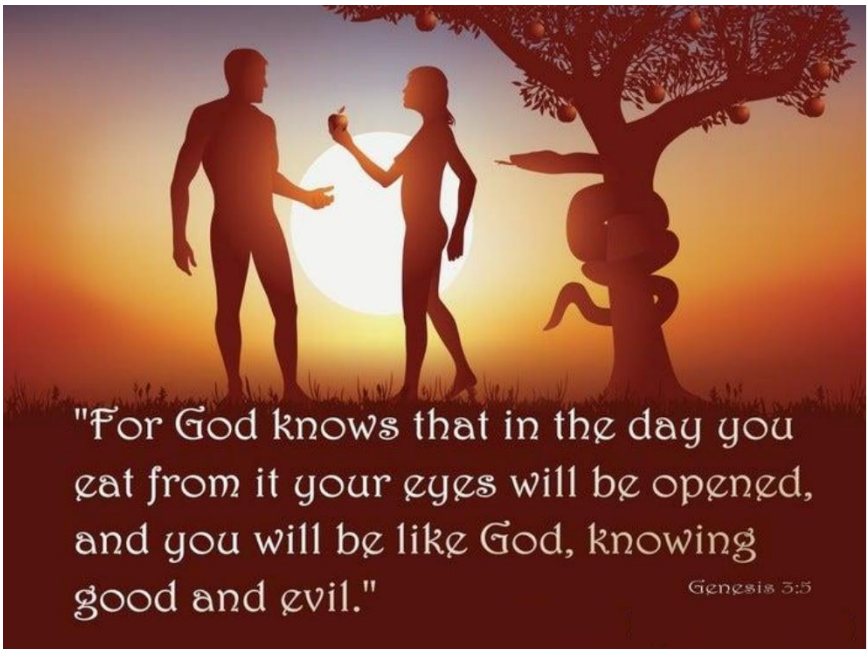


## Memorable Relations—Week 5

# Evil Spirits



"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:5

“Because they then turned away from God and turned to themselves as to a god, they made in themselves the origin of evil. ‘To eat of that tree’ signified to believe that he knows good and evil and has wisdom of himself, and not from God.” (CL 444:4)

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**CL 444.** After I had completed the meditations on conjugal love and had begun the meditations on scortatory [or licentious] love, two angels suddenly stood by me and said, “We perceived and understood what you meditated on before, but the things on which you are now meditating pass by us and we do not perceive them. Leave these alone, for they are of no account.”

But I answered, “This love on which I am now meditating is not of no account, for it exists.”

And they said, “How can there be a love that is not from creation? Is not conjugal love from creation? Is not this love between two who can become one? How can there be a love which divides and separates? Can any young man love any other virgin than the one who loves in return. Must not the love of the one recognize and acknowledge the love of the other, and conjoin themselves of themselves when they meet? Who can love non-love? Is not conjugal love alone mutual and reciprocal? If it is not reciprocal, does it not spring back and become nothing?”

[2] On hearing this I asked the two angels from what society in heaven they came. They said, “We are from the heaven of innocence. We came as infants into this heavenly world and were raised under the auspices of the Lord. And when I became a young man, and my wife who is with me here became a marriageable girl, we were betrothed and pledged, and joined at the first opportunity. And because we have not known of any other love than truly nuptial and conjugal love, when the ideas of your thought about a strange love entirely opposite to our love were communicated to us we did not comprehend it at all. We have therefore come down to ask you the reason why you are meditating upon things that cannot be perceived. Tell us then how there can be a love which is not only not from creation but is actually against creation. We regard opposites to creation as objects that have no reality.”

[3] As he said this, I was gladdened in heart that it was granted me to speak with angels of such innocence that they did not know in the least what scortation is. Therefore I opened my mouth and taught them, saying:

## DAY ONE: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, PART ONE

“Do you not know that there is good and evil? And that good and not evil is from creation? And yet evil viewed in itself is not nothing, although it is nothing of good. Good and not evil is from creation, and yet evil viewed in itself is not nothing, although it is nothing of good. Good is from creation, and also good in the greatest degree and in the least degree. And when this least becomes none, on the other side evil springs up. There is therefore no relation or progression of good to evil, but a relation and progression of good to greater and less good, and of evil to greater and to less evil; for in every and in all things they are opposites.

