



LAWS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

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Well, in my previous lecture last week, I introduced you to two kinds of direct reports on a life after death. This is in contradistinction to reports that come through mediums. These two kinds of direct reporting were firstly the near-death experience, which has been reported by a growing number of people, particularly now that we have the modern life-support and resuscitation equipment in our hospitals; and secondly, the report of that amazing scientist of the 18th century, Emanuel Swedenborg, who reported that for the last 27 years of his life, he had a double awareness and was aware of the spiritual world and able to converse with many persons in that world.

The near-death experience has shown us very clearly indeed that we have a spirit which can become separated from the physical body — this partly as an OBE, or out-of-body experience, which is something that very many people have who don't go as far as having the near-death experience; and secondly, the near-death experience has shown that people find themselves in this other spiritual body as I shall now call it, experiencing the threshold of some kind of transcendental realm providing for them an experience which they report as either being as real or more real than their experience of ordinary life in the body. Swedenborg's experiences were of this nature, that he in his spiritual body, even whilst he was still alive in this world, found himself able to go beyond the ordinary OBE and have this direct converse and visual aspect of the life after death.

I also indicated last week that the reason why I recommend that we should accept this interpretation, this evidence as real and true, is because of its potential to expand the mind's awareness and to provide a principle with greater explanatory power for our experiences, which is the same reason for which scientists accepted the Copernican theory in astronomy, which as you all know I'm sure by now, is the



theory that the Earth goes around the sun and that the sun is itself only one star in a Milky Way in a huge universe. And so the Copernican theory helped to expand man's awareness of his physical world enormously.

Now, these direct reports of a life after death show a remarkable consistency; not the kind of consistency you would get from carbon copy, that's to say, you don't get the feeling that somebody has previously read somebody else's report of a near-death experience, and then they trot out something very similar, or much the same thing. Not that kind of consistency — there's far too much variation, but within the variation, enormous consistency or a pattern that emerges. That pattern has been given very clearly by Dr Moody in his book, *Life After Life*.

But I want to mention not the consistency first of all but the variation, which sometimes can be quite extreme. For example, although mostly the reports that we hear of of near-death experiences report a very pleasant or very highly uplifting experience, there are a few known reports that present the opposite of a very unpleasant experience.

When you think about it, it's logical that if people are having roughly, let's say for the sake of argument, roughly 50 percent good experiences and 50 percent unpleasant ones, the ones that are most likely to come to light and be reported are the pleasant experiences. So there may be many more unpleasant experiences than we sometimes think. And so, I would suggest to you that the kind of experience that is reported in this near-death state is dependent upon the state, condition or inner character of the person involved, and this statement may become clearer to you later on in my talk this evening.

Right, so now let us come to the emergence, fully, into this life after death of a person who has just become deceased. We will now move on beyond the near-death experience which only provides an entrance to the threshold.

When a person first dies, he may be met by friends, relatives or strangers initially. There will be variation here, again depending upon the inner condition of the person who is just deceased. To try to make this as simple as possible for you, let me put it this way: imagine someone dying who has not really loved any of his family and not really loved any of his friends and has been unloved by others. He is unlikely to be met by any friends and relatives on the other side, simply because he is not looking for it, expecting it, welcoming it in any way.

Normally of course, most people when they die, they have loved ones of some kind who have gone before them, and therefore, it is highly likely that when any of us die, we shall certainly meet friends or relatives.



The strangers will be what I will now call spirits, as opposed to men, to make a distinction — spirits who have gone before and who are slightly somewhat more advanced in their spiritual development and who want to act as guides to the new entrants, the new person entering into the spiritual world. And so, we have the situation of the newly deceased finding himself now aware in his spiritual body, which he's always had, this is obvious from the OBE experience — he's always had his spiritual body but he's not been aware of it before until now when the physical body has been discarded and laid to one side.

He now begins to become aware of his surroundings and he finds that his surroundings appear as real and as solid as anything he has experienced in the physical world.

Now, up to this point, it would appear as though there is no essential difference, that nothing really has changed, but he will begin gradually (with some people it may take quite a long time, with some it will be very quick), they will become aware that there is a very important difference about this new world that he finds himself in, and to help you understand this, I want to put it in the form of a principle, which I shall call the principle of correspondence. This principle is a key principle to help us understand a great deal about the life after death. Once we understand this, we'll understand so much, and not only about the life after death. It will help us to understand a lot about our experiences even now in the physical body.

