

All uses are church uses.

6

Uses in Heaven



Thus said Jehovah: My son, My firstborn, is Israel. And I say to thee,
Send My son away, that he may serve Me.

Exodus 4:22-23

“That he may serve Me” signifies elevation into heaven in order to perform uses therefrom, is evident from the signification of “serving Jehovah,” or the Lord, as being to perform uses... because true worship consists in the performance of uses....

The very worship of the Lord consists in performing uses....

The angels in heaven have all happiness from uses, and according to uses, so that to them uses are heaven. (AC 7038)

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1. *Heaven is a kingdom of uses.*

Isaiah 2:3-4. And many peoples shall go, and shall say, Go ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will instruct us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths... And He shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into mattocks, and their spears into pruning hooks.

All of heaven performs uses together as a single unit, a “Grand Man,” consisting of many societies and countless individual angels, each of whom embodies a particular affection of the Lord, the Divine Human.

Divine Providence 66. Every affection of good and at the same time of truth is in its form *man*¹.

DP 67. Now since man by creation is a heaven in the least form, and consequently an image of the Lord, and since heaven consists of as many affections as there are angels, and each affection in its form is man, [it is the] inmost design [of Divine Providence] that man may be in this or that place in heaven, or in this or that place in the Divine Heavenly Man; for thus he is in the Lord.

DP 68. As was said above, heaven is divided into as many societies as there are organs, viscera and members in man; and in these, no part can be in any place but its own. Since, then, angels are such parts of the Divine Heavenly Man, and none can become angels but those who have been men in the world, it follows that the man who suffers himself to be led to heaven is continually prepared by the Lord for his own place.

¹ I.e. “person”; in New Church doctrine, the word “man” is usually a translation of the original Latin term “homo, hominis,” meaning mankind in general (think “homo sapiens”) or an individual of the human race, whether male or female. By contrast, on the rare occasion that “man” means only a *male* person, the Latin “vir” is often included in parentheses, or it is clear from context.

Just as there is an almost endless variety of parts in the human body, which corresponds to heaven, there are countless uses in heaven.

Heaven and Hell 387. THE EMPLOYMENTS OF ANGELS IN HEAVEN.

It is impossible to enumerate the employments in the heavens, still less to describe them in detail, but something may be said about them in a general way; for they are numberless, and they vary in accordance with the functions of the societies. Each society has its peculiar function, for as societies are distinct in accordance with goods... so they are distinct in accordance with uses, because with all in the heavens, goods are goods in act, which are uses. Everyone there performs a use, for the Lord's kingdom is a kingdom of uses.²

In addition to each heavenly society having a main use that it contributes to the whole of heaven, there are many supporting uses within each society that help it function.

HH 388. In the heavens as on the earth there are many forms of service, for there are ecclesiastical affairs, there are civil affairs, and there are domestic affairs.... all of which show that in every heavenly society there are many employments and services.

Helping people and spirits beyond the angels' own societies is the shared function of each society...

HH 392. ...Each [angel] has his particular charge; for every common use is composed of innumerable uses which are called mediate, ministering, and subservient uses, all and each coordinated and subordinated in accordance with Divine order, and taken together constituting and perfecting the common use, which is the common good.

HH 393. ...There are in heaven more functions and services and occupations than can be enumerated; while in the world there are few in comparison.

² Many passages in *Heaven and Hell* (including this one) have footnotes referring the reader to *Arcana Coelestia* for more about the topic.

Questions and Comments

1. Sometimes spiritual things can seem abstract and disembodied, but in reality, every affection and thought are in the human form. What would it be like to think of the good affections within us as belonging to the Divine Human Lord?
2. Some people wonder if angels worship all the time. How do these passages qualify that idea?
3. Some people believe that you lose your individuality in the common good of heaven. What do these passages suggest about the relationship between an individual angel and the whole of heaven?

2. Angels are people shaped by use.

Matthew 7:17-20. Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Divine Love and Wisdom 336. All good things that take form in act are called uses.... Everything that love does it calls use.

