

New Church Life

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE TEACHINGS
REVEALED THROUGH EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

Realizing the Dreams of Marriage
A Sermon.....*David H. Lindrooth* 295

General Church Outreach Effort..... 301

Paradigms Revisited
Part Three.....*Alfred Acton II* 306

Editorials
I Love the General Church 320
How Does the New Church Increase?..... 324
The History of the Word Revealed on Earth 327

A Brief Experience of Heaven - A Book Noted
90 Minutes in Heaven.....*Donald L. Rose* 330

Church News
General Church on the Ivory Coast*Sylvain Agnes* 332
Dawson Creek Society..... 332

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Notes on This Issue

Is there a marriage which is not challenged at times? Rev. David Lindrooth, addresses both the ideal and the temptations of marriage in a very practical and uplifting way.

An announcement heralds a program which will affect many of our readers: Bishop Kline's revised *Journey of Life* will be the focus of several societies this fall. You will receive more information in mailings, so this is a preparation.

In Part Three of *Paradigms Revisited*, Bishop Acton concludes a useful review of how the mentality of the age at the time of the Second Coming affected the formatting of some concepts. The Word is always put into the current language and expectations, and Acton offers many examples of this, explaining not only why some emphases are made so strongly in the pages of the Writings, but also why fallacies occur.

Rev. Donald Rose needs no introduction to the readers of *New Church Life*. His contributions are most welcome. Here he considers a book he read, where the author experienced a life after death episode. Rose compares this evidence against the teachings of the Writings, and also promises us something harmonic from his pen!



Rev. David H. Lindrooth is presently the Director of New Church Outreach. He also serves as regional Pastor for the Western USA. When David was inaugurated in 1990 he answered the call to act as Pastor by learning Swedish and serving first as Acting Pastor, then as the Pastor, to the Stockholm Society. He was ordained into the Pastoral Degree there in 1992. He then served with Rev. Frank S. Rose as assistant in the Tucson Society in 1994, followed by a Pastorate in Ivyland Church. He took on his present use in 2004. He and his wife Aven (Pendleton) live in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.

REALIZING THE DREAMS OF MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. DAVID H. LINDROOTH

“And Hannah prayed and said: My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies because I rejoice in Your salvation” (I Sam.2:1).

This is a sermon on marriage. The Lord offers us a highly idealistic picture of marriage, especially in the book *Conjugial Love*. There we read that “[the delights of true married love] surpass the delights of all other loves, and true married love also gives delight to these other loves according as it is present and at the same time united with them” (*Conjugial Love* 68:1). We also read, “All delights have been gathered into this love, from the first to the last of them, because of the excellence of the use that it serves...” (*Conjugial Love* 68:2). “This love,” we are taught, “is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure and clean, more so than any other love which exists...” (*Conjugial Love* 57). Of the individual relationship, we read “true married love regarded in itself is a union of souls, a conjunction of minds, an effort to conjunction in breasts, and a consequent effort to conjunction in body” (*Conjugial Love* 179).

This union is so intimate that we are taught that angel couples living in heaven can continually grow to be more and more united as one the longer they dwell together. (*Conjugial Love* 177)

These passages are a terrific source of inspiration and joy to the newly engaged and married. The hope and promise they offer is so innocent and precious. But what about the couple that has been married a while and the sweetness of new love has faded?

Many couples are inundated by responsibilities of daily life, particularly when there are children. We juggle jobs, face all the workplace pressures. We struggle with finances; deal with the

weekly routines of grocery shopping, laundry, dentist appointments and trips to the doctor's office. There is a home to maintain. We struggle to meet the social, emotional, educational and medical needs of the children. Beyond all that there are our own private evil lusts that slam us when we are weak.

With all that and more it is true that not all couples survive the challenges this life throws their way and their marriages fail or are significantly stressed. However, Jesus Christ came on earth for the lost, *not* the found. His precious message on marriage is for each of us even when we have experienced the pain of a lost marriage. With the Lord's transformative power through a life according to His Word, we as individuals can come to experience the love that is so innocent, peaceful, holy, pure and clean.

Are we not sometimes like Hannah in our story, tormented, deeply saddened because the fruits of our marriage do not seem to be there as we had hoped? If you have ever experienced: disappointment, failure, longing, frustration, boredom, grief over what is missing in your marriage then Hannah's story has a message for you! Whether you are currently married, single or widowed, it is the same; Hannah's story can help you. In a world where bearing a son was the measure by which women were judged successful, not only was Hannah childless, but also Peninnah, who stood next to her as a rival, tormented her.

Hannah, we read, "Was in bitterness of soul, and wept in anguish" as she poured out her prayer to the Lord. Her prayer was so ardent that Eli the priest took her to be intoxicated. This prayer was a turning point for her and it represents an important focus on our lives as we work to realize the spiritual love that the Lord offers all in a marriage.

Hannah's distress represents the torments, the anguish, the unhappiness, fears, and disappointments we experience during times of weakness in our marriage. The reality of any marriage between two people is that there will be temptations—combats

over personal issues, differences of opinion, conflicts resulting from self-love over desires, finances, intimacy, anger and a myriad of other issues.

These come up in a marriage because we are human beings who are growing and striving to become angels—but are not there yet. As human beings, we come with a whole host of defects and incompetencies, evil habits and inclinations. But it is really not our weaknesses that give rise to the temptations themselves. Temptations originate from conflicts that are of a larger scale. They are combats taking place between good and evil, between heaven and hell, and the battleground *is* our spiritual lives.

We read a description of this in the *Arcana Coelestia*, “When a person undergoes temptation unclean spirits are near him and round about him. They activate the evils and falsities residing with him; and they also confine him to these, increasing them to the point where he reaches despair” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5246:2).

Another passage says, “(a person's evils) are like the sea pressing against every part of a dike. If the dike were to develop a split or crack, the sea would never cease to pour through and flood the land until nothing was left standing. It would be like this with the person if the Lord alone did not bear up against the conflicts experienced by him in temptations” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1692:2).

When a husband and wife have to pay the bills, do the laundry, go grocery shopping, get ready for work, feed the kids—and are longing for more free time and more money, and perhaps that new car, and a few pet evils are active at the same time, it can seem like they are standing there at the base of the dam watching the cracks opening to what will soon be a flood of negativity washing their life away. Here is where we need to turn to the Lord and call on His presence for protection.

Think of Hannah and her supplication—the ardent nature of her prayer is a stirring reminder that represents our need to rely

completely on the Lord to sustain us in these temptations. In these times, we may feel alone with our negative thoughts and impulses, while the reality is that the Lord and His mighty angels are hard at work. “In temptation,” we read, “it looks as if a person is left to himself, but he is not, since God is then most closely present in the person's inmost, and secretly gives him support. When therefore anyone is victorious over temptation, he is most inwardly linked with God.” (*True Christian Religion* 126)

It is helpful to remember that there is a spiritual nature to these battles—a key element in allowing the genuine nature of true married love to be more active in life. In the *Arcana Coelestia* we read: “temptations are the means by which evils and falsities are dispelled, also by which goods and truths are introduced, and by which the things belonging to a person's external are brought into obedience, so that it may serve the interior or rational, and through [this] serve the person's internal, that is, the Lord who operates by way of the internal” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1717:3).

Put into the imagery of the Word, a psalm says: “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose”. When we might think our married life is a wasteland because of the temptations endured, the Lord is really hard at work sowing the seeds in that desert that will blossom as a garden.