We have two bodies: a physical, which has five physical senses, and we have a spiritual body which has five spiritual senses. Normally, the five spiritual senses, although they are operative, what they sense and see is heavily clouded by what the physical body sees and experiences.

But in the spiritual world, when the physical body is cast aside this cloud, then the spiritual body begins to become aware of surroundings which are a representation of the quality of the contents that are in their own hearts and minds. It's as if everything that is inside us, that's to say inside our spirit, I mean, not our physical body, everything inside us becomes projected outward and clothed in symbolic images.

For example, we have many things that are growing (at least I hope this is true of all of you here), many things that are growing in our minds. We've our ideas that start off as little seeds and they begin to sprout and to branch out and to flower and bear fruit. Now, if that is happening, when the veil of the flesh is removed, we begin to see these inner growing things represented, projected out from us as beautiful, growing plants in front of us.

Of course, if we do not have anything living and growing in our minds, if we've let our minds become arid and barren and dead and lifeless, then when the veil of the flesh is removed, all we shall see will be sandy, arid desert.



Now, perhaps you're beginning to realise that if what I say is true, the implications and the repercussions are tremendous and enormous. You are living now in a spiritual body. This spiritual body projects or represents outwards from itself the quality of everything that is in your heart and mind or spirit. But you are not normally aware of this because the five physical senses make too much noise, as it were, they're too loud, they're too striking, and so you don't notice. But you can, you know, and probably all of you here have sometimes noticed this difference and perhaps not realised exactly what it meant.

Let me give you a simple example. It is a very dull, wet, rainy day. You are in the middle of a dirty city but you happen to be walking along the street and your heart and mind happen to be full of lovely thoughts, love for your relatives and your friends and your children, thoughts about the nice things that you would like to do for them, thoughts of the wonderful things they've done for you. You don't notice the rain, the dirt, the grime. You enjoy everything you see. You see the best in everything you see because your heart and your mind are seeing the best in other people, and the converse is true also.

Let's look at the effect of this principle upon our sense of time and distance, and here you will find yourself on very familiar territory. Two people in a car, they travel from town A to town B and it takes them an hour. At the end of the journey, person X says, "Wow, that didn't take long! It's been an hour. It seems only to have been half an hour to me, it's been so quick." Person Y says, "My goodness, this journey didn't half drag. It seemed like two hours to me."

Now, here you have a clear indication of the different record given by the physical senses that are measured by the clock and by the ruler, and the spiritual senses that measure by our subjective sense of what we're experiencing. The clock says one hour, person X says half an hour and person Y says two hours. The half hour and the two hours have been measured by two independent spiritual clocks, we might say. The one hour has been measured by a physical clock, which is the same for all the observers.

Now, if you think through experiences like that, you will begin to become aware that your spiritual senses do sometimes have a big effect, even in this life, on how you experience your surroundings, and it comes out very strongly in this way. I will, for the sake of argument, divide people into two camps: those people who are always seeing the best in other people and those people who are always looking for the faults in others to criticise and pull them down.

And what do such people find? Those people who look for the best in others, they find it and they are made bright and cheerful and happy because of it. Those who



look for faults find faults in everybody and they become more and more cynical about life and people.

You see how we measure life very much really by our spiritual senses, which are governed and controlled by the quality of our hearts and minds. Right, so that is the principle of correspondence: what the spiritual body sees and experiences is a mirror image, if you like, of the quality of the heart and mind at the time.

Now, let's return to our newly deceased person. He may find himself in some kind of dwelling. The dwelling may be very pleasant, it may be a very beautiful house, it may be a bit of a shack.

Now, a dwelling or a house is a representation of our own inner thoughts and feelings, the innermost ones, because we all know how when we get home, we put our feet up and we relax our minds, not into the kind of thinking that we use for other people to keep up best appearances, but we relax our minds into their real, natural way of thinking and feeling. And so the kind of house that a person finds himself in after death is very closely representational of his innermost quality of thinking.

