israelites.

The central teaching of this sixth chapter of the book of Exodus is that release from infesting falsities meant by the Egyptians is absolutely certain and assured, if only we will "speak to the Pharaoh King of Egypt" and oppose false ideas as being forms of evil, which are sins against the Lord. Even though deliverance cannot be brought about immediately -- as had seemed possible when first we saw the inner

meaning of the Divine Word -- even though it will take many confrontations with Pharaoh, deliverance and the consequent rest from infestation is assured eventually, for it is Divinely promised.

Chapter 7 Signs and Wonders in Egypt

The question is, Can we today ever be set entirely free from being infested with falsities? Will there ever come a time when we wholeheartedly believe the truth of the Lord's Word and doubt not? Will doubts ever disappear?

The answer is, "Yes -- under certain circumstances."

This gives rise to the question, "What circumstances? How is it done?"

The answers are to be found in the internal or spiritual sense of the book of Exodus -- especially in the story of the plagues upon Egypt, culminating in the Passover and the Exodus out of Egypt. That portion of the book of Exodus will now be our subject.

The plagues upon the Egyptians were both signs and wonders. The Heavenly Doctrine distinguished between the two. "A sign" convinces or persuades the understanding, but "a wonder" moves the will and its affections. A "sign" is something that indicates, testifies and convinces the mind regarding the proposition under discussion, while a "wonder" is something that stirs up, strikes dumb and fills with amazement. Yet it should be added that "wonders," in stirring up the will, also convince the understanding, just as those things that move the affections also move the thought persuasively (AE 706:1).

The meaning, then, in the internal sense is that not only will the understanding be convinced of the truth of the Word but the affections will also be moved, so that there will be a love of being led by the Lord and a firm intention to walk in the paths of His revealing.

These "signs and wonders" also serve as warnings. In the literal sense they were warnings to the Egyptians that in treating the Israelites harshly they were bringing down curses upon themselves, warnings that made them aware of the Divine power or Omnipotence of the God of the Hebrews.

The explanation of these plagues as given in the Arcana Coelestia sets the scene in that region of the spiritual world known as the World of Spirits and expounds the internal-historical sense. As this explanation is comparatively easy to follow, we shall begin with it and move from there to the significance in the spiritual sense itself -- in relation to regeneration -- of each of the eleven plagues upon the Egyptians. In this chapter we will consider the first three.

It is a law of Divine order that most people, on coming into the World of Spirits, are explored before going either to heaven or to hell. There is a gradual revelation of the true quality of everyone who comes into the spiritual world, whether good or evil and this takes place in the World of Spirits. Everyone is explored so that he can see for himself whether he is worthy to be condemned and also in order to make others aware of his true quality, the purpose of this being that further hypocrisy and deceit will be impossible.

During the progressive revelation of the true quality of the evil, they are gradually deprived of whatever goods and truths they had acquired, because these conflict with their true nature. This devastation or laying waste of what is good and true, this step-by-step deprivation of the things of heaven with the evil in the World of Spirits is what is pictured here by the miracles wrought upon Egypt, all of which, of course, appeared to them as plagues. Even in the literal sense it can be seen that the plagues became worse and worse until finally the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea -- a graphic representation of damnation to hell.

It is to be borne in mind that the evil spirits who do the infesting (and who are represented by the Pharaoh and the Egyptians) have some knowledge of the Word and of the things of religion. They attack and infest the upright coming into the World of Spirits, seeking to hold them in a merely natural idea of spiritual things. This is Egyptian slavery. If they can hold good, upright spirits in such natural thoughts, they can control them and the upright cannot then be prepared for heaven.

The first loss that the infesters have to suffer, then, is the loss of any ability to elevate their minds above what is sensuous. They cannot rise above the fallacies of the senses; such, for example, as the appearance that man lives in and from himself, that his life does not flow in from any source outside of himself. From this fallacy innumerable false ideas come forth. The very basic principle of all religion -- that God is our Creator -- is in this way attacked and called in question. This pre-occupation with what is sensuous, this turning of all spiritual things into material ideas, is meant by Aaron's rod --the truth of the Word -- being changed into a serpent or whale. The serpent or dragon is always a very appropriate representation of the merely sensuous, the sensuous degree of the mind being the one that is closest to the earth, closest to the body.

It is explained in the *Arcana Coelestia* that those who infest, like everyone else, have good spirits and angels influencing them -- so that they may be able, if they wish, to turn themselves to heaven. But when it becomes quite manifest that their ruling love is such that they cannot receive the influx of truth and good from heaven, then the angels and good spirits gradually recede from them; and, we read, "as these recede, (the infesters) become less and less rational; for to be rational comes through heaven from the Lord" (AC 7395:2).

Let us recall that in the Writings the usage of the term "rational" is different from that of common speech. It does not mean merely reasonable. It means being able to see the ratio between heavenly things and natural things. It means being able to see things in the perspective of eternity and thus in the light of heaven. The infesters lose this rational perspective as the angels recede from them. As a consequence, nothing but the fallacies of the senses and the false conclusions derived from them, reign with the infesters represented by the Egyptians.

As the upright (represented by the Israelites) realize this, as they become aware of the preoccupation of their infesters with merely sensuous things, they see them in the light of heaven. They see them as they really are. The result of this is that the infesters begin to lose something of their hold upon the upright. This continues step-by-step until the upright see that they have nothing in common with those who had previously infested and fascinated them; and what is equally important, the infesters themselves also gradually come to see that they can no longer control their former slaves and must be separated from them.

Something similar happens in the little spiritual world of the human mind. We have been considering how the first of these plagues applies to life in the spiritual world. Let us now turn our thoughts from the universal spiritual world to the little spiritual world of our presented in miniature.

In the individual human affections and true thoughts and have come into the mind Word. Moses is the light of truth Divine flowing in from the Lord and this is the internal of the Word; Aaron is the external of the Word, the teaching of Divine truth in a natural form. The Pharaoh and the Egyptians are the infernal spirits who infest with fallacies and false ideas; or, in a more abstract sense, they represent those fallacies and false ideas themselves that infest.

Relating this to the regeneration of the human mind, we see that the Divine miracles, which were plagues upon the Egyptians, represent the step-by-step exposure of the real quality of the false ideas that infest. When the man of the church begins to see fallacies and falsities for what they are and especially when he at last sees that evil lies behind them, their power over him begins to be broken and at last he is set free. This is pictured by the plagues that become progressively worse, showing how the man of the church has an increasing awareness or realization of the enormity of the falsities of evil and also of the evils that come from falsities.