Another teaching describes the change that occurs as we struggle to stay close to the Lord in these states of mind. The passage compares temptation to a fermentation or distillation process in the making of wine. The marriage is purified, allowing the love from the Lord—that true love in a marriage—to come forth and bring a new level of life to the relationship. While the relationship is clouded by impurity, the nature of the relationship is changing, and in time those impurities fall away leaving a new and pure wine—much better than what was there before. (See *Conjugal Love* 145)

It is not that couples are suddenly liberated from the cares of

the world. Nor do assaults from their selfish hereditary inclinations suddenly disappear. Rather, it is that these issues no longer have the emotional choke-hold they once had on the relationship. They, lose their sense of importance. Their visceral nature fades and they no longer have the hook in our emotional life they had earlier. Instead, the sweet, pure nature of the Lord's love that exists between a couple becomes recognized and celebrated as the real life and strength in the relationship. The result is that the quality of their life is improved.

What is our part in the spiritual growth and development of our marriages? We know that the Lord forms a Marriage. We also know that the Lord alone has the power to conquer in temptations. What is then our role in nurturing our marriages so that they can be blessed with life from the Lord?

I believe the answer to this lies in cultivating what the Writings call "the wisdom of life." We read: "In brief summary, (the wisdom of life) is this: to refrain from evils because they are harmful to the soul, harmful to the civil state, and harmful to the body, and to do good things because they are of benefit to the soul, to the civil state, and to the body. This is the wisdom that is meant by the wisdom to which married love attaches itself" (*Conjugal Love* 130). The last line of that passage is important: "This is the wisdom to which married love attaches itself." True married love attaches itself to the wisdom that is involved in shunning evils as sins and turning to the Lord.

This says that people who actively use their powers of reason to take a stand against evil behaviors and to do what is good, are opening themselves to receive that special life that the Lord alone can give to relationships. This love is attached to the wisdom they are developing. One can see this when one reflects on the lessons learned as a person moves through temptations in his or her married life.

Think of the husband who, for example, is struggling to resist outbursts of anger in his relationship. He begins to turn to the

Lord for help when the angry impulses arise, and is guided to discover other, more positive ways of dealing with the unhappiness. With the Lord present in those moments where an outburst is threatening, he discovers he can turn to the Lord and take time to sort out in his mind and isolate those thoughts that are provoking him. He can then reflect on the situation with an eye to what is wrong. He can help right the situation from a stance of love and mercy. Then the husband, instead of shutting himself off with anger, is in better communication both with the Lord and with his spouse. Without the aggression present in his life, he can then be moved by higher and more spiritual feelings, feelings he was not aware of before.

This type of development through the adversity of temptation can be seen as Hannah being blessed with a son—the son dedicated to the Lord. The inference here is that when we are going through the tough times in marriage, we can succeed by firmly choosing to focus on the Lord's help. The love that is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure and clean, is offered to all, who—regardless of background or history—are willing to let the Lord shape their lives according to “the wisdom of life” that He offers through His Word. This is the wisdom that will help us live in a way that allows us to enjoy the most precious jewel of human life, the love of marriage which only comes from God.

The promise is that one day in heaven you can rejoice as Hannah did, exclaiming, “My heart rejoices in the Lord, My horn is exalted in the Lord, I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your Salvation.” *Amen.*

Lessons: Genesis 1:27-2:3; I Samuel 1:1-2:2; *Conjugal Love*
162

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH EFFORT BY THE GENERAL CHURCH

The General Church is embarking on a new and ambitious endeavor to reach out and share the teachings of the New Church—and you are invited to join the journey. We are utilizing the newly revised workbook *The Journey* by The Rt. Rev. Tom Kline (First published, *The Journey of Life*). This workbook examines the Children of Israel's flight out of Egypt and into the Promised Land and presents new ways that the lessons of this story can be applied to each person's spiritual journey. This program runs for eight weeks starting September 23rd and is open to anyone who is interested in participating.

The Journey program educates and encourages individuals, couples and families to have healthier relationships, find greater personal fulfillment, and ultimately lead happier lives through applying a unique perspective to the stories of the Bible. If you have ever wanted to break free from bad habits, and find new spiritual freedom, this program can support you through a series of sermons, interaction with people on similar paths, and personal, inspirational daily devotional readings.

Last year eight congregations participated in *The Rise Above It* Campaign. This year we are launching *The Journey* Campaign in eighteen congregations; sixteen in the United States and two in South Africa. In addition to supporting the eighteen congregations who participated in *The Journey* training held at the Ivyland New Church in June, General Church Outreach staff is available to help individuals and groups who are excited about this program access the materials, participate in the online community, and form small groups.

All are invited to participate, and there are three main ways to get involved.

1. Connect to congregations running the program
2. Sign up for an online version of the program that includes email updates, discussion boards, and more
3. Read this book on your own or with a group of friends

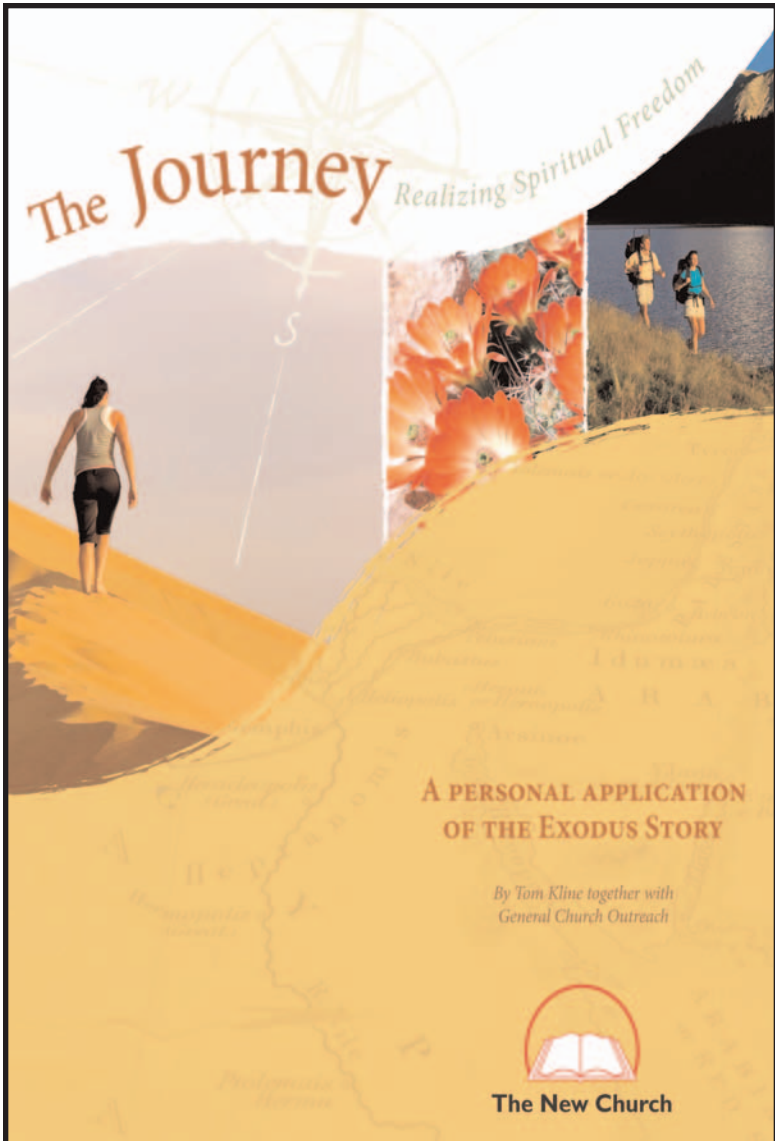
To sign up for an online email program that will provide quotations from the Word, reflections on the story of Exodus, and connections to an online community working on their journey out of spiritual slavery, or to connect with congregations running the Campaign, go to www.newchurch.org. To get the copy of the book, contact the New Church Bookstore: email bookstore@newchurch.org or call 267-502-4980.

One of the unique things about the New Church faith is that there is an internal meaning to all of the stories of the Bible, with spiritual correspondences that are readily applicable to our daily lives.