Conjugal Love 183:3. The angels replied, "Love and wisdom without use are but ideas of abstract thought, which also after some tarrying pass away as the winds. But in use the two are brought together and there make a one which is called real. Love cannot rest unless it is doing, for love is the active itself of life; nor can wisdom exist and subsist except from love and with it, while it is doing; and doing is use. We therefore define use to be doing good from love by wisdom."

HH 475. Again, it must be understood that in deeds or works the whole man is exhibited, and that his will and thought, or his love and faith, which are his interiors, are not complete until they exist in deeds or works, which are his exteriors. For these are the outmosts in which the will and thought terminate, and without such terminations they are indeterminate, and have as yet no existence, that is, are not yet in the man. To think and to will without doing, when there is the opportunity, is like a flame that is enclosed in a vessel and goes out; also it is like seed cast upon the sand, which fails to grow, and so perishes with its power of germination. But to think and will and from that to do is like a flame that gives heat and light all around, or like a seed in the ground that grows up into a tree or flower and continues to live. Everyone can know that willing and not doing, when there is the opportunity, is not willing; also that loving and not doing good, when there is the opportunity, is not loving, but mere thought

that one wills and loves; and this is thought separate, which vanishes and is dissipated. Love and will constitute the soul itself of a deed or work, and give form to its body in the honest and just things that the man does. This is the sole source of man's spiritual body, or the body of his spirit; that is, it is formed solely out of the things that the man does from his love or will.... In a word, all things of man and his spirit are contained in his deeds or works.

HH 476. All this makes clear what the life is that awaits man after death, namely, that it is his love and his faith therefrom, not only in [potential], but also in act; thus that it is his deeds or works, because in these all things of man's love and faith are contained.

HH 480. *Man after death continues to eternity such as his will or ruling love is.* This, too, has been confirmed by abundant experience. I have been permitted to talk with some who lived two thousand years ago, and whose lives are described in history, and thus known; and I found that they continued to be just the same as they were described, that is, in respect to the love out of which and according to which their lives were formed.

Will we have the same job in heaven as on earth? Not necessarily the same job, but the same uses we've loved within our work, and on a similar scale.

HH 394. In heaven everyone comes into his own occupation in accordance with correspondence, and the correspondence is not with the occupation but with the use of each occupation.... For there is a correspondence of all things.... He that in heaven comes into the employment or occupation corresponding to his use is in much the same condition of life as when he was in the world, since what is spiritual and what is natural make one by correspondences....

Questions and Comments

1. Think of what you spend your working hours doing. Even if you don't end up doing the exact same thing in heaven, what are some of the *uses* of your job (i.e. the results, the benefit to others) that you love?
2. Every person remains the same as he was in the world, viewed from the actions he did willingly and rationally whenever he had the opportunity. What does this say about good intentions? What does that say about the difference between being *full of potential* versus *reaching our potential*?
3. What would life be like if we viewed each day as an opportunity to shape our spiritual bodies? Would we live pretty much the same? A little differently? Very differently?
4. How much should we let each other off the hook vs. encouraging each other to put love and wisdom into action whenever possible? How much do we want to push ourselves? How much is good enough? (Is that even the right question?)

3. Uses are where conjugal³ love becomes real.

Genesis 24:60. And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her,
Our sister, be thou for thousands of ten-thousands,
And may thy seed possess the gate of those that hate thee.

CL 65. Conjugal love... is as the parent, and [all] other loves are as the offspring. Hence it is that from the marriages of the angels in the heavens spiritual offspring are generated, which are generations of love and wisdom, or of good and truth...

CL 115:5. "The wisdom that men (vir) have from the Lord knows no greater delight than to transmit its truths. And the love of wisdom that wives have in heaven knows no greater pleasure than to receive them as though in a womb, and thus to conceive them, carry them, and give them birth. That is what spiritual procreations are like among angels of heaven. And if you would believe it, natural procreations come also from the same origin."

While Swedenborg was meditating on conjugal love, two married partners came to him and told him how being useful focuses, strengthens and kindles their love.