The first thing he realizes is that ideas that are opposed to the Divine Word and that seek to keep it in bondage are all of them falsities derived from fallacious appearances. When he sees that an idea is based only upon the evidence of the senses and on conclusions derived from them, when he realizes that those who inspire these ideas are incapable of rising above the sensuous plane, then he has taken the first step in being liberated from infestation. For the first time it dawns on him that these arguments all proceed

from the principle that we should believe only what we can prove by means of the five senses, the principle that the sensuous alone is the level of the mind where the criterion of truth resides.

The fact that the Egyptian magicians were able to do similar miracles to the Divine ones is also according to the laws of Divine order. In the spiritual world those who in the life of the body had practiced cunning and had devised various ways for defrauding others and had attributed their success in doing so to their own prudence, become addicted in the other life to magical practices. Magic -- by which these miracles were done by the Egyptians -- is nothing but an abuse of Divine order, especially an abuse of correspondences (AC 7296). Order and correspondences are abused when the things of order are not applied to good ends, but to evil ends -- such as domineering over others and destroying what is good (ibid). We are further taught that "by 'sorcerers' and 'enchantments,' when mentioned in the Word, is signified the art of presenting falsities so that they may appear as truths and that of presenting truths so that they may appear as falsities, which is especially done by means of fallacies" (AC 7297).

The power of the Egyptian magicians to deceive comes from the fact that they can present abuses of order in such a way that they appear the same in outward appearance as order itself; "for things that flow from order," we read, "are not altered by abuse, but appear the same as to the external form, yet not as to the internal form, for they are contrary to the ends of order" (AC 7297). This causes confusion in the mind of the man of the church who is being infested. He experiences what the Writings call "a dullness in respect to the noticing of truth" (AC 7298). When we allow our mind to descend into what is merely sensuous, we lose temporarily the rational sight of the truth and are bemused by fallacious appearances.

An example of this would be the appearance that a merely moral life is no different from a spiritual moral life. It is indeed true that in outward appearance they are identical. In both cases there would be no lying, no dishonesty, no stealing, cheating, violence, murder, or adultery. As far as actions and words are concerned the outward conduct is faultless. But the inner motive is vastly different. In the case of a spiritual moral life, there is a regard for the Lord and His Word and obedience to what the Lord commands. There is a desire to do the Lord's will. This is entirely lacking in a merely moral life, which even an atheist can lead. We become infested with falsities derived from the fallacies of the senses if we allow our focus to be limited only to what comes before the eyes, if we look only on the outward appearance and neglect the inner essence.

This is the spiritual reason that the Egyptians could duplicate the Divine miracles. But the Writings give a further reason -- namely, that it is according to the laws of order that no one ought to be persuaded about truth in a moment. Truth should never be confirmed in a moment so as to leave no doubt whatever about it. The reason is that the truth so impressed upon the mind becomes persuasive. The mind that is persuaded of a truth in a moment is incapable of seeing any further implications or applications in it. It becomes a hard-and-fast rule, devoid of any extension and of any yielding quality. For this reason, we are taught, "in the other life as soon as any truth is presented before good spirits by a manifest experience, there is soon afterward presented something opposite which causes doubt. In this way it is given to think about it, to consider whether it be so and to collect reasons and thus to bring that truth into their minds rationally... This is the reason why the magicians were allowed to do as Aaron; for thereby doubt was excited among the sons of Israel about the miracle, whether it was Divine; and thus an opportunity was given them of thinking and considering whether it was Divine and of finally confirming themselves that it was so" (AC 7298:2).

Yet, despite this confirmation of the truth, the man of the church does not remain in it. He later lapses back into the sensuous, seeing everything in sensuous light. This is the meaning of the Pharaoh's heart being hardened. No more spiritual progress is made until the Lord again speaks to Moses, that is, until there is more enlightenment from the Lord. Then it becomes possible to take another step forward towards liberation.

This takes the form of realizing that the ideas injected from the hells falsify the true things of the Word, turning them, as it were, into blood.

In a good sense "blood" means spiritual truth, or truth from good -- truth that is believed from the heart, from the will. Just as blood flows forth from the heart, so does living truth flow forth from the spiritual heart or the will. Truth from good or faith from charity is what is meant, in a good sense, by blood. But when used in a bad or harmful sense, as here, "blood" signifies the falsity of evil -- falsity believed from an evil heart. The water in the rivers of Egypt being turned into blood is a vivid portrayal on the physical plane of what happens when the truths of the Word are falsified. This violence done to the truth is especially perpetrated by those who have been in a persuasive faith but in a life of evil. They merely know about the true things of the Word but do not apply them, remaining merely natural. They destroy even the knowledge of the truth --meant by the fish in the river dying.

In this passage from the Arcana Coelestia ten examples are given of truth being extinguished by being falsified:

"Truth is falsified when from reasonings it is concluded and said that because no one can do what is good from himself, therefore good does nothing towards salvation. Truth is also falsified when it is said that all the good that a man does looks to himself and is done for the sake of recompense and this being so, works of charity are not to be done. Truth is falsified when it is said that because all good is from the Lord, therefore man ought to do nothing of good, but should wait for influx. Truth is falsified when it is said that truth can exist in a man without the good which is of charity, thus faith without charity. Truth is falsified when it is said that no one can enter into heaven except one who is miserable and poor; also when it is said, unless he gives all he has to the poor and reduces himself to miseries. Truth is falsified when it is said that everyone can be admitted into heaven from mercy, no matter how he has lived. Truth is still more falsified when it is said that there has been given to man the power of admitting into heaven whomsoever he pleases. Truth is falsified when it is said that sins are wiped and washed away like filth by water; and truth is still more falsified when it is said that man has the power of remitting sins and that when they have been remitted, they are altogether wiped away and the man is pure. Truth is falsified when it is said that the Lord has taken all sins upon Himself and so has taken them away and that thus man can be saved, no matter what his life is. Truth is falsified when it is said that no one is saved except one who is within the Church. The reasonings by which such a falsification is made, are that those who are within the church have been baptized, have the Word, know the Lord, about the resurrecton, life eternal, heaven and hell and thus they know what the faith is by which they can be justified. There are countless such things as these, for there is not a single truth which cannot be falsified and the falsification confirmed by reasonings from fallacies" (AC 7318:1,2).