Now, he begins to move around and explore and as he moves around and explores, he begins to find that he can go anywhere but that from time to time he comes up against limits, borders or barriers. Now, these barriers are not barriers that are imposed by any deity or external authority. The barriers are in his own mind because everything he now experiences in this new spiritual world is a representation of what is going on in his mind.

Now, many people are building up barriers in their minds at this very moment in this world, or allowing barriers to be built up by other people and by society, and so it's no wonder that in the other life, you find that your horizons at first are very limited. They're limited by the barriers you yourselves have accepted. And so the person begins to explore.

Now he may, at this stage, begin to want to allow his mind to be broadened, to increase his awareness and he may allow himself to begin to explore in unknown, exciting regions.

Now, these regions are all really regions within our own minds and spirits, and in talking to other inhabitants or to guides who are helping him if he wishes to be helped, he begins to become aware that in this new world in which he now lives, there are many layers of existence. There are many very high layers of existence which you'll only know about by hearsay and they may be given the name of heavenly levels of existence.



He will also be told about very low levels, way down, that may be called hellish levels of existence. And in between in the area in which he is able to explore for himself, he finds that there are roughly two types of level: there is a higher type which is relatively bright, cheery and pleasant and is often called the Summerland; and there is a lower level which is dimmer, more grey and rather cheerless, which is called the lower Earth.

Now, all these levels are projections of the levels of the human mind, and in reality, every one of us born into the world has all these levels from the highest heavenly level down to the lowest hellish level within our minds or spirits right here and now, but we have probably explored only a few of these levels so far, and that perhaps not very much.

Now, when one begins to explore the spiritual world, one of the things you quickly begin to notice is the enormous freedom that you have to go anywhere you want and to do anything that you want to do. You find that there are no police. There are no external authorities to catch you and to try you and judge you and punish you. You're free to do whatever you want.

Now, think again of the enormous implications of finding yourself in such a free state. Many newcomers, when they experience this new sense of freedom from external restraints and authority, they begin to find many not-very-desirable desires and needs arising within them.

One of the first things you do in the other life is to begin to look for company, for people that you enjoy being with. In fact, this introduces us to a second principle of life in the spiritual world: that like attracts like. It operates of course in this life, but very often the barriers of fixed time and space prevent all the people who are really like each other on the face of the globe at any one time from being able to find each other and get together. In the spiritual world it is quite different. All the persons who are very like each other begin to find each other. They are drawn to one another, and they begin to congregate in companies, and if these companies are beginning to want to experience and indulge in licence of one form or another, then they begin to travel downwards of their own accord, excited by the new life they're going to find in the new areas as they go downwards.

They begin to enter areas where life is based on a principle which we can call the hellish principle. They begin to find themselves in areas which are based upon the principle of "You use other people as pleasure generators". You use other people as pleasure generators. You extract as much pleasure out of other people and life as you can. And so these companies begin to operate of their own free will according to this principle, and you can begin to see where it will lead. It'll be a bit like living in the wild west of the '80s, well away from where there is much law and order. Rather



exciting at first, but you're liable to get rather hurt in a pretty short space of time because there's no policing and so you are exposed to the desires of those around you.

Some people allow themselves to be drawn lower and lower and lower, and they begin to come into what you might call hellish regions proper, and here they begin to experience the fire of burning lusts, hell fire, within their own hearts. They begin to experience weeping, which is self-pity, when they can't get their way and other people won't give them and do for them what they want and they begin to experience the gnashing of teeth as they and others around them get frustrated when they can't continually satisfy their desires and get in each other's way. They find by living experience that there is a hell fire and that there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, but it is all self-chosen.

At some point, at some point a person may begin to say to himself, "There must be a better way of life than this." And as soon as he says that, a guide, a friend, a voice or a light appears — help of some sort. There must be a better way.

And so, this spirit begins the slow and the rather painful path back to the realms of light, to the realms of light in his own mind as well as the realms of light that he can see outside of himself. Whenever he wants it and calls for it, there will always be help of some form or other to help him work his way back to the realms of light and cheerfulness. But it is not easy, just as any of you will know if you have allowed yourself to get to indulge some not-very-acceptable or some rather anti-social practice, that when you decide that you want to get rid of this and return to a better way of life, it takes quite a bit of effort and struggle and pain on your own part until you can make it, but you can make it if you want to, but it is not an easy path.