CL 137. They said, "We have been now for ages married partners and continually in the flower of age in which you see us now. Our first state was as the first state of a virgin and youth when they unite in marriage; and we then believed that state was the very blessedness of our life. But we heard from others in our heaven, and afterwards we ourselves perceived that that was a state of heat not tempered with light, and that it would successively be tempered, as the husband is perfected in wisdom and the wife loves that wisdom in the husband. And that this is accomplished by uses and according to them, the uses both of them, by mutual

³ In New Church doctrine, the word *conjugal* refers to marriage in general. However, since *true* married love is so rare (CL 58) and so precious (CL 457), we often reserve the term 'conjugal' for love *truly* conjugal.

aid, perform in the society. And delights follow according as heat and light, or wisdom and its love are tempered.

“A warmth as of spring breathed upon you as we drew near, because conjugal love and springtime heat in our heaven act as one. For with us heat is love, and the light with which heat is united is wisdom; and use is as the atmosphere which contains both of them in its bosom. What are heat and light without a containant? So what are love and wisdom without their use? The conjugal is not in them, because the subject in which they might be does not exist. In heaven, where the heat is of springtime, there is love truly conjugal....

He further said, “With us in heaven there is perpetual light... Hence it is that the heat and light proceeding from our sun make perpetual spring... And our Lord, through the eternal union of heat and light, breathes forth nothing else than uses. Thence also are the germinations on your earth, and the mating of your birds and animals, in the springtime. For the springtime heat opens their interiors even to their very inmosts, which are called their souls, and affects them and imparts its conjugal, and causes their prolific inclination to come into its delights, by a continual endeavor to produce the fruits of use, and the use is the propagation of their kind.

“But with [people] there is perpetual influx of springtime heat from the Lord. Therefore they can at any time, even in mid-winter, enjoy the delights of marriage. For men (vir) were created receptions of light, that is, of wisdom, from the Lord, and women were created receptions of heat, that is, of the love of the wisdom of the man, from the Lord...”

And they added, “No one knows the blessed delights of conjugal love but he who rejects the horrid delights of adultery; and no one can reject them unless he is wise from the Lord; and no one has wisdom from the Lord unless he performs uses from the love of use.”

Questions and Comments

1. It said that a husband and wife both perform uses "by mutual aid." What picture does that give of marriage in heaven? What might that look like?

2. As it wraps up, CL 137 presents a series of choices that flow in a logical order. What is the best way to get ready for being married in heaven?

4. Examples of angelic uses in heaven

Matthew 10:42. And whoever shall give a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

HH 391. As all the societies in the heavens are distinct in accordance with their goods... so they are distinct in accordance with their uses, goods being goods in act, that is, goods of charity, which are uses. Some societies are employed in taking care of little children; others in teaching and training them as they grow up; others in teaching and training in like manner the boys and girls that have acquired a good disposition from their education in the world, and in consequence have come into heaven. There are other societies that teach the simple good from the Christian world and lead them into the way to heaven. There are others that in like manner teach and lead the various heathen nations. There are some societies that defend from infestations by evil spirits the newly arrived spirits that have just come from the world. There are some that attend upon the spirits that are in the lower earth; also some that attend upon spirits that are in the hells, and restrain them from tormenting each other beyond prescribed limits.

HH 332. As soon as little children are resuscitated, which takes place immediately after death, they are taken into heaven and confided to angel women who in the life of the body tenderly loved little children and at the same time loved God.

There is writing in heaven.

HH 258. As the angels have speech, and their speech consists of words, they also have writings; and by writing as well as by speech they give expression to what is in their minds.

Angels write, and their books are permanent.

HH 262. It is a notable fact that the writings in the heavens flow naturally from their very thoughts, and this so easily that the thought puts itself forth, as it were, and the hand never hesitates in the choice of a word, because both the words they speak and those they write correspond to the ideas of their thought; and all correspondence is natural and spontaneous. There are also writings in the heavens that exist without the aid of the hand, from mere correspondence with the thoughts; but these are not permanent.