The man of the spiritual Church makes a further step forward towards being set free from infesting falsities when it dawns upon him that out of the falsifications of the truth of the Word there come forth a plague of fatuous reasonings -- outright denials of the truth. Not only are they unclean like frogs but also they make no more sense than the croaking of frogs. Hence they are represented by the plague of frogs coming forth from the river and covering the land of Egypt. After the true things of the church have been falsified, the reasonings that then come forth are devoid of wisdom and intelligence, being based on nothing but false ideas.

Some very illuminating examples of these reasonings are given in the Arcana Coelestia, as follows: "A man reasons from mere falsities when he attributes all things to nature and scarcely anything to the Divine; when yet all things are from the Divine and nature is only the instrumental means by which the Divine works. He reasons from mere falsities who believes that man is like a beast, only more perfect, because he can think; and thus that man will die like a beast; by thus denying the conjunction of man with the Divine through the thought which belongs to faith and by means of the affection which belongs to love and hence that he has resurrection and life eternal, such a man speaks from mere falsities. In a similar manner he who believes that there is no hell. And also he who believes that all a man has is the delight of this world's life and therefore he must enjoy this, because when he dies, he dies altogether. He reasons from mere falsities who believes that all things depend upon his own sagacity and on fortune; and not on the Divine Providence, except such as is universal. And also he who believes that religion is good for nothing except to

keep the simple in bonds. Especially do they reason from mere falsities who believe that the Word is not Divine. In short, all those reason from falsities who utterly deny truths Divine" (AC 7352).

There is an infernal delight in such reasonings against the Divine truth. In fact, it becomes the delight of life for those who reason from falsities to deceive others by confirming false ideas and laughing at true things and so seducing others to their opinion. It is a delight from lust and thus exciting. This is meant by the frogs penetrating even into the ovens of the Egyptians. In a good sense "ovens" mean in the Word delight from good. But in an evil sense, as used here, they mean the delight of the lusts that are from the loves of self and the world. This is plain from the prophet Hosea, where we read: "They are all adulterers; they are as an oven heated by the baker; they are all hot as an oven and devour their judges; all the kings thereof fall" (Hosea 7:4,7).

Yet despite this enlightenment, despite these insights into the true nature of falsities, there is still not a complete release from being infested by falsities. The heart of the Pharaoh continues to be hardened. This is because there are still alternations of state. The understanding is sometimes in the light of heaven, sometimes in the comparatively luminous light of hell. The light of heaven is like the noonday sunlight; the light of hell is comparatively like a luminous, phosphorescent light, that needs to be surrounded by darkness in order to be seen at all. It disappears in the daylight. In this early state of being delivered from infesting falsities, the man of the church alternates between the light of heaven and the light of hell. This also explains further why the Egyptian magicians could duplicate the Divine miracles. They could make falsities appear as truths and truths appear as falsities -- in outward appearance. In the light of heaven man sees how things really are. These are the Divine miracles wrought by Aaron's rod -- the power of light from heaven. But his understanding can still lapse back into merely natural light, when he is deceived by the Egyptian magicians. Then it is that the Pharaoh's heart is hardened again.

The great theme in this chapter is that the Divine liberation from falsities is certain, but gradual, by degrees. There is a step by step revelation to the man of the church of the true quality of the influx from hell. In this chapter we have considered the first three steps or degrees of this enlightenment; in the next chapter we will discuss the remaining eight steps, which, to the natural man, seem like plagues.

Chapter 8 The Remaining Plagues upon Egypt

For any of us to come into the promised land of heaven, either in this world or in the other world, the first thing that must be done is to be released from our slavery to false ideas. We are all born with a tendency to be impressed and delighted by the false teachings of the natural man that keep us enslaved to natural, worldly loves. If, then, we are not released from this bondage but continue to believe what is false, all good, heavenly affections will gradually die out and so, too, will the heavenly, everlasting happiness that accompanies them.

This deliverance from being infested by false ideas is not accomplished in a moment, but only step-by-step over a long period of time. It is helped by our reflecting on the Word of God and living according to it and it is hindered by our neglect of the Word, either by failing to read it and reflect upon its teachings or by not practicing what we learn from it, whether through forgetfulness or deliberate rejection. If we choose to cooperate with the Lord in order to be released, we will find that as we pass through the successive stages of this deliverance, we will come into a progressively deeper acknowledgment of the power of the Divine truth from the Divine good. This power of Divine truth is what is meant in chapter 8, verse 19, by "the finger of God."

Since the truth is the means of his deliverance, the hells seek to destroy it in the man of the spiritual Church. He is first tempted by means of the falsities of evil. He is not so much tempted yet to do what is evil, but rather to believe what is false -- to be enslaved by false ideas.

As we learn from the Arcana Coelestia, the man of the spiritual Church undergoes this enslavement and infestation only while he is in the comparatively external state of what is called "the good of faith," that is, the good of obedience to the truth because it has been commanded by the Lord. In this state man from

faith in the truth looks toward the good of charity, but he has not yet attained it. When he does come into the delight of charity or love towards the neighbor, he is delivered from infestation by falsities (AC 7474:2)

That same passage goes on to distinguish clearly between infestations and temptations. The difference is that those who are in temptations have the feeling that they are condemned to hell because of their evils; consequently, they are in a state of anguish and grief. They mourn their lack of goodness. On the other hand, those who are being infested are in poverty of spirit; they are aware of their lack of truth clearly understood and acknowledged. They are preoccupied with this. As yet, they have no fear of being excluded from the delights of heaven, because they have had very little experience of them. But they are very much afraid of losing their understanding of what is true, of succumbing to false ideas. As yet, they do not realize that this will surely lead also to a lack of goodness. At this time they are disturbed only by the loss of what is true.

The plague of frogs was the first one that Pharaoh begged to have removed. This illustrates the easily—understood truth that those in the hells who infest the man of the external church, that is, the man who is in obedience to truth but still in some obscurity, can infest him with falsities based on fallacies and appearances, but they cannot do any mischief when using reasonings from mere falsities, that is, "from utter denials of truth" (AC 7392:2). Those who are striving to lead a good life "laugh at mere falsities, which are denials of truth." They can see that such things are blatantly false, so the infernals cannot infest by means of them. Hence we read: "This is the reason why Pharaoh prayed for deliverance from the evil of the frogs, but not from the evil of the blood, of which above., for by the evil of the frogs is signified infestation by means of reasonings by mere falsities, by which reasonings they cannot do mischief; whereas by the evil of the blood is signified infestation by means of falsities from fallacies and appearances, which infestation is delightful to them, because they can do mischief by means of it" (AC 7392:2).