“And because good and evil are opposites, there is an intermediate, and in that is equilibrium, in which evil acts against good; but because it does not prevail it abides in the endeavor. Every man is brought up in this equilibrium, which, as it is between good and evil, or what is the same between heaven and hell, is a spiritual equilibrium, which produces freedom with those who are in it. From this equilibrium the Lord draws all to Himself, and the man who from freedom follows, is led out from evil into good and thus into heaven.

“So it is with love, especially with conjugal love and with scortatory love. The latter love is evil and the former is good. Every man who hears the Lord’s voice and from freedom follows Him is introduced by the Lord into conjugal love, and into all its delights and satisfactions. But he who does not hear and does not follow introduces himself into scortatory love, and at first into its delights, but afterwards into what is undelightful and finally into its miseries.”

[4] When I had said this the two angels asked, “How could evil come into existence when from creation nothing but good had existed? That anything may come into existence, it must have its origin. Good could not be the origin of evil, because evil is nothing of good for it is deprivative and destructive of good. And yet as it exists and is felt, it is not nothing but is something. Say, then, where this something after nothing comes from.”

## DAY ONE: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, PART ONE

To this I replied, “This arcanum cannot be unfolded unless it be known that no one is good but God only, and that there is not anything good which in itself is good except from God. He therefore who looks to God, and wills to be led by God, is in good. But he who turns himself away from God and wills to be led by himself is not in good, for the good that he does is either for himself or for the sake of the world. Thus, it is meritorious, or simulated, or hypocritical. From this it is plain that man himself is the origin of evil. Not that this origin was inherent in man from creation, but that by turning away from God, he imposed it on himself. That origin of evil was not in Adam and his wife, but when the serpent said:

In the day that you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall be as God (Gen. 3:5),

and because they then turned away from God and turned to themselves as to a god, they made in themselves the origin of evil. ‘To eat of that tree’ signified to believe that he knows good and evil and has wisdom of himself, and not from God.”

*(This discussion is concluded on Day Two.)*

### Questions

1. Have you ever wished that you or your children could have grown up in heaven, or in the Most Ancient Church, not knowing what evil is, or even that it can exist?
2. What might be some good, useful results that the Lord might bring out of our living in the present time?
3. What sort of equilibrium and freedom exists for those who grow up in heaven?
4. What can we do to avoid making the origin of evil in ourselves, and to overcome the evil with us by heredity and poor choices?

## DAY TWO: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, PART TWO

*(continued from Day One)*

**CL 444:5.** But the two angels then asked, “How could man turn himself away from God and turn to himself, when yet man can will, think, and therefore do nothing except from God? Why did God permit this?”

I replied, “Man was so created that all that he wills, thinks, and does appears to him just as if in himself and thus of himself. Without this appearance man would not be man, for he could not receive, retain, and as it were appropriate to himself anything of good and truth, or of love and wisdom. From this it follows that without this as-it-were living appearance, man would have no conjunction with God, and therefore no eternal life. But if from this appearance he induces on himself the belief that he does will, think, and therefore do good of himself, and not from the Lord, although it is in all appearance as if of himself, he then turns good into evil within him, and thus makes in himself the origin of evil. This was the sin of Adam.

[6] “But I will open this subject somewhat more clearly. The Lord looks at everyone in the forehead, and this look passes through into the back of his head. Behind the forehead is the cerebrum and in the back is the cerebellum. The cerebellum is dedicated to love and its goods and the cerebrum to wisdom and its truths. Therefore, he who looks with the face to the Lord receives wisdom from Him, and through wisdom love; but he who looks backwards away from the Lord receives love and not wisdom, and love without wisdom is love from man and not from the Lord. And this love, because it conjoins itself with falsities, does not acknowledge God, but itself as a god; and this it tacitly confirms by the faculty of understanding and of becoming wise, as if of himself, which is implanted in him from creation. This love therefore is the origin of evil.

“That this is so can be shown to the eye. I will call here some evil spirit, who turns himself away from God, and will speak to him from behind, or into the back part of his head. And you will see that the things said will be turned into their opposites.”

## DAY TWO: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, PART TWO

[7] And I called such a spirit. He was present, and I spoke to him from behind, saying, “Do you know anything about hell, about damnation, and about the torment there?” And presently when he had turned towards me I asked, “What did you hear?”

He answered, “I heard this: ‘Do you know anything about heaven, about salvation, and the happiness there?’”

And afterwards when I repeated his answer to him from behind, he said that he what I had said at first.