People who have participated in other New Church Journey programs say:

“I can't think of anything that has so inspired my life.” And
“Taking this class has helped me make God a part of my
everyday life-not just at Church on Sunday.”





SAMPLE EMAIL UPDATE

The Journey *Realizing Spiritual Freedom*



Week 6:

Battles on the Journey

Your Tasks for the Week

Accept help on your journey and offer support to others striving to focus on the Lord.

More on Week Six

Activities and Sermons for this week.

Day Two Foundation

The reason why the faith that looks to the Lord conquers, is that in this case the Lord fights, for the Lord is the faith, because the faith is from Him. But the faith which looks away from the Lord to self and the world yields, because the person then fights from him or herself. (*Secrets of Heaven* 8606) *More...*

Day Two Insight

Battles in the Lord's Word remind us of the battles between good and evil that we have in our own lives.

Find out more about the New Church

at www.newchurch.org/about/beliefs.

Day Two:

Attacks on the Journey

The children of Israel continued on their journey south, approaching Mount Sinai. The wilderness was slowly changing from flat desert to mountains. We can picture narrow winding passes through the barren rocks of the hillsides, a change in the nature of the journey. Soon the children of Israel would be called on to fight battles with the people of the lands.

When they began the journey from Egypt, the children of Israel had no idea they would have to fight as an army. They thought of themselves as travelers, not as soldiers. But as they approached Mount Sinai, the men of Amalek attacked them in a peculiar way. Rather than wage a major war, the Amalekites preferred to wait in ambush and slowly pick off the weak and elderly who straggled behind. This continued for some time until Moses realized they would have to stop and face the Amalekites openly in battle. We hear Moses' command to Joshua: "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand" (Exodus 17:9). We can imagine Moses standing with his hands

raised toward heaven while the Israelites fight the Amalekites in the valley below. As long as Moses' hands were held toward heaven the Israelites would win, but when his hands tired and he let them down, the battle would turn in favor of the Amalekites. Then two men, Aaron and Hur, took Moses and sat him on a stone and helped steady his hands. With this support the Israelites won the battle.

[More on Day Two](#)

Reflection

What does it mean to look to the Lord in your life?

[Today's reflections questions](#) (PDF, 1.2MB)

Prayer

Lord, sometimes I feel so alone on my journey. What a blessing it is to know that there are people that I can reach out to for support and also whom I can support. Help me to keep my eye out this week for people I can help. Teach me to be open to receiving the support that I need in my life to help me continue to look to and follow You. Thank you Lord. Amen.

If you would no longer like to receive these emails, please feel free to [unsubscribe](#).

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Susan V. Simpson has recently resigned as Secretary of the General Church. Sue worked for the Academy and the General Church for the past 27 years, which included serving as Bishop's Secretary for many years and as Secretary of the General Church for the past seven years. Her years of efficient, quiet service have been much appreciated, and we wish her well as she and her husband Jim settle into their new home.

I am happy to announce the appointment of Alaine York as the new Secretary of the General Church. Alaine will also retain her role as Executive Secretary for both Bishop Keith and myself. I have the utmost confidence in Alaine's ability to serve in this role, and feel it is appropriate and useful to have the role of Executive Secretary and General Church Secretary combined in this way.

Thomas L. Kline

PARADIGMS REVISITED
BY THE RT. REV. ALFRED ACTON II
Part Three

[In this concluding part, Bishop Acton continues his survey of six categories of finite limits to the sense of the letter of the Word, beginning with the category of the culture of the day.]

4. The culture of the day in which Revelation was given, which defines the meaning of ideas at the time

Revelation must be accommodated to the people who are the first readers. We are specifically told that the Old Testament was accommodated to the genius of the Jewish people.¹ In the same passage, it is indicated that the New Testament is accommodated in the same fashion. The reason given is that people were not ready to receive deeper truths because they would have profaned them. Nevertheless, it is added that the Lord on earth did disclose many interior things “but only for the wise.”² The Old Testament had to be couched in the circumstances of Jewish culture, which at first was given to a people just released from slavery.³ However, it changed over time. The first Christian converts were mainly from the lower class in the Roman Empire. But the first people to whom the New Testament was addressed were those who could read or listen to koine Greek. The Writings were first addressed to 18th century aristocratic Protestants. They also were addressed to others who could read Latin and who were mostly clergymen, philosophers, and other aristocratic males. Swedenborg himself was the son of a bishop and became an aristocrat. He was a part of that culture.

As I mentioned earlier, Moses adapted the Ancient Word to the

¹ See *Arcana Coelestia* 5220:5

² *Ibid.* section 6

³ See *Arcana Coelestia* 10453:3 cited above

Hebrew culture by stating that Noah sacrificed an animal on leaving the Ark. Many other examples of how the culture of the people is imbedded in the letter of Revelation exist. Laban and his sons pursued Rachel for stealing the household idols.⁴ The culture says that the household gods were in fact the deeds to the property. Given this knowledge, it is not surprising that she was pursued. The prophets of Saul's day were people who probably had epilepsy. So when Saul had a fit, he was numbered among the prophets.⁵ Laws relating to divorce and concubinage, as the Lord said, were given because of the hardness of the Jewish people's hearts.⁶ Polygamy was also an accepted practice in the Jewish culture. Without this accepted practice, the twelve sons of Jacob by both handmaids and two wives would not have been accepted into Revelation. All these things relate to the genius or culture of Jewish people. What form the Word might have taken if the Jews had not stubbornly insisted on being chosen is a matter for speculation. But it seems clear it would have been very different if given in a different culture.⁷

In the New Testament, we find many illustrations of the influence of culture upon Revelation. For example, Jesus decries the concept of "Corban."⁸ Corban was a way to defer giving. A person could dedicate his wealth to the Lord and then keep using it, thereby getting both continued use and credit for giving. The Lord condemns the Jewish practice as: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." Repeatedly the Lord says in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was

⁴ See Gen. 31

⁵ See I Sam. 19:24

⁶ Matt. 20:8

⁷ See Arcana Coelestia 10396, 10430, 10612

⁸ Mark 7:11

said...but I say to you.”⁹ In this way, the Lord changes the accommodation of truth to a new culture. The famous saying, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,”¹⁰ would make no sense apart from the culture. Rome ruled, and the penny had the image of Caesar on it. Also, there would have been no issue had not the Jews hated the necessity of paying tribute to their Roman conquerors. Of course, without the Roman practice of crucifixion the entire resurrection story would not have happened.

I turn now to the culture in which the Writings were given, the culture of 18th century aristocrats, clergymen, and other well-educated men, especially philosophers of the period. Swedenborg as a philosopher had given up his own experimentation and instead read extensively in the works of others. The Swedenborg Library's Swedenborgiana Collection includes a collection of Swedenborg's reference works which illustrates just how extensive was his reading in the works of others. Swedenborg seems to have used generally accepted ideas as illustrations of doctrinal points. For example, in the *Index Biblicus* Swedenborg notes that swallows hibernate in the ocean, a prevailing idea in the 18th century.¹¹ In his *Economy of the Animal Kingdom* and *Animal Kingdom* series, we see how broadly he quoted sources before his own development of ideas. I do not know whether it was believed that ivory came from the teeth of camels in the 18th century. I do know that Swedenborg states it is so.¹² Today, the only true sources of ivory are said to be “elephant and mammoth tusks.” “Narwhal tusks, hippopotamus teeth and

⁹ Matt 5

¹⁰ Mark 12:17

¹¹ See *Index Biblicus*, vol. 4, *Hirundo* (Latin for swallow) which states "... because swallows submerge in waters and in springtime reappear." Latin: quia Hirundo sepe litur in aquis et tempore veris resurgit, Jer. VII: 7 vide luetus.