At the same time that Pharaoh entreated the Lord to remove the plague of frogs, he also made his first promise to release the sons of Israel. Before this, he had always refused point-blank to let the people go, nor did he give any indication of ever changing his mind. But now he promised for the first time to release them. Even though he did not keep this promise, still it showed that he had begun to think of releasing them.

This depicts in the mind of the man of the church his feeling that, since he now sees that these reasonings are nothing but false, he feels that his deliverance from bondage to falsities is already at hand. Whereas it had seemed before that this would never be accomplished, it now seems possible; and this is a source of great encouragement.

We read that the frogs, when they "died out of the houses, out of the villages and out of the fields," were gathered together "upon heaps: and the land stank" (verses 13,14). This signifies the fact that the reasonings from falsities were removed from the center of the mind, where they had been the focus of attention and were relegated to its boundary. They were arranged in order among the other loathsome things of falsity. Something similar is meant by the fact that some living frogs remained -- "in the river." Let us remember that "the river of Egypt" means what is false. Hence the meaning is that these reasonings were in the midst of the falsities.

The next stage in the liberation process -- the fourth marks a turning point. When the light of truth Divine as seen in the Word is brought to bear upon falsity, behold a miracle -- a startling revelation! The disgusting evils that lie hidden within the falsity of evil come forth to view. They are brought forth from their hiding place. This is the plague of lice that rose up from the dust. This wretched plague occurred after Aaron, at the Lord's command through Moses, stretched out the rod of Moses and smote the dust of the land. The "dust of the land" means everything in the natural mind that is damned -- here, all the falsity of evil. As we have seen, Moses represents the light of the Divine truth that enters by an internal way; while Aaron, who held the rod of Moses in his hand, represents the Divine Law in its external form -- as in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem. The rod is the power of that external law -- power that comes from the internal, Divine law within. In this light the evils from which falsities come are made manifest.

We are taught that the evils here meant are especially those that are in the sensuous degree of the mind, particularly in a completely external kind of man. "Such also," we read, "is the sensuous of those who have been in the knowledge of faith, but in a life of evil" (AC 7419). From other parts of the Writings we learn some more particulars about the correspondence of "lice" to certain evils in the sensuous or lowest level of the mind; for example, that they correspond to those who persecute the innocent (AC 4628:2), to those who secretly attack the things of faith and also secretly pervert those who are not able to know better things (SD 3424), to those who want to counterfeit holy things (SD 654) and to those who are avaricious (SD 377:2).

It is also said that there was "louse on man and on beast" (verse 17). This signifies both interior and exterior evils belonging to lusts, "mankind" signifying interior evils and "beast" signifying exterior evils. It is further explained that "interior evils are distinguished from exterior by the fact that interior evils are those which are of thought and will; and exterior evils are those that are of act. That there may be evils which are interior and not exterior, is evident from the fact that a man may be evil and yet in the outward form may appear as an upright man and even as a man of faith and conscience" (AC 7424).

When the man of the spiritual Church sees, in the light of the Divine Word, that such filthy, sordid evils come forth from the falsities that have been infesting him, when he sees falsity for what it is -- a form of evil or a formulation of evil, evil presenting itself in the understanding this is the end of the power of Egyptian magic. It is no longer possible for natural light to produce the same effect as Divine light. When the hidden evils of falsity are brought to light, the power of the hells to seduce and lead astray by means of appearances is drastically diminished. They can indeed make falsity to appear as truth and truth to appear as falsity. But they will never expose to view the hidden evils within their own falsities. These they try at all costs to conceal. It is against their interests to show the real inner content of falsities. Can Satan cast out Satan? "If Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" (Luke 11:18). Evil can never expose evil. That is why the magicians of Egypt could no longer emulate the Divine miracles.

Note that the plagues up to this point had been concerned with revealing the intellectual inadequacies of false ideas and fallacious appearances. Now, however, their true quality begins to appear. The interest shifts from the intellect to the will, from the thoughts to the affections. We now see what kind of affections, loves, pleasures, desires and lusts lie behind teachings that are contrary to the Divine Word. From now on the Egyptian magicians are bereft of their power to deceive. They even begin to acknowledge the presence of the Divine in the man of the church. "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

We are taught that in the spiritual world those who are in evil cannot bear the sphere of heaven, because the Lord is in that sphere. From this they flee away in great anguish and discomfort. This is represented in the New Testament Word by the fact that the demons cast out by the Lord recognized and acknowledged Him. It is also meant here by the acknowledgment of the Divine made by the magicians.

When the man of the church begins to receive something of the good of charity from the Lord as a result of his application of the truth of the Word to his own life, he is to that extent protected from infestation from the hells, who cannot bear the presence of good from the Lord. They recognize power from the Divine -- "the finger of God" -- and dare not approach (AC 1717:2).

From now on evils are exposed as well as falsities. This is seen in the plague of swarms of noxious flies that annoyed the Egyptians to exasperation point. They are described as signifying "the falsities of malevolence" that "take possession of all things of the natural mind" (AC 7442). It dawns on the man of the church that there is malevolence, in these noxious falsities. Just as the plagues increased in severity, so does the man of the church become more deeply aware that falsity is from evil and tends towards evil.

There even begins to be a stronger promise of liberation. Pharaoh urgently summons Moses and Aaron and agrees to let the sons of Israel depart "a little way" in order to worship the Lord. Moses says there must be a complete separation. This is the Divine Law: there must be a complete separation of what is good and true from what is evil and false. There must be a journey of three days. Unless there is this complete separation, the worship of the Lord will be contaminated by a merely natural sphere, with all its

falsities of evil. This is meant by Moses' fear that if the Israelites agreed to Pharaoh's suggestion that they should worship the Lord in the midst of the Egyptians, the Egyptians would stone them. In the internal sense, the meaning is that they would be bombarded with the stones of falsity. So a complete separation is called for.

The land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel dwelt, was exempted from "the grievous swarm of flies" that filled the house of Pharaoh and all the land of Egypt. By this was represented the beginning of deliverance from evil, which also meant the beginning of deliverance from what is false. "The land of Goshen" represents the inmost of the natural degree of the mind -- the rational degree, which can be most easily enlightened from above because it is nearest to the spiritual or internal mind. In the state we are considering, it had begun to receive something of the good of charity from above. The man of the spiritual Church can be redeemed or delivered from infestation because he can raise his mind above what is sensuous; he can think about eternal life, the life of heaven; he can look to the Lord and in this way have his understanding raised up and separated from what is merely natural. He is at the same time separated from the plagues of evil and falsity.