Then it was said to him from behind his back, “Do you know that those who are in hell are insane from falsities?” And being asked by me about what he heard, he said, “I heard, ‘Do you know that those who are in heaven are wise from truths?’” And when these words were spoken from behind his back he said that he heard, “Do you know that those who are in hell are insane from falsities?” And so on.

From this it was very manifest that when the mind turns itself away from the Lord, it turns to itself, and then perceives things in a contrary way.

“This is the reason why in this spiritual world, as you know, one may not stand behind another and speak to him. For in this way a love is inspired into him which his own intelligence favors and obeys on account of its delight, but which, because it is from man and not from God, is a love of evil or a love of falsity.

[8] “Besides this I will tell you of another similar thing, namely, that several times I have heard goods and truths let down from heaven into hell, and in the descent, they were gradually turned into their opposites, the good into evil, and the truth into falsity. The cause of this fact is undoubtedly the same, that all who are in hell turn themselves away from the Lord.”

Having heard these things the two angels thanked me, and said, “As you are now meditating and writing upon a love which is opposite to our conjugal love, and the opposite to that love saddens our minds, we will take our leave.”

## DAY TWO: THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, PART TWO

And when they said, “Peace be to you,” I begged them not to tell anything about this love to their brothers and sisters in heaven, because it would hurt their innocence.

I can affirm for a certainty that those who die in infancy grow up in heaven, and when they attain the stature of young men in the world at eighteen, and girls at fifteen years, they remain at that age; and that then marriages are provided for them by the Lord. Also that both before marriage and after it, they are entirely ignorant of what scortation is, or that it is possible.

### Questions

1. From section 5, we might infer that by giving man the appearance that life is his own, God gave us the possibility of making the origin of evil in ourselves. Does that seem to make it God’s fault that we made (and still make) evil?
2. What if God had not given us the appearance that life is our own?
3. Why is it essential that we receive love through wisdom from God, and not just receive love directly?
4. What does this teaching imply about falling in love, or continuing in love? What does it imply about distinguishing what is just from what is unjust but might appear just?
5. Have you seen examples of people turning truths completely upside down?



## DAY THREE: TWO EVIL BISHOPS AND A WISE LAYMAN

**AR 675.** There was seen a certain paper sent down from the Lord through heaven to a society of the English, but that society was one of the smallest of them, where there were also two bishops. The paper contained an exhortation that they should acknowledge the Lord as the God of heaven and earth, as He taught (Matt. 28:18); and that they should recede from the doctrine of faith justifying without the works of the law, because it is erroneous. This paper was read and copied by many. And about the things that were in it they thought and spoke soundly from interior judgment, and were enlightened by the Lord; and the enlightenment was received in light, which is implanted with the English more than with others.

Yet after they had received those things, they said among themselves, "Let us hear the bishops." And they were heard, but they contradicted and disapproved. For those bishops who were there were from those who had become in the world hard of heart as to the spiritual things of faith and charity, from the love of dominion over the holy things of the church, and of supereminence by means of them even in political affairs. Therefore, after a short consultation among themselves, they sent the paper back to heaven, from which it came. This being done, after some murmuring, most of the laity receded from their former assent. And then their light in spiritual things, which before shone brightly, was suddenly extinguished. And afterwards they were admonished again, but in vain. I saw that society sinking down, but how deeply I did not see. Thus it was withdrawn from the sight of the angels, who worship the Lord alone and are averse to faith alone.

[2] But after some days, I saw as many as a hundred of them ascending from the lower earth, to which that small society sank down. They approached me, and a wise man from among them spoke and said, "Listen to a surprising thing. When we sank down, the place at first appeared to us like a lake, but soon like dry land, and afterwards like a small city, in which everyone had his house, but a poor one. After a day we consulted among ourselves what was to be done. Many said that we must go to the two bishops and mildly argue with them, because they sent back the paper into heaven, from which it was let down, on account of which this had

## DAY THREE: TWO EVIL BISHOPS AND A WISE LAYMAN

happened to us.” They chose some who went to the bishops, and he that was speaking with me said that he was one of them.

“And then a certain one among us who excelled in wisdom addressed the bishops in this way. ‘Hear, fathers. We believed that with us above others was the church which deserved to be called the first in the Christian world, and a religion which deserves to be called the greatest. But there has been given to us enlightenment from heaven, and in the enlightenment a perception that at this day there is no longer any church in the Christian world, nor any religion.’