HH 388. [In societies of heaven there are] domestic affairs; see where the dwellings and homes of angels are treated of (183-190), and marriages in heaven (366-368). All of which show that in every heavenly society there are many employments and services.

HH 393. Those are concerned with ecclesiastical affairs in heaven who in the world loved the Word and eagerly sought in it for truths, not with honor or gain as an end, but uses of life both for themselves and for others. These in heaven are in enlightenment and in the light of wisdom in the measure of their love and desire for use.... These minister in the preaching office....

HH 393:2. Those are concerned with civil affairs who in the world loved their country, and loved its common good more than their own, and did what is just and right from a love for what is just and right.

Apocalypse Explained 1214. Those that are skilled in the sciences of botany, chemistry, medicine, and pharmacy, come after death into a knowledge of spiritual uses from the plants in the spiritual world, and cultivate that knowledge and find the greatest delight in it. I have talked with such and have heard from them wonderful things.

Questions and Comments

1. In reading this sampling of angelic uses, what thoughts did you have about how your own skills and delight in being useful might carry over into heaven?
2. How does your view of heaven change when you think about people writing and reading books, taking care of a home, coordinating the uses of others, cultivating the knowledge of how to use spiritual plants, etc?
3. Next time a child asks what people do in heaven, what might you say?

5. Examples of angelic uses on earth

Psalm 91:11-12. For He will command His angels as to thee, to keep thee, in all thy ways. Upon their palms they shall bear thee up, lest thou strike thy foot on a stone.

HH 391. In general, angels from each society are sent to men to watch over them and to lead them away from evil affections and consequent thoughts, and to inspire them with good affections so far as they will receive them in freedom. And by means of these [good affections] they also direct the deeds or works of men by removing as far as possible evil intentions. When angels are with men, they dwell as it were in their affections; and they are near to man just in the degree in which he is in good from truths, and are distant from him just in the degree in which his life is distant from good. But all these employments of angels are employments of the Lord through the angels, for the angels perform them from the Lord and not from themselves.

AC 50. Without communication by means of spirits with the world of spirits, and by means of angels with heaven, and thus through heaven with the Lord, man could not live at all. His life entirely depends on this conjunction, so that if the spirits and angels were to withdraw, he would instantly perish.

AC 50:2. While man is unregenerate, he is governed quite otherwise than when regenerated. While unregenerate there are evil spirits with him, who so domineer over him that the angels, though present, are scarcely able to do anything more than merely guide him so that he may not plunge into the lowest evil, and bend him to some good—in fact, bend him to good by means of his own lusts, and to truth by means of the fallacies of the senses. He then has communication with the world of spirits through the spirits who are with him, but not so much with heaven, because evil spirits rule, and the angels only avert their rule.

AC 50:3. But when the man is regenerate, the angels rule, and inspire him with all goods and truths, and with fear and horror of evils and falsities. The angels indeed lead, but only as ministers, for it is the Lord alone who governs man through angels and spirits.

Where do the arguments between right and wrong in our minds come from?

AC 227. When evil spirits start to have dominion, angels set to work to ward off evils and falsities, as a consequence of which conflict arises. And it is by means of perception, dictate, and conscience that a person comes to feel this conflict. These, together with temptations, make it possible for a person to become plainly aware of the fact that spirits and angels are residing with him, provided he is not so totally engrossed in bodily interests that he believes nothing he is told about spirits and angels.

Angelic uses include caring for children growing up on earth.

AC 2303. Directly after birth, angels from the heaven of innocence are with [infants on earth]. In the following age there are angels from the heaven of the tranquility of peace, and afterwards those who are from the societies of charity. And then, as the innocence and charity with the young children decrease, other angels are with them. And at length, when they become older and enter into a life foreign to charity, angels are indeed present, but more remotely, and this in accordance with the ends of life, which the angels especially regulate by continually insinuating good ones and turning aside evil ones. And they flow in more nearly or more remotely in proportion as they can or cannot do this.