And so let's follow our spirit now as he works his way back gradually through the lower Earth and across the divide into the Summerland, and there in these bright, cheery regions, he finds that just as he is wanting and needing instruction in how to live a better life, so he meets better, more highly developed guides and he comes across colleges and schools where all the guidance and instruction he needs are provided by more highly developed beings. These schools and colleges are not academic institutions as we have in our own world here. They are schools that provide education in living, in how to find happiness in life.

And so our spirit begins to learn, and as he rises, so he himself in turn begins to want to teach those lower down the path. He is so delighted in the way he has been led on and got over obstacles by others, that he can't avoid wanting to help others reach where he has reached, and so we find in the spiritual world, a whole chain of guides and teachers coming right down from the mists of where we can't yet



understand or be aware of, right down to where we are and down below us to those that we are leading on afterwards.

And so we find this upward progression of spirits as they gradually learn the deeper levels of living, discovering deeper levels in themselves. And so they progress from level to level until eventually they cross a threshold and enter a new set of levels that we will call heavenly levels. We call them heavenly levels because here the spirit, when he reaches it, has discovered and faced up to all the things in himself that he has had by heredity and acquired during his life on Earth, and he has chosen which he will accept and which he will reject.

In these heavenly realms, he is now what we call an angel. There are no angels who were not once men and women on one of the planets in our universe, and certainly the Bible does not teach so, although many people mistakenly have believed that the Bible does. All angels are highly developed men and women.

In these heavenly levels, we find that the surroundings are extremely bright and colourful, beyond what we could possibly stand at the moment. If we were shot into one of these heavenly levels, we would be blinded by the brightness because we're not used to living at that high level of the human mind. Once we are attuned to it, the brightness and the warmth is indescribable, and the beauty. Those who have experienced it have said the beauty cannot be described. It is beyond words. It has to be experienced to be known.

[Break in recording] ...are in the flower of youth and early manhood. They live in countless communities, some small, some large. These communities are of every conceivable kind, just as there have been every conceivable kind of community of people living on our Earth down the ages. There is no one fixed, set pattern of life. Every community is different. Every individual in every heavenly community is different, but all those who live together in the same community have a very striking similarity about them despite their differences, and they are collectively serving a particular use and we find here at this level that they are operating upon an opposite principle to the hellish principle that I mentioned earlier.

They have the heavenly principle, that delight or joy is generated by being of use to others. Remember, the opposite one was to use other people as pleasure generators. All the heavenly communities are finding delight and joy in being of use in some way to the community and to others who are lower down than themselves on the spiritual scale.

Every individual in these heavenly communities has a slightly different, unique use, but the communities as a whole have a collective use or function.



Now, if you can imagine all these many, many diverse communities scattered across this spiritual space, which is not like physical space, you don't have to spend hours to travel a long distance. If you imagine all this, it turns out that if you look at all these functions, the different functions that each community is serving, you begin to see appearing before you an image of the human body with all the different and varied functions that each part or organ of the human body plays, so that the whole of these heavenly levels looked at together is like, as it were, is like a human body in relation to the harmonious and integrated functioning of the different uses of these different communities. And this leads us to see that the human body itself, which is the highest, most complex, most wonderful organism that is to be found in the physical world, contains within itself the blueprint of the heavenly pattern of organisation itself.

If you look at any well functioning factory, industry or community, you will find, at least in simple ways, something of this pattern there. You will find leaders and lieutenants and subordinates and workers of various sorts, which is very like in the human body, which has organs which have to lead, organs which have to be lieutenants and so on, right down to the parts of the body which actually carry out the orders that come from the top.

The angels are finding their delight in serving other people. They do not always remain fresh and bright. They're not pasteboard figures rather like the pictures of angels and the idea we have of them in picture books. They do change and they change in this way, a way that we already know by our own experience because all of us are angels in the making.

They find that sometimes in their work, when their charges that they are helping are very difficult and when their charges wilfully ignore all the good impulses that their guardian angels give them, and get themselves into a mess and find themselves in trouble and upset those around them, it tends to drain, temporarily, something of the life and energy of the angel and he is made sad, he or she, I should say, is made sad, only temporarily.