[3] “The bishops said, ‘What are you saying? Is not the church where the Word is, where Christ the Savior is known, and where the sacraments are?’

“To this our spokesman replied, ‘Those things are the church, and they make the church; but they do not make it outside of man, but within man.’ And he said further, ‘As to the church: can the church be where three gods are worshiped? Can the church be where the whole of its doctrine is founded on a single saying of Paul falsely understood, and hence not on the Word? Can the church be where the Savior of the world is not approached, and where He is divided into two?’

“‘As to religion: who can deny that religion is to shun evil and to do good? Is there any religion where it is taught that faith alone saves, and not charity? Is there religion where it is taught that charity proceeding from a man is nothing but moral and civil charity? ... Is there in faith alone anything of deed or of work? And yet religion consists in doing.... See, fathers, what glory we would have, if the church, which is not, and religion, which is not, should begin and arise with us.’ ...

[6] “‘You regard man as to... all spiritual things which are of the church and religion, as a stump or as a lifeless image, and not as a man created in the image of God, to whom was given, and is continually given, the faculty of understanding and willing, of believing and loving, and of speaking and doing, altogether as of

## DAY THREE: TWO EVIL BISHOPS AND A WISE LAYMAN

himself—especially in spiritual things, because man is man from them....

“The apostle James calls faith without good works not only dead, but also diabolical.’

[7] “Then one of those two bishops, when he heard his faith called dead, diabolical, and a specter, became so enraged, that he snatched the miter from his head, and threw it on a table, saying, ‘I will not resume it until I have been avenged on the enemies of the faith of our church.’ And he shook his head, murmuring and saying, ‘That James, that James!’ Upon the miter was a plate, on which was engraved ‘Faith Alone.’

“And then there suddenly appeared a monster rising out of the earth with seven heads, whose feet were like a bear’s, and his mouth like a lion’s, altogether like the beast which is described (Rev. 13:1-2), whose image was made and adored (Rev. 13:14-15). This specter took the miter from the table, and stretched it out beneath, and put it on his seven heads. After this, the earth opened under his feet and he sank down into hell. Seeing this, that bishop cried out, ‘Violence, violence!’

”We then departed from them; and behold, there were steps before our eyes, by which we ascended, and returned upon the earth, and into the sight of heaven, where we were before.” These things the wise Englishman related to me.

### Questions and Comments

1. This story shows a judgment, that is, a separation of good from evil and truth from falsity, taking place. What can we learn from it about judgments on earth?
2. The story shows that there were (and presumably are) good, wise Christians. Can you see why even so, the church was at its end, and the Lord needed to come and raise up a new church?
3. Why did the bishops not receive the truth from the angels? What does this show about judgment after death?

## DAY FOUR: THE MADNESS OF SATANS

**TCR 80.** Once a satan was given leave to come up from hell together with a woman, and he approached the house where I was. Seeing them I shut the window but talked with them through it. I asked the satan where he came from, and he said from the company of his own people.

And I asked where the woman came from, and he made the same answer. She was from a crowd of sirens, who are skilled in putting on every appearance of beauty and every adornment of dress. At one time they assume the beauty of Venus, at another the charm of face of Parnassian nymphs, at another they deck themselves out like queens with crowns and royal robes, and walk majestically leaning on silver staffs. Such in the world of spirits are harlots, and they specialize in fantasies. Fantasy arises from sensual thought when the ideas springing from any interior thought have been excluded.

I asked the satan if she was his wife. He replied, “What is a wife? I do not know and my society does not; she is my harlot.” Then she inspired lewdness in the man, which sirens know how to do skillfully. And on receiving it, he kissed her and said, “Ah, my Adonis!”

[2] But to more serious matters. I asked the Satan what his calling was. He said, “My calling is learning. Don’t you see the laurel wreath on my head?” His Adonis had conjured this up by her magic arts and put on his head from behind.

“Since you come from a community where there are schools of learning,” I said, “tell me what you and your companions believe about God.”

He replied, “God for us is the universe, which we also call nature. Simple folk in our country call it the atmosphere, by which they mean the air; but the intelligent mean the atmosphere which is also the ether. God, heaven, angels and the like, the subject of many tales in this world, are idle words and fictions inspired by meteors, which many people here have seen flash before their eyes. Is not everything to be seen on earth the creation of the sun? Every time the sun draws nearer in springtime are not insects born, with

## DAY FOUR: THE MADNESS OF SATANS

and without wings? Does not its heat make birds love each other and reproduce? And does not the earth, warmed by its heat, cause seed to sprout and produce fruits as its offspring? Does this not mean that the universe is God, and nature a goddess? And she as the wife of the universe conceives, bears, rears and nurtures these things.”