¹² See *Apocalypse Explained* 1146:2.

walrus tusks are considered ivory-like materials.”¹³ Many have said this report was a slip of the pen, which would have been corrected if the work had been published, but it is written in the “fair” copy that would have been published. Of more importance is the statement that the child of a black or Moorish father by a white or European mother is black.¹⁴ I have been told that this piece of knowledge is attributable to Leibnitz. Whether this statement is true or not the fact remains that Swedenborg believed it, and so used it to illustrate the fact that the soul comes from the father, an essential doctrine concerning the Lord's birth and resurrection. Aristotle is the first to claim that the soul comes from the father, but Swedenborg in his *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, in the chapter on the chick in the egg, agrees.¹⁵ Another piece of knowledge from 18th century culture concerns venereal disease. It was not known just how it was acquired. *Conjugal Love* states this disease was a cause for separation from the bed, not divorce.¹⁶ Adultery is a cause for divorce.¹⁷ 18th century culture believed venereal disease could be caught by a married man without the act of adultery.

Both the meaning of words and the way a person lives have changed since the 18th century. Take the term “domestic” for example. An aristocratic lady of the 18th century was considered domestic. But she did not cook, she did not dust, she did not wash the clothes, and she did not raise her children as is the case today. She did manage the estate, and consult with her cook, housekeeper, and nanny. Those acts were her “domestic” offices.

¹³ See Amy Carlson, Museum Studies Program, San Francisco State University, in *Minerva Online*, Vol. 1/1 Spring/Summer 1998

¹⁴ See *Divine Providence* 277

¹⁵ See *True Christian Religion* 92. Also see Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, Book II Chapter 3. Swedenborg quotes this section in part in his note as published in *A Philosopher's Notebook* p. 173

¹⁶ See *Conjugal Love* 253

¹⁷ See *Conjugal Love* 255, 468-9

Further she did “such works as are done with the hands called knitting, embroidery, and by other names, and which serve for ornament and for the enhancement of her beauty.”¹⁸ From this background the index to the missing work on Marriage notes that, in general, women's intelligence deals with “economic” and domestic affairs.¹⁹ In a letter on the revision of the Swedish economy, Swedenborg uses the Swedish word that is equivalent to the Latin “domestic” as we use it today in speaking of foreign and domestic affairs.

In 18th century Sweden, the laws about divorce were different from ours today. If an innocent party divorced a person, that person could not remarry unless one of two events happened. The innocent party either remarried or died. We find nothing in the Writings to help us deal with a remarriage for the guilty party. It was illegal.

Paragraph 446 in *Conjugal Love* states that, “The love of the sex, from which is fornication, commences when a youth begins to think and act from his own understanding, and his speaking voice begins to become masculine.” In 18th century Sweden, puberty for men began about age 18.²⁰ How does this fact affect the way we educate young men? Do we appeal to the boy's thinking from himself at puberty or at age 18? Should we recognize that boys at age 12 are beginning to think and act from themselves?²¹

There is no specific mention in the Writings of homosexuality.

¹⁸ *Conjugal Love* 91

¹⁹ See Angelic Wisdom concerning Marriage, First Index, Sex, 274-278. My grandfather Alfred Acton in his reconstruction of the work translates economic as “housewifely” while the index uses the word economical.

²⁰ J. Money and H. Musaph, editors, *The Handbook of Sexology*, Vol. I, Elsevier Press. 1978, pp. 351-360. See also *On Generation* 290 that states women reach puberty at age 15 while men reach it later, which confirms the statistics.

²¹ In the work *On Generation* 290 Swedenborg writes that girls reach puberty at age 15 and boys a good bit later.

However, there is mention of "little-known evils which are too unspeakable to be named," and "criminal acts which are too villainous to be named."²² 18th century culture dealt with both these things in a very different fashion from our own culture. The French for example burned convicted sodomists alive. I asked Jonathan Rose when he was curator of Swedenborgiana to look up both onanism and sodomy as to what they meant in the 18th century. His three page reply shows that sodomy in Swedenborg's era meant all kinds of sexual acts which were "against nature" including homosexual acts, heterosexual oral or anal intercourse, and bestiality. He notes that "there is no mention of sodomy and no reference to homosexual acts anywhere in the Swedish law.... Neither is there any reference to heterosexual anal intercourse." He continues, "It is surprising that even the code of laws will not mention them, when one would think that such instances would have to be prosecuted on the basis of some definition of the crime and some indication of the penalty."²³ 18th century culture accepted the observation that masturbation led to insanity since insane people were seen doing this. Is this observation behind why the statement in paragraph 450 of *Conjugal Love* states that love of the sex cannot be totally restrained without harmful results including "mental illness" as well as "little-known evils," allowing young men to fornicate instead? Would we have the same reason for this application today?

It seems clear that the later part of *Conjugal Love* has been addressed to its first readers, 18th century aristocratic males. These men had the wherewithal to support a mistress, and their culture supported the practice. How these teachings apply to

²² See *Conjugal Love* 450, 459:5

²³ Letter from Jonathan Rose dated 1/14/93

Editor's Note: Swedenborg owned Schurig's *Gynecologia*, 1730, (Swedenborgiana, Swedenborg's own library) which details forbidden homosexual and bestial acts, with their penalties.

women is not stated.

There are also illustrations which are dated by the 18th century culture. For example, paragraph 515 of *True Christian Religion*, considering the subject of contrition, speaks of Tartary and also mentions that people in Pennsylvania would not be affected by the wrath of the king of Persia. The point of these and many other illustrations is that the 18th century genius is a part of the Writings which imposes on the doctrine finite limits containing fallacies—fallacies which if taken as realities produce falsities.

5. The limits of angels' knowledge

Time in the other world is measured by a change of state instead of the rotation of the earth.²⁴ But there are time limits there. The overall state of the other world changes with each new arrival. Because angels in a single society are in a similar state, they can all get up in the morning at about the same time, and so forth. Angels are also limited by their relation to this earth. They do not know the future. Swedenborg had various talks with angels about the future state of the church. In one such conversation they said that “they know not things to come, for the knowledge of things to come belongs to the Lord alone; but they know that the slavery and captivity in which the man of the church was formerly, has been taken away, and that now, from restored freedom, he can better perceive interior truths.”²⁵ The passage goes on to suggest that the New Church will grow with the Africans. Because angels of Swedenborg's day as well as today do not know the future, they cannot relate things that have not yet happened. For example they cannot talk about the then unnamed planet Pluto.²⁶ Also, for us to speculate, as some New Church people have, that inhabitants of the moon actually are

²⁴ See *True Christian Religion* 29 et al

²⁵ See *Last Judgment* 74.

²⁶ I realize we no longer recognize Pluto as a planet so try Neptune

people who arrived there in the future, perhaps even being people from earth, is futile. Angels are limited by existing time on this earth. Angels do have insights in terms of the present beyond our knowledge. One example of this kind of insight is found in Swedenborg's famous dice game. Angels could predict whether he would win or lose by the sphere around him which they could observe but we, on earth, could not. When his sphere appeared as a bright cloud he would win, but when it was dusky he would lose.²⁷ Because the Lord sees the consequences of the present perfectly, He knows the future perfectly and so can make prophecies. But His knowledge is not limited by time and space. It is infinite. Of course angels are not limited in terms of things beyond time and space. They have angelic wisdom far beyond our mortal wisdom, but that kind of wisdom transcends space and time. Angels have never experienced our 21st century concept of the equality of men and women in the work place. They cannot address this topic directly. The tremendous changes in communication in our time greatly affect thoughts as to the growth of the church in some specific geographical area as was indicated in the prophecy just mentioned about the church growing with the gentiles in Africa. To understand the true nature of Angelic Wisdom we need to put off the time-space fallacies used to illustrate their wisdom and see the timelessness therein.