There are many ways in which those in these heavenly communities are able to have their batteries recharged just as we can in this life learn the processes by which the batteries that control the inner sources of energy within us may be recharged.

The angels do not only work. They also play, and how they know how to play! They know how to play far better than we do. They know far better than we do how to have fun and laughter and gaiety. In their communities, they enjoy all sorts of things — games, dancing, country walks, operatics, dramatics, dinners, sports, you name it. If they want to be into it, they're into it and they know how to throw themselves fully into it and get the maximum enjoyment out of it for themselves and for the benefit of all those with whom they are.



Heaven is a place of the utmost happiness and enjoyment. But the greatest delight that they experience comes not through the recreation but through their work, particularly when they succeed in helping one of their charges to take a real step forward nearer to the light.

In heaven, there are no marriages. There are no legal contracts. Instead, in heaven, there are what Swedenborg calls conjugal pairs, that is to say, a man and a woman who are becoming more and more indissolubly linked soul to soul, mind to mind, spirit to spirit, each being the complementary half of the other, and what God has put together, no man can put asunder. In heaven, the angels are united indissolubly into man/woman pairs that no-one can yank asunder.

On this point, I'd like to take you back for a moment to the newly deceased because the question might arise in your minds: what now is going to happen when, say for instance, a person marries twice in this life? Are you going to remain joined together with the person whom you married in this life, and if so, which one?

We need to realise at this point that normally, whilst we go through life in this world, our experience of ourselves is relatively very shallow. Our experience of our married partner is very shallow relatively. We may have a very happy marriage in this life, and yet not know each other very deeply.

When we come into the spiritual world, we begin to have opened up for us gradually the inner depths to our character and spirit. When this happens, many couples find that they are not such at a deeper level that they can or want to become so closely and indissolubly linked as a conjugal pair, and when that happens, they both become aware that this is so and they mutually and happily part as husband and wife and go their separate ways and begin the search for their true, eternal, conjugal partner.

If a man has had two or more wives in this life, or the same with a wife, in the other life, let us take for example a man with two wives and let's assume that the three of them meet up in the spiritual world. Gradually, all three parties will become aware of the true situation, which might be that if the husband is a conjugal partner to wife A or to wife B or to neither wife A or B, they will all become aware and they will all happily and mutually part and go their separate ways if that is the underlying reality.

Returning again to the heavenly levels and the conjugal pairs — as you know only too well, men and women have been made with a very powerful sexual urge which is not only very powerful but it is very deep and it is very wonderful. It really, it goes very much to the heart of God's creative processes. It is absolutely fundamental throughout all of nature as you know. It's a fundamental part of all creation, and therefore it must have a fundamental part to play in life.



Therefore, when we come to consider the conjugal pairs on the heavenly realms, we do not find them sexless as some people have thought, but the use of sex is far more wonderful than is made of it by so many people in this life. Sex is one of the most perfect vehicles for expressing the tenderness and deep love of one man for his conjugal partner and vice versa, and therefore, that aspect of life in heaven we can expect to find to be extremely wonderful indeed and to far exceed the experience of that that we have in this life. But it is entirely contained within that conjugal relationship.

Are there any children of this aspect of their life together? The only children are truly spiritual children, that is to say, new born creations in the spirits of the man and his partner. There are no actual new persons evolved — that all takes place in the physical realm only. But there's a corresponding new birth within the minds and spirits of the conjugal pair. Nevertheless, these heavenly levels are full of children — children who have died in childhood, died stillborn or died in the womb.

When Swedenborg was writing 200 years ago, his estimate was that a third of the inhabitants that he met on the heavenly levels were children. These children are growing up under the care of 'mothers', inverted commas, a motherly person, teachers and guides. They have to be instructed just as we are instructed. They make mistakes just as we make mistakes. They get into trouble just like we get ourselves into trouble, but they gradually learn and gradually they become adapted to full, angelic life.

But because they have never had the experience of this world's troubles and evils and ills and the toughening up process that that provides for us, they cannot mature to the same degree as those persons who have lived a full life in this world and met and faced up to many difficulties, many problems and many evils in life around them.