[3] I asked further what he and his society believed about religion. He replied, “To us, who are more learned than the masses, religion is nothing but a bewitchment of the common people. Like an aura, it encompasses the sensitive and imaginative powers of their minds, and in that aura notions of piety fly about like butterflies in the air. And their faith, which connects these ideas as it were in a chain, is like a silkworm in his cocoon, from which he comes forth as king of the butterflies. For the unlearned masses, from a desire to fly, love to imagine things above their bodily senses and their thought from them, in this way making wings for themselves, with which they may soar like eagles and cry boastfully to those on the ground, ‘Look at me!’ But we believe what we see, and we love what we touch.” With that he touched his harlot and said, “This is something I believe in because I see and touch it. But we throw that other nonsense out of our windows and blow it away with a breath of laughter.”

[4] Then I asked what he and his companions believed about heaven and hell. He replied with a loud laugh, “What is heaven but the ethereal firmament above? And what are its angels but spots wandering around the sun? And what are archangels but comets with long tails, on which a crowd of them dwell? And what is hell but bogs where, in their imagination, frogs and crocodiles are the devils? Everything beyond these ideas of heaven and hell is mere nonsense brought forth by some prelate for the purpose of winning glory from the ignorant multitude.”

All this he said precisely as he had thought upon these subjects in the world, not knowing that he was then living after death, and having forgotten all that he had heard when he first entered the spiritual world. So again he replied to a question about a life after death, that it was a thing of the imagination; and that perhaps some

## DAY FOUR: THE MADNESS OF SATANS

effluvium arising from a buried corpse in the shape of a man, or a thing called a ghost, about which some tell stories, had introduced such a notion among men's fancies.

[5] When I heard this I could no longer keep from bursting out laughing. And I said, "Satan, you are raving mad. What are you now? Are you not now in the form of a man? Do you not talk, see, hear, walk? Recall to mind that you have lived in another world which you have forgotten, and that you are now living after death, and that you have been speaking just as you formerly did."

And recollection was given him, and he remembered and was embarrassed. And he cried out, "I am mad! I saw heaven above, and I heard angels there uttering things ineffable, but that was when I first came here. I will now keep this in mind to tell my companions from whom I came, and maybe then they will be embarrassed like me."

And he held it on the tip of his tongue, that he would call them insane. But as he went down, forgetfulness drove out remembrance, and when he was there, he was as mad as they were, and he called the things he had heard from me madness.

Such is the state of thinking and conversation among satans after death. Those are called satans who have confirmed falsities with themselves until they believe them; and those are called devils who have confirmed in themselves evils by their life.

### Questions

1. In what sense is this satan "insane"? How does his insanity compare with mental illness in this world?
2. Are there many who are similarly insane? Do you suspect that you are insane in some areas or have sometimes acted insanely?
3. What is the cure for spiritual madness?
4. What use does laughter serve in this story?

**CL 477.** I heard a certain spirit, a young man recently from the world, boasting of his scortations<sup>1</sup>, and desiring to gain praise because he was a man more masculine than others. And among the effronteries of his boasting, he put forth this: “What is more dismal than to imprison a man’s love and live with only one? And what more delightful than to let the love go free? Who does not tire of one only? And who is not enlivened by many? What is sweeter than promiscuous liberty, variety, deflorations, deceiving husbands, and scortatory hypocrisies? Do not these, which are got by cunning, deception, and stealthy arts, delight the inmosts of the mind?”

[2] Those standing by hearing these things said, “Do not speak in this way. You do not know where you are, and with whom you are. You are a newcomer here. Under your feet is hell, and above your head is heaven. You are now in a world that is intermediate between these two, which is called the world of spirits. All who depart out of the world come into this world and are gathered here and explored as to their quality; and the evil are prepared for hell and the good for heaven. Perhaps you still remember from priests in the world that whoremongers and harlots are cast down into hell, and that chaste married partners are taken up into heaven.”

The newcomer laughed at this, and said, “What is heaven? And what is hell? Is it not heaven where one is free? And is he not free who can love as many as he pleases? And is it not hell where one is a slave? And is he not a slave who is obliged to cling to one?”