It is next said that Moses, at the request of the Pharaoh, begged the Lord to remove the swarms of flies from Egypt; which the Lord did -- but only after Moses had gone out from Pharaoh.

The meaning of this is similar to what we saw earlier about the removal of the plague of frogs. Falsities that are plainly from or malevolence are of no use to the evil. No one is deceived by means of these. Once the man of the church perceives any viciousness in what the natural man advocates, he cannot be led astray. Such falsities of malevolence are in vain. That is why the natural separated from the spiritual (represented by Pharaoh) finds them of no use. Pharaoh begs to have the plague removed.

The sixth insight into the nature of falsity that comes from evil is that it is only apparently good. At first these principles that are contrary to the Word of God had seemed to be the real answer to the ills of mankind. They had seemed to come from a real concern for the welfare of the human race; they had seemed to be looking to the brotherhood of man. But now it dawns upon the man of the church that this is only an outward—seeming good. It is seen that it proceeds from a complete inability to acknowledge such absolutes as truth and good. It is realized that there is no acknowledgment within these falsities of a power outside of itself. It gradually dawns on the man of the church that self is at the center of these false principles, that good is defined as the ways and means of satisfying self. The apparent goodness of these ideas is at last seen to be false, a mere appearance and not real. It is a plague, a pestilence. Hence it is represented by the pestilence upon the cattle of the Egyptians -- upon the horses, the asses and camels. All of these animals mentioned represent intellectual things: the "horse" the understanding of the Word, the "ass" scientifics, the "camel" the most general scientifics. It is seen that these falsities destroy a true understanding of the Word, a true understanding of scientifics, even the most general of them. The plague also falls upon the "oxen and upon the sheep," which represent here an apparent love for what is good and true but which is only natural and worldly.

Having seen these things, the man of the church is prepared for a further stage of enlightenment -- the seventh. In this he realizes that since the falsities of evil cannot rise above appearances, since they falsify the truths of the Word, since they give rise to specious reasonings from appearances, since they conceal disgusting evils and proceed from them, since they even have a certain malevolence within them, since they are only apparently good but are really devoid of any absolute standards of good and truth, they are in reality blasphemous. They curse the Lord and blaspheme against Him and all things heavenly. This is a hideous state and has to be pictured by a hideous plague -- "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast." It is said "upon man and upon beast" to show again that these things come forth from both interior evil, meant by "the man," and also from exterior evil, meant by "the beast."

This calling forth of the deeper evils occurs when the sphere of heaven approaches nearer. The sphere of heaven with its light becomes more and more present as the man of the church is progressively released from the hold of the falsity of evil. These stages of enlightenment may well be described as increasing degrees of the presence of heaven.

The eighth step towards being liberated from infestation is one in which it is explicitly seen that these falsities have no connection whatever with heaven, that they are in fact contrary to the life of heaven. The operative word here is "explicitly." There may have been a vague feeling that all this is un—heavenly, but now there is an explicit awareness of this in the understanding. This insight is meant by the rain of hail, which is frozen rain and thus devoid of the warmth of heaven, destroying all the servants and cattle of Pharaoh that were left out in the field instead of being brought into the houses -- "the houses" meaning the interiors of the mind where remains of goodness and truth are stored up. The meaning is that only the falsities of ignorance by which some remains of spirituality had been implanted can be preserved. All else, being against heaven, is to be removed.

Because these falsities are against heaven, they are also against everything that we know from the Word of the Lord, every piece of knowledge of what is good and true. They destroy these knowledges just as the plague of locusts destroyed anything left after the plague of hail, the plague of locusts being the ninth plague upon the Egyptians.

It is obvious then that these falsities of evil inflict thick darkness concerned. The natural mind is that they have nothing of the upon the mind as far as spiritual things are come from those in the spiritual world whose completely separated from the spiritual mind, so absolutely nothing of spiritual enlightenment, light of heaven. When the man of the church realizes that the falsities of evil destroy the light of heaven and are quite capable of inducing thick darkness in his own mind, he is almost free from infestation. This tenth step is what is meant by the thick darkness that covered the whole land of Egypt.

But there is one more acknowledgment to make before there can be complete deliverance. It has to be explicitly seen and acknowledged that anything at all that is contrary to the teaching of the Word is a falsity -- either a falsity of ignorance or a falsity of evil. If it is the latter, if we see that it comes from evil and tends towards evil, then we must finally see it as damnable, as coming from hell, which is against the Lord. This is the final plague. When the man of the church has experienced the series of insights that we have been considering and when he finally sees that these falsities are hellish, he can be set free from them. They have become repugnant to him. They are as painful to him as sunlight is to an infected eye, or salt added to a wound. He wants to avoid them. He wants to flee away from them -- which is the real meaning of the word "to shun." This is what is meant in the internal sense by Pharaoh, on the death of the firstborn, "thrusting out" the Israelites from Egypt altogether.

This final insight, which at last sets the man of the church free from infestation, is signified by the death of the firstborn of man, from the highest to the lowest in Egypt and also the firstborn or the beasts. The "firstborn" usually means faith, but here it means the mere knowledge of what is to be believed. The destruction of the firstborn therefore means the realization that there is absolutely nothing of real faith or true belief in these falsities because they are connected solely with hell. They are utterly destructive of the things of the Lord's Kingdom.

Let us take, as an example, the falsity that "when you are dead, you are dead." At first this false idea is quite appealing. There seems to be some truth and some good in it; it frees us from all that "superstition" about a life after death, about angels and paradise, but especially about hell. We are pleased at the thought that there is no judgment after death and no hell; it delights us to think that we can do as we please here on earth -- if we can get away with it. We feel a sense of freedom, of relief, not realizing at the time that we are really under bondage to Egyptian falsities, under bondage to evil spirits who curse the Lord and all that is good and who delight in all things evil.

But later -- as we come more deeply into the Divine Order of life by living according to the Word -- as we receive progressive enlightenment, we come to the terrible realization that we have indeed been seduced by falsities, that the denial of the life after death also does away with heaven and eternal happiness, does away with Divine justice and mercy, with the Divine Providence, in short, that it destroys everything of the church, including the acknowledgment of the Lord our Creator and Redeemer. We realize at last that though these falsities seemed to promote the brotherhood of man, in reality they destroy its very essence -- which is the fatherhood of God. What makes people to be brothers is the acknowledgment of a common father. The brotherhood of man is impossible without the fatherhood of God. When we are convinced of

this, we see that the destruction of everything good and true and of its Divine source is characteristic of all falsities that are not merely from ignorance.