6. The changed nature of the Lord in each form of Revelation. (The distinction between the terms Divine and the Infinite)

The purpose of all Divine Revelation is to bring about conjunction with the Lord. Conjunction with Him, in turn, completes the purpose of creation which is a heaven from the

²⁷ See *Arcana Coelestia* 6494

human race.²⁸ Such conjunction in its fullness exists when people can worship the Lord as a visible God.²⁹

To see the Lord as a visible God in the Old Testament, it is necessary to open that Word by means of representatives and significatives which show the internal sense or spiritual sense. All things of the Israelitish church were both representative and significative. Nevertheless, because the doctrine of representatives and significatives was unknown to the people of the Old Testament, the Lord was invisible to them. For this reason that church is called a representative church.³⁰

With the Advent, the Lord became visible in the person of Jesus Christ. All but two representatives of the Lord were abrogated, Baptism and the Holy Supper. The office of a priest also remained as a representative.³¹ But when the Christian Church introduced the idea of three persons in one God they made Him invisible. Jesus Christ is the only representative of the Lord in the New Testament. To see Him as such we must understand that the “symbols” or significatives of Him, for example that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are just that, significatives, not actual persons who represent the Lord. There are representatives in the New Testament. For example Peter represents faith and the apostles as a group represent the Lord's church.³² But these are not representatives of the Lord. To see the Lord in the New Testament we need to use the doctrine of significatives to open the internal sense or spiritual sense.

In the New Church we see the Lord as the one God of heaven and earth who is Jesus Christ. We worship the Lord in His Divine Human. There are neither representatives nor significatives of the Lord in the Writings. But time/space appearances are

²⁸ See *Divine Providence* 27 and *Arcana Coelestia* 1062315

²⁹ See *True Christian Religion* 786

³⁰ See *True Christian Religion* 670

³¹ See *Arcana Coelestia* 3670

³² See *Arcana Coelestia* 8581, 9212:6

present in the Writings. These things make up the real appearances of heaven which are representatives of spiritual things.³³ To see the Lord in the Writings we need to make a right comparison of passages to unfold the doctrine of genuine truth which is on a par with the internal sense. This right comparison shows us the spiritual sense.

As we open the spiritual sense in all forms of Revelation, our Lord and Savior becomes visible to us. We see Him through His representatives in the Old Testament, as a man on earth in the New Testament, and in the fullness of His divine character, the revealed Divine Human, illustrated plainly in His Divine doctrine.

In this sense, the Lord has changed in the way He appears to people. His finite form has changed.

Obviously, the Infinite cannot change, but the presence of the Lord in finite things has changed. This change is not simply in how we view the Lord. It is a real change. But because it is a change in time and space, it is a fallacy of the senses. The Infinite does not change. In the Old Testament the Lord is present with people by representatives which also signify, for example, Moses. In the New Testament there are no people representing the Lord. There are people that represent other things, but Jesus Christ the Lord is His only representative on earth. He has abrogated all representatives except Baptism, the Holy Supper, and the office of the Priesthood. People such as Peter do represent certain spiritual things.

There are symbols or significatives in the New Testament, as opposed to representatives in the Old. Examples are Father, Son, Holy Spirit—they are terms. They stand for qualities or attributes of the Lord. They are symbols for those qualities. In the Writings there are no symbols and no representatives of the Lord. The Lord is with us by the correspondence of words to

³³ See *Arcana Coelestia* 3485

ideas, or that of human language in relation to spiritual language. There are spiritual representatives. There are things in the spiritual world that represent the loves that cause them, but the Lord is here in His Divine Human; His Human character is now visible. The word “Divine” is either an adjective which modifies a noun or it can be used substantively. As such, when used in relation to the Lord, it limits Him. It makes Him comprehensible to us. We cannot comprehend the infinite. It has no limits. Swedenborg in his work on *The Infinite or final Cause of Creation* observes that if we say anything about the Infinite, we have said too much. We cannot limit the infinite. But the Lord has limited Himself so that we may see Him and love Him. He put on the Human and made it Divine, or perfect. This finite perfect form is now visible to us in the Writings. *The Word Explained* (paragraph 5060) prophesies this fact as follows: “What further these words signify I am unable as yet to know, but something I can suspect. Things which are representative, such as the types of the Old Testament, ceased when God Messiah came; and things which are significative, such as the symbols [of the New Testament], will also cease when man is introduced into the kingdom of God Messiah. The types of the Old Testament were REPRESENTATIVE, while the symbols of the New Testament were SIGNIFICATIVE, these being then applied to man, that is, to the spiritual man, more interiorly and inmosty. Afterwards they also will cease, in consequence of the coming of the effigy whose image they are, etc., etc.” This passage written before the publication of the *Arcana Coelestia* is a prediction by Swedenborg of what will happen when the Lord makes His Second Coming. The Representatives of the Old Testament and the Significatives of the New Testament will vanish when the coming of the effigy whose image they are takes place, that is, when the Second Coming is accomplished by means of the Writings.

Conclusion

In this article I have endeavored to examine the sixth degree of truth Divine. This degree is written in “human language.” Enlightened individuals looking at this degree are able to glimpse the fifth degree. To achieve this glimpse they must look beyond the time and space limits imposed on this degree. They must see fallacies for what they are and not make them as accommodations of truth. To fail to do so is to turn fallacies into falsities. The time and space limits are a cloud that obscures truth. The glory in this cloud is both the internal sense opened by representatives and significatives, and the doctrine of genuine truth which is not limited by time and space. A right comparison of passages in both cases allows an enlightened individual to look beyond the glory into heaven itself at least to some small degree. We pray that the Lord will grant us such a vision.

Appendix

According to NewSearch there are 458 passages that use the word “fallacy” or “fallacies” or both. I have selected several of these passages to illustrate how the terms are used.

1. *Arcana Coelestia* 25: The Lord does not break fallacies, nor quench cupidities, but bends them to what is true and good.
2. *Arcana Coelestia* 735: [M]an is in the fallacies of the senses, and the fallacies of the senses are such that they cannot but enter, and are therefore also easily dispelled.
3. *Arcana Coelestia* 4341: The good itself which is to be conjoined with truth is not tempted, but the truth. And moreover truth is not tempted by good, but by falsities and evils, and also by fallacies and illusions and the affection of these, which adhere to truths in the natural. For when good flows in, which is effected by an internal way, or through the internal rational man, the ideas of the natural man, formed from the fallacies of the senses and the derivative illusions, cannot endure its approach, for they are in disagreement with it, and hence comes anxiety in the natural, and temptation.
4. *Arcana Coelestia* 5084: [2] As few know what the fallacies of the senses are, and few believe that they induce so great a shade on rational things, and most of all on the spiritual things of faith, even so as to extinguish them,