[3] But a certain angel looking down from heaven heard these things and interrupted his speech, that he might go no further in profaning marriages, and said to him, “Come up here and I will show you to the life what heaven is, and what hell is, and what hell is like to confirmed whoremongers.”

And he showed the way, and the young man went up. And after reception he was led first into a paradisaal garden where were fruit trees and flowers, which with their beauty, pleasantness, and

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<sup>1</sup> whoring, adulterous behavior, licentiousness

## DAY FIVE: A WHOREMONGER'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

fragrance filled the mind with the delights of life; when he saw them he admired with great admiration.

But he was then in the external sight in which he had been when he saw analogous things in the world, and in this sight he was rational. But in his internal sight, in which scortation took the lead and occupied every point of thought, he was not rational. Therefore, his external sight was closed and his internal sight opened. When it was opened, he said, "What do I see now? Is it not straw and dry wood? And what do I now perceive? Is there not a disgusting smell? Where now are the things of paradise?"

The angel said, "They are near and are even present, but they do not appear to your internal sight, which is scortatory, for this turns heavenly things into infernal ones and sees only their opposites. Every man has an internal and an external mind, and so an internal and an external sight. With evil men the internal mind is insane, and the external is sane. But with the good the internal is sane, and from that the external is sane also. And as the mind is, so man sees objects in the spiritual world." ....

[6] But he was brought yet again into his external state of mind, and virgins were brought before him, who were beautiful because they were images of heavenly affection. And with the sweet voice of their affection, they spoke to him. And then from the very sight and hearing of them, his countenance changed and of himself he returned into his internals, which were scortatory. And because these internals could not bear anything of heavenly love, and on the other hand they could not be endured by heavenly love, they both vanished, the virgins from the sight of the man and the man from the sight of the virgins.

[7] After this the angel instructed him where these inversions of his state of vision came from, saying, "I perceive that in the world from which you have come you were double, one man in internals and another in externals. In externals you were a civil, moral, and rational man, while in internals you were neither civil, nor moral, nor rational, because you were a whoremonger and adulterer....

"And you must know that with everyone here the externals are successively closed and the internals opened, and in that way they



## DAY FIVE: A WHOREMONGER'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

are prepared for heaven or for hell. And because the evil of scortation, more than any other evil, fouls the internals of the mind, you cannot but be brought down to the filthy things of your love, and these are in hells where the caverns stink with excrements. Who cannot know, from reason, that the unchaste and lascivious in the spiritual world is impure and unclean, and thus that nothing more pollutes and befouls a man and brings what is infernal into him? Beware then that you glory no more in your scortations, that in them you are a man more masculine than others. I foretell you that you will become impotent to such a degree that you will scarcely know where your manhood is. Such a lot awaits those that glory in the potency of scortations.”

After hearing this the young man descended and returned to the world of spirits, and to his former associates there, and spoke modestly and chastely with them, but yet not long.

### Questions

1. Does the young man have a point in saying that heaven is where you feel free and hell where you are a slave? What is wrong with this argument?
2. Does it happen in this world as well, that a scortatory internal mind sees heavenly things as hellish and vice versa?
3. How were the heavenly virgins protected from the awful sphere of this man? Is there any way to duplicate this protection in this world? What if the girls themselves are not always heavenly?
4. Do you see how it is so that scortation fouls the internals of the mind more than any other evil, such as avarice, revenge or deceit?

**CL 263.** While I was reflecting upon [the universal loves of hell and of heaven] it was said to me by an angel from the Lord, “Just now you shall see and be confirmed by seeing what that hellish love is like.”

Then suddenly on the left the earth opened and I saw a devil coming up out of hell, who had on his head a square cap pressed down over the forehead even to the eyes, his face full of pustules as of a burning fever, his eyes ferocious, his bosom swelling into a rhomb. Out of his mouth belched forth a fume as of a furnace; his loins were all aflame; in the place of feet were bony ankles without flesh; and from his body exhaled a stinking and unclean heat.

[2] I was terrified at the sight of him, and called out to him, “Do not come near. Tell me where you are from.”

He answered hoarsely, “I am from the lower regions, and am there in a society with two hundred which is super-eminent above all societies. We there are all emperors of emperors, kings of kings, dukes of dukes, and princes of princes. No one there is a mere emperor, or a mere king, duke, and prince. We sit there upon thrones of thrones, and we send forth mandates from there into all the world and beyond.” ....