In the literal story, as the severity of these plagues increased, so did Pharaoh's willingness to let the people go. After the plague of frogs, which was the third plague, he was willing for them to go "a little way" in order to sacrifice unto Jehovah. From then on he expressed a growing interest in allowing them to leave the country. Each time he promised to let them go, he made a less stringent restriction; yet he always hardened his heart and refused to let them go. Even when he had been moved by the plagues to promise to release the Israelites, even when he had been convinced by the magicians that this was "the finger of God," even when he begged Moses to have the plagues stopped, he still refused to let the people go -- once Moses was out of his sight.

In the internal sense that is not very remarkable. We all know what it is to be in alternating states -- states of light and states of darkness. When we lose sight of the light of Truth Divine (represented by Moses), we lapse back into an obstinate clinging to the things of the natural man. Consequently, we cannot yet be completely released from bondage to false ideas, even when deep down, in states of enlightenment, we know that they come from filthy evils and lead to them, that there is ill will towards others in them and that they are destructive of the Lord's Kingdom. These things we forget when Moses is absent.

That is why it is so important to keep within the sphere of the Word -- every day of our lives. We can do this by reading something of Divine Revelation each day, even if it is only one page. For at least part of the day our understanding can be raised up into the light of heaven. We can also pray to the Lord for aid. This helps us remember the true things, the realities and the good things that we had seen before in states of enlightenment and stimulates us to try even harder to be guided by the power of the Divine Word -- to have both Moses and Aaron present -- Aaron being the Word as it is on earth, Moses the light of Truth Divine, which becomes more and more present as we live according to the Word. This is our means of deliverance from the falsities of evil and the first step in our journey towards the Promised Land of heaven. Surely it is obvious to us all that we shall never be led by the Lord as to our will unless we are first led by Him as to our understanding.

Chapter 9 The Passover and Release from Egypt

What finally releases us from infestation is the realization, as we have seen, that these things that are contrary to the Lord flow in from hell. They are separate from us and should be kept separate from us. We turn away from them with feelings of revulsion. But, as we have also seen, this does not happen all at once; it takes a long series of insights before we are finally convinced that falsities are infernal.

It is similar in the literal story. It was by a series of plagues upon the Egyptians that the Lord brought about the release of the Hebrews. While it is true that only the last plague (the death of the firstborn) caused the Egyptian Pharaoh finally to release the Israelites, while this was indeed the final calamity that softened his heart, the way had been prepared by all the previous plagues.

What the Lord has been developing in us by means of the enlightenment that He has given us step-by-step is a certain willingness to be led by Him, a certain innocence. This is the very inmost quality in the mind that makes deliverance from infestation a final certainty.

We are all familiar with the definition of innocence as being a willingness to do the Lord's will and be led by Him, a desire to follow Him whithersoever He leads. But it is also said to consist "in acknowledging that in one's self there is nothing but evil and that all good is from the Lord; and also in believing that man does not know or perceive anything from himself, but from the Lord, thus also the truth that belongs to faith. When man is in this state, then falsity can be removed from him and the truth can be insinuated by the Lord" (AC 7902).

This is the state to be attained before there can be complete emancipation from the attacks of falsities -- a state so full of good from the Lord that the evil spirits who infest dare not approach. It is described in many

different ways in the Writings -- "the acknowledgment of the Lord," "the acknowledgment of self," "truth from a celestial origin." But however it is described it is a state of such gentleness and tenderness that it can be represented best by a lamb. For that reason the number just quoted concludes by saying: "This state is what is signified by... the eating of the pascal lamb" (AC 7902).

In fact, we read that "the whole state of liberation is signified by the Passover in the complex" (AC 7831). This whole state of being liberated marks the end of infestation and the beginning of a completely new general state of mind. It is to reign throughout all the states of mind that follow on from it. This new phase in a person's progress towards regeneration is therefore signified by, "This month is to you the head of the months; this is the first to you in the months of the year" (Ex. 12:2).

But let us bear in mind that this great change of state refers especially to the things of the understanding rather than the will. It is the liberation of the understanding that is meant. That is why it is called the first of the "months" rather than the first of the year. Both "a month" and "a year" mean the end of one state and the beginning of a new one; but since a month is really "a month," being calculated with reference to the phases of the moon, it signifies something to do with the light of faith, which is a reflection of the light of love, just as the light of the moon is a reflection of the light of the sun. Since a year is calculated with reference to the sun, it represents the state of the mind as to love.

The end of infestation and the beginning of liberation is quite plainly an advance towards the deeper things of the mind, the interiors. The innocence of the first states when remains of truth were implanted returns. It is therefore stipulated that the lamb should be taken on "the tenth of the month" -- the number "ten" in the Word referring to the goods and truths implanted by the Lord in infancy. These are called remains because they do remain. They are often the only remnant of good or truth left in the mind. These remains of truth, implanted by the Lord in infancy, are the source of that unspotted innocence, devoid of any falsity or evil. That is signified by "a lamb unblemished."

We are speaking here of the innocence of the spiritual church -- those who must first learn what is true before they can do what is good. They do not do good spontaneously and immediately; they have first of all to learn what is the good way -- by means of the true things that make up their faith. To the extent that they do follow these things, they are being led by the Lord, or, what is the same, they have this precious quality of innocence. This is the significance of the detail that it had to be a male lamb. "A male" always means the truth of faith, the truth that is to be believed and acted upon.

It should be stressed that this is not mere knowledge but truth from good. It is truth that has already been acted upon. This state is described in the Writings as "a full state" (AC 7839). It is attained when truths are looked at from good; but it is not yet full when man looks longingly at good from truth, as he does while he is being regenerated. When he has been regenerated, he looks from good towards truth and is thus of the internal church, whereas before he was of the external church (AC 7839). This full state, when man looks from good towards truth, is meant by the stipulation that the lamb was to be "a son of a year" -- a "year" referring to a new state as to good.

It is this truth from the good of innocence that brings about liberation from falsities. Good alone does no good work -- even though it be the good of innocence. In a confrontation with a falsity the good of innocence is powerless. Imagine yourself trying to refute a falsity that has come into your mind; the fact that you experience, deep down, a strong desire to do the Lord's will, a feeling of willingness to be led by Him -- this in itself does not provide the answer to the falsity. What is needed is the light of truth from that good -- some spiritual light that lights up all parts of the understanding, including even the outmost part of the natural, conscious mind -- for that is where the words of our language are. That is where we make contact with the outside world.