especially when the man is at the same time in the delight of the cupidities from the love of self and the love of the world, the subject may be illustrated by examples, showing first what are the fallacies of the senses which are merely natural, or in those things which are in nature, and then what are the fallacies of the senses in spiritual things. (1) It is a fallacy of merely natural sense, or that which is in nature, to believe that the sun revolves once each day around this earth, and also the sky with all the stars; (2) It is a fallacy of merely natural sense, or that which is in nature, that there is only a single atmosphere, and that this is merely successively purer from one portion to another, and that where it ceases there is a vacuum. When only the external sensuous of man is consulted, it apprehends no otherwise. (3) It is a fallacy of merely natural sense, that from the first creation there has been impressed on seeds a property of growing up into trees and flowers, and of reproducing themselves and that from this is the coming into existence and subsistence of all things. (4) It is a fallacy of merely natural sense that there are simple substances, which are monads and atoms (5) It is a fallacy of merely natural sense that all things are of nature and from nature, and that there indeed is something in purer or interior nature which is not apprehended; (6) It is a fallacy of sense that only the body lives, and that its life perishes when it dies. (7) It is a fallacy of sense that man cannot live after death any more than the beasts, because these also have a life similar in many respects to that of man, man being only a more perfect animal. (8) It is a fallacy thence derived that the very living part of man, which is called the soul, is merely something ethereal, or flamy, which is dissipated when the man dies; and that it resides in the heart, or in the brain, or in some part of this, and from thence rules the body as if this were a machine. (9) It is a fallacy of sense that light, and also heat, can come from no other source than the sun or elementary fire. That there is light in which is intelligence, and heat in which is heavenly love, and that all the angels are in this light and heat, the sensuous does not apprehend. (10) It is a fallacy of sense that man believes that he lives of himself, or that life has been imparted to him; for so it appears to the sensuous mind. (11) The sensuous man believes from fallacy that adulteries are allowable; for from the sensuous he concludes that marriages are instituted merely in behalf of order for the sake of the education of the offspring; and that so long as this order is not destroyed, it is immaterial from whom the offspring comes; and also that what is of marriage differs from lasciviousness merely in its being allowed; (12) It is a fallacy of sense that the Lord's kingdom, or heaven, resembles an earthly kingdom in respect that the joy and happiness there consist in one being greater than another, and hence having more glory than another; (13) It is a fallacy of sense that good works merit reward, and that to benefit anyone

for the sake of self is a good work. (14) It is also a fallacy of sense that man is saved by faith alone, and that faith can exist in one who has no charity, and also that it is the faith, and not the life, that remains after death.

5. *Arcana Coelestia* 6472: The Lord does not compel man to receive what flows in from Himself; but leads in freedom, and so far as man allows, through freedom leads to good. Thus the Lord leads man according to his delights, and also according to fallacies and the principles received there from; but gradually He leads him out from these; and this appears to the man as if it were from himself. Thus the Lord does not break these things, for this would be to do violence to freedom, which however must needs exist, in order that the man may be reformed.

6. *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 53. The Fallacies of the Senses, in which merely Natural and Sensual Men are, Merely natural and sensual men think and reason from the fallacies of the senses, There are fallacies of the senses in things natural, civil, moral, and spiritual, and there are many in each of them; but I wish to enumerate here some of the fallacies in spiritual things. Whoever thinks from the fallacies of the senses cannot understand: 1. That a man after death can appear as a man; and that he is able to enjoy his senses as before; thus that angels enjoy them. Such persons think: 2. That the soul is only a something vital, purely ethereal, of which no idea can be formed. 3. That it is the body alone that feels, sees, and hears. 4. That man is like an animal, with this difference only, that he can speak from thought. 5. That nature is all, and that it is the first from which all things are. 6. That man is introduced into thought and learns how to think by an influx of interior nature and its order. 7. That the Spiritual does not exist, and if it does, that it is a purer Natural. 8. That man cannot enjoy any happiness, if divested of the delights of the love of glory, honor, or gain. 9. That conscience is only a disease of the mind, originating from infirmity of the body, and from non-successes. 10. That the Divine Love of the Lord is the love of glory. 11. That there is no Providence, but that all things flow from self-prudence and self-intelligence. 12. That honours and riches are real blessings, which are bestowed by God; not to mention many other similar things. Fallacies of the senses in spiritual matters are of this character. From this it may appear, that heavenly things cannot be comprehended by those who are merely natural and sensual; those are merely natural and sensual, whose internal spiritual man is closed, and whose natural man only is open. and the fallacies of the senses are such that they cannot but enter, and are therefore also easily dispelled.

Editorials

I LOVE THE GENERAL CHURCH

I was brought up in it, and it has been ingrained in me. Does that make me indoctrinated? In my defense, I first knew it as Allmänna Kyrkan! How could you *not* love a Church called that! I was born, baptized, and brought up in it, but in Sweden. My first memory of episcopal visits and assemblies began there.

General Church Assemblies conjure up pleasant memories. One early memory was the snapping of the Assembly Photograph of the First Scandinavian Assembly in Stockholm (*New Church Life* 1949, p. 540). It shows about 130 attending with Bishop Willard D. Pendleton presiding. Three priests were on the Chancel. I saw tears of joy and laughter at hearing the addresses. I was seven. Another time Bishop Alfred Acton I visited our home in Ensta. He gave me a chocolate bar with a red wrapper. Another time in our home, Bishop de Charms talked about the New Church with his hand resting on my shoulder! Apparently, his talk was about the future, but I could only understand ‘Dick and Jane’ vocabulary. Well, he taught me a course in Theological School in 1970. At one Assembly, de Charms encouraged everyone to “have that New Church school,” for which there was a large bequest. By 1959, the British Academy Summer School was up and running. I attended the first three as a student, and eight of them later as instructor.

Rev. Erik Sandström, Sr. called assemblies the “pulse of the Church” (*New Church Life* 1965, p. 438). In an assembly address, he traced the use of gatherings from the most ancient church through the present. He quotes Bishop W.F. Pendleton on the essence of General Church Assemblies, namely “the love of truth for its own sake.” (*New Church Life*, 1899 p. 120)

This love desires, indeed requires, instruction. New Church members love receiving instruction in the truth. No wonder: The

“church specific” has the Word and knows the Lord (*Heavenly Doctrines* 244). “They who will be of the Lord's New Church are instructed by the Lord in genuine and pure truths through the Word” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 814). “Those who will be of His New Church are to be instructed in truths” (*Apocalypse Explained* 734.2). We can receive this instruction, because “Now it is permitted to understand...the doctrines,” because they form a “series of truths” which lift us “into the light enjoyed by the angels of heaven. [That light] is in essence truth, and it makes the acknowledgment of the Lord as the God of heaven and earth shine out in all its glory” (*True Christian Religion* 508). How? By this: the same truths that the angels “discuss with each other” are now “described in the words of natural language so as to be grasped *rationaly*” (*De Verbo* 3.4, emphasis added). No wonder we are moved by instruction in the Doctrines: “There do not exist any Divine secrets which cannot be *perceived and expressed naturally* as well.” (ibid.) The Writings do just that. The *power* of this instruction in spiritual truth is prophesied by the “rod of iron,” a power to “convince all who are willing to be convinced” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 544). Such a willingness to receive instruction goes hand in hand with joining the New Church: Both life-long and brand-new members, and friends, are smitten by “the soundness and purity of doctrine which establishes the Church” (*True Christian Religion* 245), because their love and reason combine to see it as “self-evident” (*Canons* 1). They “belong to the New Church [because they] are in the truths of its doctrine” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 565).

The self-evident nature of the Writings has started the New Church, following the historical formula, “the Church is from the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 76). Every Church is inaugurated by a new revelation of the Word. Right from its start the General Church accepted the Writings as the Word of the Lord in His Second Coming—*on their own authority*. In 1902, the New Church Life Editor wrote “...the Writings of the New Church

are a Divine Revelation of Divine truth....the Lord's own works...given by means of a complete Divine inspiration... [and they] constitute the genuine Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, which is the same as the internal sense of the Word, and ...[they] constitute the Second Advent of the Lord” (Rev. C.T. Odhner, *New Church Life*, 1902, p.562). That is why the Writings are read as a third or final Lesson from our church lecterns.

We know that the Writings are the revealed Word: “The spiritual sense of the Word has at this day been disclosed by the Lord because the doctrine of genuine truth has now been revealed” (*Sacred Scripture* 25), i.e. in that book itself, and also in “the small works which are being given to the public” (*De Verbo* 7:8), [i.e. *The Four Doctrines*]. Another quote says this is “HEAVENLY DOCTRINE...from God out of heaven ... presented in this book” (*Heavenly Doctrines* 7). The evidence seems irrefutable. Even the timing of The Writings and the Second Coming seems to have been the earliest possible *rendezvous*: Any sooner and it would have been profaned (*Lord* 61, *Divine Providence* 264:1,4), any later and there would have been no one left (*Brief Exposition* 117).