**CL 264.** After this the earth opened again, but on the right, and I saw another devil rising up, on whose head was as it were a tiara twined around with the coils as of a serpent, whose head rose up from the top of it. His face was leprous from the forehead to the chin, and both hands also. His loins were naked and black as soot, through which fire gleamed darkly as of a hearth; and the ankles of his feet were like two vipers. Seeing him the former devil fell upon his knees and adored him.

“Why do you do that?” I asked. He answered, “He is the God of heaven and earth, and is omnipotent.”

And then I asked the other, “What do you say to that?” He replied, “What should I say? I have all power over heaven and hell. The lot of all souls is in my hand.” I asked again:

“How can he who is emperor of emperors thus submit himself, and you receive his adoration?” He answered, “He is nevertheless my servant. What is an emperor before God? In my right hand is the thunderbolt of excommunication.”

## DAY SIX: THE POLITICAL & ECCLESIASTICAL LOVE OF SELF

[2] I then said, “How can you be so insane? In the world you were only a canon. And because you labored under the fantasy that you also had the keys, and from them the power of binding and loosing, you raised your spirit up to such a height of insanity that now you believe you are God Himself.”

Angry at this, he swore that he was, and that the Lord has no power in heaven, “Because He has transferred it all to us. We need only command, and heaven and hell reverently obey. If we send any one to hell the devils immediately receive him; and so do the angels any one whom we send to heaven.” I asked further, “How many are you in your society?” He said, “Three hundred; and we all there are gods; but I am the god of gods.”

[3] After this the earth opened under their feet and each sank down into his hell. And it was given me to see that there were workhouses under their hells into which those that do harm to others sink down. For his own fantasy is permitted to everyone in hell, and also to glory in it, but he is not allowed to do harm to another.

Those who are there are such because man is then in his spirit, and the spirit after it is separated from the body comes into the full liberty of acting according to his affections and his thoughts from them.

[4] Afterwards it was granted me to look into their hells. The hell where they were emperors of emperors and kings of kings was full of all uncleanness, and they appeared as various wild beasts with ferocious eyes. And so likewise in the other hell where they are gods and god of gods. In this hell dreadful birds of night also appeared flying around them which are called ochim and ijim. This is how the images of their fantasies appeared to me.

From these experiences it was made evident what is the nature of the political love of self, and of the ecclesiastical love of self, that the one is to wish to be gods, and the other to wish to be emperors; and that men do thus wish, and strive to attain it, so far as the reins are given to these loves.

**DP 340:6.** Some spirits by permission ascended from hell and said to me, “You have written much from the Lord. Write something from us as well.”

## DAY SIX: THE POLITICAL & ECCLESIASTICAL LOVE OF SELF

“What shall I write?” I replied. “Write,” they said, “that every spirit, whether good or evil, is in the enjoyment of his delight — a good spirit in the enjoyment of the delight of his good, and an evil spirit in the enjoyment of the delight of his evil.”

“What delight do you have?” I asked. They said that it was the delight of committing adultery, stealing, deceiving others, and lying.

Again, then, I asked, “What kind of delights are these?” They replied that they were perceived by others as being like the foul odors of piles of excrement, like the putrid smells of corpses, and like the fetid stench of stagnant pools of urine.

I said, “Do you find these things delightful?” They said they found them most delightful. “Then you are like unclean animals that live in such filth,” I said. They replied, “If we are, we are; but to our nostrils these things are delightful.”

[7] “Shall I write anything further from you?” I asked.

They said, “This, that everyone is permitted to be in the enjoyment of his delight, even of one most unclean (as others term it), provided he does not molest good spirits and angels. But because we cannot help but molest them,” they said, “we were driven away and cast into hell, where we suffer terrible hardships.”

“Why,” I said, “did you molest good spirits?” The spirits replied that they could not help it. It is as though a kind of madness invades them whenever they see some angel and feel the Divine atmosphere surrounding him. At that I said, “Then you are also like wild animals.” On hearing this, a madness came over them, which appeared as the fire of hatred, and to prevent them from doing any harm, they were drawn back into hell.

### Questions and Comments

1. What are some things we learn about spirits in hell in these stories, as to appearance and their nature?
2. Why could those spirits not help molesting the good? What can we infer, if anything, about systems of government in this world?