The result of this is that when you observe the inhabitants of the heavenly realms, you can tell who were born as children because they look younger in appearance, perhaps about 18, 20, 21; whereas the mature adults who died in adulthood appear to be more like the age 30, 35. That's the only difference.

And now let us turn to religion. In the spiritual world, first of all when a person dies and begins to move around and join up with people in the spiritual world, if for instance a big part of his life was membership of the Methodist Church, or the Anglican, or the Buddhist or the Hindu or the Muslim or what have you, he will quickly find himself in a group with others to whom that also is very important. And so you find in the intermediate regions of the spiritual world, you find all the same religious groupings that we have in this life here with all the same variation of opinions.



Now this means of course that if you were to talk to or to hear reports from any of these people, their reports are going to be different. “What’s God like?” “What’s the truth?” The answer to these questions could differ. For example, one that was raised by a person here last week was, “Does man undergo reincarnation after a period of time in the spiritual world?” Well, they are still discussing that in many regions of the spiritual world. The discussions go on.

There are those who hotly maintain that man is to be reincarnated again and again. There are those who would equally hotly maintain that, “No, we are intended to progress onwards and upwards, not to go back downwards.” And there are those who are not sure. And so when you read the reports that come through from the other world, you will find those that say, “Man is always reincarnated,” those that say, “No, he’s never reincarnated,” and those that say, “Well, maybe he is sometimes, but we’re not sure.”

Now, as people in these communities begin to advance and rise upwards through the spiritual levels, as their instruction improves and their enlightenment grows, so they begin to move towards the universal truth and all religions begin to merge. But what we find is that the most wonderful expression there has ever been of the truth is the expression of Christhood, which was manifested through the person of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago.

This does not make Christianity as we know it necessarily the king pin, as you might say, in the spiritual world. In fact, we might find, as I believe is certainly the case that very many Christians who die into the spiritual world are much further from the universal truth than many people of non-Christian religions, some of whom have seen more deeply into the true Christ nature of God himself.

But nevertheless, the higher you go, the higher the reports, the more you begin to hear of how Christ is the perfect manifestation that God took upon himself to help men and women on Earth know what he is really like and what he really intends.

But sadly, his teaching has been distorted in a thousand different ways by different sections of the Christian Church. So much so that Christianity in many quarters has been hived off from other religions and many Christians have said, “If you’re not a Christian when you die, you will never enter heaven.”

Friends, can I put it this way? Heaven is not a place that you might be if you’re lucky or fortunate or good enough to be granted after death, but heaven is a state which exists now in your own hearts and minds. This kingdom that we call heaven is already within you. You might not have discovered it or experienced it very much yet, because perhaps you haven’t looked for it sufficiently.



But anybody regardless of their faith or religion can find this heaven within which can be summed up quite simply in the heavenly principle of finding delight in serving other people and helping them take the next step on the road upwards towards the light.

In the heavenly communities, they all worship God their father and creator. They don't simply worship him by going to churches and praying and singing hymns on a Sunday. Some of them may still have that as part of how they like to worship God. But angels find that they are worshipping God in every moment of their life in everything that they are doing, in all their work, in all their play and in all their resting, they find themselves worshipping God.

He has become so close to them and they are so constantly talking to him as a close father and friend that the worship is continuous — so much for what we sometimes call Sunday religion in this life. Every moment of life should be a kind of Sunday or Sabbath state, in which we feel close to God and thank him and praise him and worship him for his wonderful love.

In these heavenly communities, they have the equivalent of what we call the Bible. They have scriptures, but they don't see what we see in the Bible. We see in the Bible a set of myths, sagas, histories and illustrations from nature, and particular personages that lived long ago like Abraham and Moses and Joshua and so on. But what angels see instead, they see all the faculties and the principles and the departments and the changes that go on within the human mind and spirit which have been represented or symbolised in all these stories which, put together, we call the scriptures or the Bible.

To give you just one simple example, you probably all know a little bit of the first chapter of Genesis, which describes how God created the heavens and the Earth in six days and rested on the seventh day — is literally, a notion which has no scientific foundation for our Earth is millions if not billions of years old.

But why should we think that God in giving us the Bible is trying to teach us archaeology or history? He's got better things to do than that. We can discover these things for ourselves. The Bible is surely a spiritual book which is about our spirits and how they are to grow and to meet and to overcome obstacles and to eventually find life close to God, from whom we have come.