Truth that flows from the good of innocence is the life--blood of spiritual life. It is the kind of enlightenment and wisdom enjoyed by those who love the Lord to the extent of striving to keep His commandments all the time, in any company, in any situation. When this truth flowing from the good of innocence is sprinkled around, it is a sign, a token, a protective token. It is truth from the heart -- just as blood flows forth from the heart. When this kind of truth is applied even on the natural plane in external

things, when it is applied to the conduct of our life on the moral plane and even on the civil plane, then it is a real testification proclaiming that genuine good dwells within, that in the will, which is a man's spiritual house and dwelling-place, there is something of good from the Lord. The sphere of heaven is then welcome and can be received.

This truth from the good of innocence is what is meant by the blood of the lamb. In a spiritual sense -- understood as just outlined -- we are indeed saved "by the blood of the lamb." The extension of this truth from good even into the truths and goods in the outermost part of the natural mind is meant by the Divine command that they were to take the blood and sprinkle it upon the two posts and upon the lintel of the door of each house.

This is indeed a holy state -- signified by the stipulation that the lamb was to be kept until "the fourteenth day of the month." "Fourteen" has the same signification as "seven," because numbers that are multiplied have a similar signification to the simple numbers; and, "seven" always means what is holy. "Hence it is," we read, "that the Passover was to begin on the fourteenth day of the month, was to last seven days and was to cease on the twenty-first day, which day also signifies what is holy, because it arises from the multiplication of three and seven. Hence it was that on the first day of the Passover there was to be a holy convocation and on the twenty-first day a holy convocation (verse 16)" (AC 7842).

This holy state is meant to be full of delight. It is meant to be enjoyed. Being led by the Lord or innocence is the very essence of heavenly joy. The enjoyment of the good of innocence is what is meant by the eating of the flesh of the lamb. We read that "flesh" means man's proprium vivified by the Divine Human of the Lord, thus all celestial and spiritual good with man (AC 7850).

But certain conditions must be met for this enjoyment to be experienced. The innocence must be from the good of love to the Lord; no lesser degree of innocence will suffice. This is meant in the internal sense when it is said that the lamb must be "roast with fire". "Fire" signifies love; "roasted" signifies that which is imbued with love, consequently good (See AC 7852).

There must also be a complete purification from everything that is false. In this state when the man of the spiritual church is being liberated from falsities, he must have nothing to do with any teaching that is false, anything that he knows is contrary to the truth the Lord has revealed. Anyone who does appropriate falsity (that is, firmly believes it) cannot partake of innocence and casts himself out from the Lord's protection. Hence the pascal lamb (the good of innocence) was to be eaten with "unleavened things," and the Israelites were to eat nothing leavened for seven days. This comes from the signification of "leaven" as being falsity. This we can readily see from the Lord's words in Matthew: "See ye and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Afterwards the disciples understood that He had not said that they should beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:12). From all this it is clear why anyone who ate unleavened bread was to be an outcast, cut off from the congregation of Israel.

Another condition required for the enjoyment of the good of innocence is that we must pass through the bitterness of temptations. The undelightful things of temptations are an absolute necessity. For the teaching is that "the good of innocence, which is represented by the pascal lamb, cannot be appropriated to anyone except through temptations" (AC 7854). This is signified by the law that the lamb was to be eaten "upon things bitter."

There can be no enjoyment of the goodness of innocence without love -- love to the Lord. There must be something of this, or else it is not innocence. The lamb was not to be eaten raw, "raw" signifying without the good of love. It is clear that this is the meaning of "raw" from the fact that "roasted with fire" means, as we have seen, the good of love; consequently "raw" means what is not roasted with fire, thus what is without love (AC 7856).

Nor is mere obedience to the truth of faith sufficient. We all know that there is precious little delight in obedience to command in the early stages of regeneration. "When man is being regenerated," we read, "the good with him proceeds from the truth of faith; for he then acts in accordance with truth; not from the affection of truth, but from obedience, because it has been so commanded. Afterward however, when

he has been regenerated, he does what is good from affection, thus from love. These two states with man are precisely distinguished in the Word, for the reason that man cannot enter into the other until he had been regenerated; and he who is in the second state must not betake himself to the former. If anyone so betakes himself, he loses the affection of doing what is good from love and relapses into the state of faith, which has been of service to him to introduce him to good and he also relapses beyond this state" (AC 7857).

That passage goes on to point out that this is what is meant by Lot's wife, in that she looked back behind her and it concludes by saying: "Whence it can be understood what is meant by enjoying the good which goes forth from love, but not that which goes forth from the truth of faith, which things are signified by the command that they should eat the flesh roasted with fire, but not boiled in water" (AC 7857). The distinction between roasting and boiling comes from the fact that "roasting" signifies good because it is done by means of fire, while "boiling" means truth because it is done by means of water 7852).

In the delightful state that we are describing the good of love must interpenetrate everything of the mind - from the inmost to the lowest of the external. Interior and exterior things must act together as a one, in order for the man of the church to be a kingdom of the Lord. They are separated when the natural or external mind acts differently from the spiritual or internal mind. "From all this it can be seen what was signified by the command that the pascal lamb should be roast with fire, the head upon the legs and the midst" (AC 7859). The "head" means inmost things, "the legs" mean things exterior, but "the midst" means the natural still more external than that, namely, the sensuous degree of the mind. The delight must fill the mind from the highest to lowest, even to the sensuous.

Yet this state of being willing to be led by the Lord for the sake of being liberated from infestation by the falsities of evil is not the be-all and end-all. It is not an end in itself. It is a means to an even more advanced state -- elevation into heaven. This is meant by "the morning" (AC 7860). If this particular kind of innocence lasts beyond its appointed duration, it becomes an obstacle to being raised into heaven. It will, in fact, bring on a return of temptations. We can understand, then, why the Israelites were commanded not to leave anything of the pascal lamb until morning and that if anything were left of it until the morning, they were to burn it with fire, "Burning with fire" meaning to undergo temptations (AC 7861).

Obviously, this delightful state signified by the Passover lamb and all the particulars concerning it does look towards separation from the evil spirits who infest. This great change of state, this journey out of infestation, is clearly what is meant in the literal sense by these words: "And thus shall ye eat it: your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; this is the Passover of Jehovah" (verse 11).