While all earlier dispensations of the Word lack original documentation, our belief in the Writings as the Word is backed up by a perfect provenance. We know exactly *who* wrote them—“by the Lord through me” (*Ecclesiastical History* 1), *when* they were published—from 1749 through 1771, and both *who* printed them and *where*—Lewis and Hart in London and almost certainly François Changuion in Amsterdam. We know *what* those first editions looked like.¹ We also know *why*: they fulfill all prophecies of the Second Coming and of a New Jerusalem. We can even inspect the 1646 Sebastian Schmidt Bible Swedenborg used while writing “from the Lord alone, while I have read the Word” (*True Christian Religion* 779). *That* was

¹ See: Bayside Swedenborgian Church—<http://www.baysidechurch.org>

“the Word” he used! One excursion of that Scandinavian Assembly in 1949 inspected this original volume of *Schmidius*. In it, Swedenborg started to write the internal sense in the margins. Copies of it are now for sale! Thus, we can witness the very first movement of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven. We see it also in Swedenborg's *Index Biblicus* where he lists spiritual meanings, going back to circle those earlier entries which by a later standard receive the stamp of certainty. We can trace the next steps through Swedenborg's manuscripts: we know *what* the first and second draft manuscripts look like, the rough draft written in two columns per folio page, to the final draft neatly spanning the whole page, with scalloped spaces for ornaments. We even find one sample of a title page in his own hand, matching exactly the published ones. The provenance is complete: we witness Divine revelation through the entire sequence. And after 250 years, there are shelves of translations into many languages, 34 and counting.

The New Church was established as quickly as they were translated, and as sail and carriage could carry these texts. That is why it had several beginnings. We rejoice in the facts: 1787 the Conference in England, 1817 the Convention in the US, 1847 the Association in Adelaide Australia, 1877 the Academy of the New Church in Philadelphia, leading to the General Church 20 years later, and 1937 the Lord's New Church. Why are all these dates multiples of 30 years from Last Judgment of 1757? Today, these organizations dot the whole world, with new groups beginning every year. As many have done, you can globe-trot just the General Church. The sun never sets on it! Bryn Athyn College sends interns to many centers, in several of which I have enjoyed serving. You good folks gather to hear the doctrines. *New Church Life* is the instrument of the General Church, and it is my honor to be its most recent Editor.

HOW DOES THE NEW CHURCH INCREASE?

How will the New Church increase? “The new heaven increases, [and] the New Church descends from it...to the extent that the false ideas of the former church are set aside” (*True Christian Religion* 784). We can know for sure: replace false notions with true ideas, and watch the Church grow. We should practice for when the subject comes up.

Were There Angels from the Beginning?

Both Christianity and Islam have angels created separately from human beings. Hinduism is full of prior godly beings, which Buddhism treat as our own mental projections. Gnosticism claims we ourselves pre-existed, and must return to the prior world. Ancient mythologies mix up the two worlds, while other beliefs place ancestors as the higher beings. Etc. The reason angels are thought to be created from the beginning, is that the human race withdrew from angelic contact (*Arcana Coelestia* 4180) to the point that their visits turned into legend. All this is straightened out by the truth: “The purpose of creation is a heaven *from* the human race” (*Heaven and Hell* 311, *Divine Love and Wisdom* 330, *Divine Providence* 27, emphasis added). “HEAVEN AND HELL ARE FROM THE HUMAN RACE [title]. No one in the Christian world is aware [of it]. It is believed that angels were created from the beginning, and so heaven was formed; and that the Devil or Satan was an angel of light, but becoming a rebel was cast down together with his crew, and so hell was formed” (*Last Judgment* 14).

Every New Church person already knows all this, but we can understand more. When people die, from whatever planet in the universe, the Lord's "mighty force" draws their souls out of their bodies and lifts them into the spiritual world (*Heaven and Hell* 440, 447, 449). His power alone can do this. The “soul” is then called a “spirit” in the world of spirits, half way between heaven and hell and which all who die pass through (*Heaven and Hell*

540, 600). The same force later lifts angels to their own society, and perpetually withholds them from the evils and falsities they had overcome on earth (*Arcana Coelestia* 1049, 5758, 6945).

We all have loved ones who have passed on. Do we not "look upwards" when we think of them? Where are they now, we wonder? For a few years after they die, they are still in the world of spirits. It is in the "vicinity" of the planet, because it comes "from its inhabitants" (*Earths in the Universe* 47). That means our loved ones are still very close to us. When they are "lifted" into heaven—actually they find pathways to follow—any time from "immediately" to 30 years later, we may think of this as "going higher," because heaven is received into the interiors of the mind. Although heaven is not in the sky, still the three heavens are one above another (*Heavenly Doctrine* 4). The Lord always appears above the heads of all angels (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 103) and even as above a ladder with rungs of ascending care for others (*Heavenly Doctrine* 91). Yet no matter how "high" heaven is, since time and space do not operate there as here, it is still "close" to its own people. Our loved ones are actually quite close to us, especially during worship.

Now when John saw the angel, twice he fell down to worship him. Each time the angel told him "See that you don't do that." (Revelation 19:10, 20:9) It means, "Angels of heaven are not to be adored and invoked because nothing Divine belongs to them, but they are associated with men as brothers with brothers with those who worship the Lord," (*Apocalypse Revealed* 818), "and are in the doctrine of the New Jerusalem and do its precepts" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 946). "Thus the Lord Alone is to be adored in company with them" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 818). Angels and our loved ones are "in our company," side by side in our worship of the Lord! This is one purpose we can be sure of when going to Church.

Evil spirits who "descend" or "fall" into the lower mental

spheres they had chosen in the world on the other hand, enter hell after death. These levels thrive on unclean things underground. Hell thus “appears” to emerge from the ground, while angels “appear” as up in the sky. In reality, angels are “close” to good people, either by means of the Word or when they are being useful at work. Devils are “near” evil doers by means of things false, impure or violent.

A Time before Angels.

Since angels come from human beings, there had to be an era when “there were as yet no angels” (*Spiritual Experiences* 2591). Since people cannot live without angelic attendance, the problem is “How could the first human beings exist before this Grand Man [of angels] had been formed?” (ibid.). This “tender scruple” is another version of the chicken and the egg. The simple solution is “The first human beings were led by none other than the Lord Alone” (ibid.). Before the first angels had arrived from earth, the Lord as a Divine Human led humans directly. “He Alone sustains the human race”—but after the first angels arrived—“now by means of angels and spirits” (ibid.). Although the Lord can do everything Himself, He employs angels in occupations for the sake of their eternal joy (*Arcana Coelestia* 8719).

Can you count the number of mistaken notions dispelled by all of this?

THE EXPERIENCE OF HEAVEN

I have been allowed, in the Lord's Divine mercy, while still in the physical body in the world, to be in the spirit in the next life—for a human being is a spirit clothed with a body. ...[4] Because so many people assert that they will believe if someone comes back to them from the next life it now remains to be seen whether, despite the hardness of their hearts, they will be persuaded. *Arcana Coelestia* 1886:3,4 preface

THE HISTORY OF THE WORD REVEALED ON EARTH

We start with a general view. There has always been a Word of God on earth. However, since history spans eons of time, the Lord revealed the Word several times: “The Word has existed in all times, but not the Word of this day. There had been another Word in the Most Ancient Church before the flood, another Word in the Ancient Church after the flood; then the Word written by Moses and the prophets in the Jewish Church; and lastly the Word written by the Evangelists” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2895). This lists four dispensations of truth, including the Ancient Word, the Old Testament and the Gospels.