And so, the sacred scriptures which are studied with great delight by the angels in the heavenly communities are concerned with the intricacies of the human spirit and my goodness, don't the angels need to get well into those intricacies because they're having to help people like you and me who get very deeply tangled up inside with our motives and our desires and our conflicts and we need to have guardian angels who



can see clearly and understand what is going on. All of that is mapped symbolically in the pages of the sacred scriptures.

But here I'm beginning to stray onto my last lecture, which is concerned with how life in the spiritual world influences life in this world. And I'd just like to tell you one more thing about heaven. Heaven has as its essence a life of innocence, peace and joy — and notice I said 'innocence'. That's a word that might strike us as a bit odd at first. Those of you who know your Bible somewhat might know how Jesus was described as the 'Lamb of God', the innocent one, the one who went to his death on the cross through no fault of his own.

Innocence essentially is the willingness and the delight in being led by a higher spiritual authority, in particular the highest of all — God himself. It's the delight in being like a child, like a little child relative to God. No wonder Jesus said, "Unless you turn and become like little children, you can't enter the kingdom of God." You can't know what heaven is like unless you develop the childlike trust in your heavenly father.

In the heavenly communities, some of the angels are of enormous wisdom, tremendous wisdom and power. But Swedenborg tells us that the higher the angels are in wisdom, in themselves the more childlike they feel in relation to God. It seems to go on reverse proportions you might say — the higher you rise, the more like a child you feel. The greater your wisdom, the more childlike you are. And I think perhaps when you think that one through, you may see the wonderful truth in that particular report on heaven.

Peace — the peace that is felt in heaven is a peace, a release from all inner conflicts. An angel doesn't have any conflict inside himself between the good and the bad because he has overcome that with the help of God when he was climbing up from lower regions upwards to the heavens. He has no inner conflict, he has no regrets over yesterday. He has no fears about tomorrow. He knows that yesterday is gone and doesn't exist any more. He knows that the future is completely and totally in God's hands, and so he lives in perfect peace now in the eternal present.

Now, isn't that perhaps one of the most wonderful gifts that any man can receive? That heavenly peace, to have no regrets or guilt feelings over the past because all the guilt has been released, and no fear of the future of tomorrow, but just the delight of working and serving and playing in the present that goes on forever more. The joy of heaven is the joy of service and the joy of knowing the closeness of God to oneself. You can't describe that unless you've experienced it.

Finally, once you become an angel in heaven, you don't stop needing to grow. You're not perfect, you still can make mistakes, you still have faults and areas that need improvement, and so the delight of further instruction, further experience and



further spiritual growth and insight and perception goes on and on and on because of course the truth and wisdom itself are infinite and we are only finite and no angel can ever reach infinite perfection and infinite wisdom, so there is always more to learn, more to experience and further development to see happening within yourself.

Right, can we believe this, or accept it? Or is everything I've told you tonight just a rather enticing and rather beautiful, perhaps, fairy story? Can I cast your minds back to the principle that I stated before upon how we choose a particular interpretation? We discovered last week that scientists went for the Copernican theory in astronomy because it expanded their horizons and it led to further discovery. The same thing happened with Einstein's theory of relativity. I don't know whether any of you have ever got to the position where you could begin to try to understand what Einstein's relativity theory was about.

But let me tell you this — even the greatest scientists have difficulty in comprehending that theory, but no way will they reject it, at least certainly as things stand at present. To them it is still a great advance on the previous theory, which was that of Newton's, because Einstein's theory of relativity has so much greater explanatory power over the physical phenomena of this life.

Now, this evening I have been presenting you with reports of a life after death, which include principles of great and tremendous explanatory power, and these principles have the power to increase your mental awareness and to help to take you closer to the heavenly levels within your own mind. These principles are capable of beginning to prise open your hearts a little more so that you can begin to take more people into your world so that your world will begin to expand and become a greater world as your heart gets bigger and as your mind expands.

These principles I've given you tonight will do all those things and deepen your sense that there is meaning and purpose, a wonderful meaning and purpose in our creation. I leave you therefore with this thought: dare we not accept these reports and these principles if we wish to grow and to develop as human beings?