In this heavenly state, when there is complete trust in the power and protection of the Lord and a deeply-felt willingness to follow His leading, what falsity of evil can survive? How could anything from hell intrude itself into our thoughts or affections? No matter what the falsity we may have entertained in the past, it cannot be seen now. It is as if it were not there. It is in thick darkness, as in the middle of the night. We read that "there is thick darkness (in the hells) when anything of light from heaven flows in: for then their light from which they see is dissipated and becomes thick darkness" (AC 7870). It is most fitting, then, that the Passover lamb was to be eaten "in the night," and that the Lord passed through the Egyptians "at midnight" (verse 12,29).

The falsities injected by the infesting evil spirits are seen as damnable -- as flowing in from the hells. From the basic first principles or assumptions even down to their applications to the sensuous plane, they are all condemned in the mind of the man of the church. Thus there was a fatal plague upon "all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh about to sit upon his throne even unto the firstborn unto the captive that was in the house of the pit; and all the firstborn of beasts" (verse 29).

When the man of the spiritual church sees for himself that falsities are in this way to be condemned, the hells at the same time suffer fear and aversion. They dare not approach. The sphere of good causes them the greatest discomfort, so that they wish for separation. This is seen in the urgent pleading of the

Egyptians for the people to go in haste and leave the land of Egypt. In fact, "Egypt was strong upon the people, hastening to send them out of the land; for they said, We be all dead" (verse 33)

The sphere of hell, then, far from wishing to infest the man of the church in this state, is not even able to approach. Even if it were, it could do him no harm, for he is in complete protection against all that flows in from hell. It passes over him, doing him no harm. This is what is meant by the various particulars in the literal story about the plague on the firstborn passing over all the houses of the Israelites where there was blood from the lamb sprinkled on the door posts and lintels.

In this state of liberation, there is no such thing as putting our knowledge of the true things and the good things of the Lord's kingdom to evil uses. In our early states of regeneration that may well have been the case; we may have used what we know about truth and goodness for the sake of the loves of self and the world, for the sake of enhancing our status in the world or for our own advantage. But now, that is a thing of the past. Everything that we know about what is true and about what is good is applied to good uses -- to love towards the neighbor and love to the Lord. This transfer from serving what is evil to serving what is good is meant by the sons of Israel asking "of the Egyptians vessels of silver and vessels of gold and garments. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they lent to them; and they spoiled the Egyptians" (verse 35,36).

We would remark in passing that this is what the Writings give as the meaning of the expression "spoiling the Egyptians" or "borrowing from the Egyptians." This is a far cry from what is becoming a popular misconception of these phrases in the church. The meaning is not that we are commanded here to take the scientifics and sciences of the world and apply them to the work of the church. This is not the place to discuss whether we should or should not do that. But it does seem appropriate to point out that that is not what the Writings are telling us to do here. The subject is the scientifics of the church, not of the world. The scientifics of the church include such things as a knowledge of rituals, the science of correspondences and the doctrinal things of the Word and the church. These can be used either for good purposes or evil purposes, for the Lord or for self. "It is with man's scientifics as it is with his riches and wealth," the Arcana says. "Riches and wealth are hurtful to those who are in evil, because they apply them to evil uses; but they are useful to those who are in good, because they apply them to good uses. If therefore the riches and wealth which pertain to the evil are transferred to the good, they become good" (AC 6917). (For those who wish to pursue this matter of "borrowing from the Egyptians," see an excellent editorial by the Rev. Martin Pryke in *New Church Life* for February, 1975, page 76.)

The state of mind signified by all these particulars concerning the Passover is meant to be within all ritual or external worship in the spiritual church. That is why the celebration of the Passover was commanded and so many regulations given at the close of this twelfth chapter of Exodus.

This certainly seems to be a highly regenerate state of mind. The man of the church is described as being in the good of innocence from celestial love; as being in the good of charity towards the neighbor; as being in the enlightenment of truth from good; and as looking from good towards truth, which is expressly said to be the state of one who has been regenerated (AC 7857). It is also said to be "a full state," one in which the truth has gone into act from delight. What more, then, is to be done? Is not this the fully regenerate state? Is not the man of the church prepared to be elevated into heaven?

If this were so, if this were indeed the completion of regeneration, it would have been represented in the literal story by the sons of Israel going immediately into the land of Canaan by the shortest route. But, as we all know, they were expressly forbidden to do this, lest they be overcome by the Philistines --despite the fact that the route by way of Philistia was the most direct. Instead, they had to wander by a circuitous route through the wilderness for the extraordinarily long period of forty years before they came to the boundary of the land and began the task of entering into it. They suffered many hardships and privations, doubts, discouragements and states of despair while struggling through the wilderness. What does all this represent? What states of mind are yet to come after freedom from being infested by false ideas?

The key to understanding this is to recall that in the process of his spiritual journey out of Egypt into Canaan the man of the spiritual church is first tempted as to the truth, but only later as to good (AC 641,

642, 653). That is to say, he is first infested with falsities that attack his belief in the truth. He is not so much tempted to do what is evil but rather to believe what is false. But when he is at last set free from these infesting falsities -- in the way we have been describing -- he can gradually be let into his evils and be tempted as to good by means of them. They could not be allowed to rise up before he had become thoroughly established in the truth, before his faith in the truth was personally confirmed. If his evils had been allowed to rise up and tempt him earlier than that, he would surely have yielded. That is why the Lord, in His Divine Providence -- which always looks to eternal things, namely, the salvation of the human race in general and in particular -- moderates and controls the societies in the spiritual world that are present with man, always maintaining his freedom of choice, always making it possible for him to choose good rather than evil, always bending his affections heavenward. The temptations that arise when the man of the spiritual church, having been liberated from the infestations of falsity, is let successively into his evils, are described most graphically by the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness. This represents the state of reformation. The driving out of evils and the possession of the Holy Land by the sons of Israel is a very vivid picture of what happens while man is being regenerated by the Lord: good from the Lord drives out evil.

Yet even in this matter of being delivered from falsity there are many things in the Word that represent a basic truth that salvation is of the Lord. It is the Lord who delivers our mind from being infested by incessant falsities and from being held in bondage to them. He it is who gives us the progressive enlightenment to see that Egyptian falsities are nothing but plagues; He it is who gives us the necessary truths from the good of innocence -- the blood of the lamb -- by which we are delivered from their power.

It is true that we must follow the instructions He gives through His Word, as if of ourselves -- even as the Israelites had to hearken to what the Lord revealed through Moses and Aaron. But the reality is that it is only as if of ourselves. It is the Lord who really is the Deliverer.

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