No Church or religion could exist except from a prior revelation of some kind. Thus, “the Church is from the Word, and according to the understanding of the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 76 [title]). Everything “which makes the Church and also worship, must be from the Word” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10603). Moreover, in the New Church in particular, “Worship is prescribed in doctrine and is performed in accordance with it” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 880). At all times, acts of genuine worship have used the Word in order to elevate and conjoin. “Conjunction of heaven with man is by means of the Word” (*Heaven Hell* 303, *Life* 3, *Sacred Scripture* 18). “In its internal sense the Word is elevated to the angelic understanding, and at every point [it] embodies more than the whole of heaven is capable of comprehending, although in the letter it seems so ordinary and so crude” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2533). That is also why the New Church places the Word of Sacred Scripture on the altar, because it is the “base, container and support” of all internal meanings (*Sacred Scripture* 27-38). It’s opening and closing begins and ends formal worship.

The written Word was also the “principal reason why the Lord

was born on our planet, and not on another.” He came so that “the Word might be written and afterwards published throughout the whole earth, and preserved to all posterity,” thereby “making manifest even to all in the other life, that God became Man” (*Earths in the Universe* 113).

The Word is always adapted for our use: “The Word was spoken and written in accordance with the apprehension and genius of the people who then lived” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2520). “Were it not [written] according to appearances, no one would understand and acknowledge the Word; thus no one would receive it” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2242). That also explains why some Biblical stories are so abominable: “Would anyone say that the abominable matter involving Lot's daughters would be recorded in the Divine Word if more deeply within they did not embody some hidden Divine meaning?” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2310.3, referring to Genesis 19:30-38). For the sake of that Divine meaning, all stories are recorded “using only such words as in the internal sense may express these arcana” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1468). In the internal sense “one thing after another follow in marvelous array and perfect sequence. This special feature is what makes the Word different from all other literature” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2333:4). Here it is referring in particular to the Old Testament.

However, while He was on earth, the Lord Himself was the only source of truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 9818:14). In the New Testament, therefore, the Gospels contain all that the Lord “spoke and did” because they were “representative and meaningful” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2900, *Apocalypse Explained* 405:24). However, nothing was recorded while the Lord Himself was speaking with His own voice. It was only some time after the resurrection that the Lord again used angels to be the means of the Holy Spirit. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9818:14) The Gospels and Book of Revelation were then recorded under Divine enlighten-

ment, i.e. “from the spirit of His mouth” (*Sacred Scripture 2*), nonetheless utilizing the authors' own recollections of what they had heard “from the Lord's own mouth.” (ibid, cp. John 14.26, 16:4 “bringing to remembrance”) That was how the New Testament came about.

There are consequently Two Testaments, both of which contain a spiritual sense in every phrase and word. Those books that qualify, and “the rest” which do not, are listed in the Writings (*Arcana Coelestia* 10325, *Heavenly Doctrine* 266, *White Horse* 16). These Two Testaments are meant in Revelation: “I will give unto My two witnesses... denote the Word of both Testaments in respect to its witnessing concerning the Lord.” (Revelation 11:3, *Arcana Coelestia* 9648:3). The Two Testaments are consequently called the Word of “sacred scripture” (*Sacred Scripture 1*) because they constitute the “fullness, sanctity and power” of the Word (*Sacred Scripture 37*) just because they contain a spiritual sense.

This sense has been revealed in and by the Writings. How the Writings add themselves to the list of the Word revealed on earth (above, *Arcana Coelestia* 2895) we will also see in a later editorial. This series of editorials will follow exactly how the Word was successively given through all eons and eras of human history.

THE BOOKS OF THE WORD

The books of the Word are all those which have the internal sense; books which do not have it are not the Word. The books of the Word in the Old Testament are: The five Books of Moses; the Book of Joshua; the Book of Judges; the two Books of Samuel; the two Books of Kings; the Psalms of David; and the Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. And in the New Testament they are: The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; and the Book of Revelation. *Arcana Coelestia* 10325

A BRIEF EXPERIENCE OF HEAVEN

A Book Noted by the Rev. Donald L. Rose

90 Minutes in Heaven by Rev. Don Piper, Revell Books, 2004

This was written by a Baptist minister, Rev. Don Piper, who was involved in a devastating car accident after which he was presumed dead. The book was at first sold only in religious book stores, but after a couple of years it got national attention and sold in the hundreds of thousands.

Relatively few of the book's two hundred pages are about the experience of heaven. More pages are devoted to the car accident and the way the author has managed in his mangled body. Having "died" in the crash, he says he awoke but saw no tunnel nor a journey into the light (p.22). He saw many happy people waiting to welcome him, and he never felt so loved (p.23). He comments that things were exceedingly "real", and we will mention that later. Everything glowed with intense brightness (p.27,28). Each of our senses is immeasurably increased (p.28). (Compare this to what is said in *Arcana Coelestia* 4622.)

Wonderful music is the subject of the second chapter of the book, and I hope to devote a later article to that subject. From page 37 onwards we are back in this world with a bruised body and 34 surgeries. There are a dozen chapters on Piper's life and his encouragement to other people.

It is especially interesting to find that the author had been skeptical about stories of near-death experiences! "Despite my skepticism—even today—of many of their testimonies, I have never questioned my own death" (p.200). "I know I went to heaven" (p.201). "I know heaven is real. I have been there and come back" (p.202).

How intriguing for us is the following quotation from page 202. "It comes down to this: Until some mere mortal is dead for a lengthy period and subsequently returns to life with irrefutable evidence of an afterlife, near-death experiences will continue to

be a matter of faith, or at the very least, conjecture.” Ponder that.

Although he still has many questions, Piper is at peace in the conviction that he is where God wants him to be. God has given him a hint of what eternity in heaven will be like. In God's time he will return to heaven, and prayerfully, he will see us there too (p.205).

Mr. Piper hopes to write another book on the theme that “heaven is real.” The Writings do emphasize this theme. In heaven things are “so real that those there hold them to be real, and things in this world relatively not real.” That is from *Arcana Coelestia* paragraph 1116 which is also affirmed in paragraph 1628. We read in paragraph 1630 that some visited angel homes and said upon their return that “things were real; and that in the life of the body they had never believed this.” In paragraph 3485 we read that they who are in the other life have sometimes said, “that the things they see there are real things, and the things which man sees are in comparison not real.”

As I mentioned, I intend to do an article about music in heaven. I hope that this short report stimulates thought on how people are affected by the reports of near-death experiences.

In a way a near-death experience may be compared to a miracle. Our belief is not to be compelled by miracles or conversations with the dead. We read in *Divine Providence* that “conversations with the dead would have the same effect as miracles, namely man would be persuaded and forced into a state of worship for a short time” (*Divine Providence* 134).

Little miracles do occur, as do experiences of the afterlife. How do wise people respond to them? “When they hear anything about a miracle they give thought to it only as an argument of no great weight that confirms their faith; for they think from the Word, thus from the Lord, and not from the miracle” (*Divine Providence* 133).

Church News

Congratulations to the General Church on the Ivory Coast, Africa.

“July 26th, 2007 became a very important day in the history of the General church in Cote d'Ivoire. The church got the official accreditation from the government of Cote d'Ivoire. It was a long process that took us two years. Consequently, the General Church in Cote d'Ivoire can operate as a legal religious organization.”

From The Rev. Sylvain Agnes.

Congratulations also to the Dawson Creek Society, in British Columbia, Canada!



The New Chancel at Dawson Creek, used first in celebrations of the 50th Anniversary and District Assembly, on August 3 to 5, 2007, organized by its pastor The Rev. Michael D. Gladish, with Bishop Thomas L. Kline presiding.

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