The reason babies in this world are so lovable (in spite of their heredity) is because of their association with babies and angels in heaven:

AC 4563:2. Infants are led by the Lord by means of infants and angels from Him.

Questions and Comments

1. What if anytime we noticed mental turmoil, we thought, "That's a sign that angels are at work protecting me from hell."
2. Do we have guardian angels? What ways do the Writings correct or expand the truth that angels are looking out for people?
3. Think of infants who don't make it. Picture them getting to be useful even as babies by communicating innocence to babies who are still in this world.
4. Since angels especially care for our ends (or purposes), and also of growing children, what are some ways we might cooperate with angels in helping kids aim for heaven?

6. After death, one's situation reflects one's love of uses.

Matthew 20:26-27. But whoever will become great among you, let him be your minister; and whoever will be first among you, let him be your servant.

HH 389. All things in the heavens are organized in accordance with Divine order, which is everywhere guarded by the services performed by angels, those things that pertain to the general good or use by the wiser angels, those that pertain to particular uses by the less wise, and so on. They are subordinated just as uses are subordinated in the Divine order; and for this reason a dignity is connected with every function according to the dignity of the use. Nevertheless, an angel does not claim dignity to himself, but ascribes all dignity to the use; and as the use is the good that he accomplishes, and all good is from the Lord, so he ascribes all dignity to the Lord.

There are differences in status in heaven, not because some people are inherently more worthy, but because people vary in how much or how little they receive and act on the Lord's love of uses.

HH 390. From this it may be inferred what subordinations in the heavens are, namely, that as any one loves, esteems, and honors the use he also loves, esteems, and honors the person with whom the use is connected; also that the person is loved, esteemed and honored in the measure in which he ascribes the use to the Lord and not to himself; for to that extent he is wise, and the uses he performs he performs from good. Spiritual love, esteem, and honor are nothing else than the love, esteem, and honor of the use in the person, together with the honor to the person because of the use, and not honor to the use because of the person. ...One man is then seen to be like another, whether he be in great or in little dignity, the only perceptible difference being a difference in wisdom; and wisdom is loving use, that is, loving the

good of a fellow citizen, of society, of one's country, and of the church.

As with angels, the situation and status of evil spirits matches how they inwardly viewed uses while in the world.

AR 153[9] [After death, spirits who have believed works to be unnecessary are asked] "Why are you sitting so idle? Come with us to our houses, and we will give you jobs to do and feed you." They joyfully then arise and go away with those people to their houses, and each is there given his job, and in exchange for the work food. However, because all who have confirmed themselves in falsities of faith cannot do works of good and useful service, but only works that serve evil, and because they do not do the works faithfully, but only so that people may see them, for the sake of acclaim or material gain, therefore they abandon their jobs and care only to socialize, talk, walk, and sleep.

Because they refuse to work, they go hungry, and their hunger eventually drives them underground.

AR 153 [11] The whole of hell consists of such caverns, which are nothing less than eternal workhouses. I have been given to go into some and see, in order that I might make this known, and the people all appeared to be of a low class, nor did any one of them know who he had been in the world or what his occupation had been. But an angel who accompanied me told me that this one had been a household servant in the world, this one a soldier, this one an administrator, this one a priest, this one a person of high rank, this one a person of wealth; and yet none of them knew anything other than that they had been servants, and their fellows likewise. That is because they had been inwardly alike, even though unlike outwardly, and it is people's inner qualities that affiliate them in the spiritual world. Such is the lot of people who have set aside a life of charity [or in other words the life of use], and so have not lived it in the world.

Questions and Comments

1. Evil spirits are eventually confined to workhouses, where their own hunger drives them to work. Idleness results in no food, while punishment is reserved for when they do evil. What lessons can we learn from this in understanding how to motivate others (or even ourselves) to be useful?
2. There is a popular notion that inequality is inherently bad, yet *Heaven and Hell* tells us that angels vary greatly, both in style of living and importance in the community. What accounts for these differences? How might the nature of these differences inform our view of inequality in this world?
3. If kids are talking about wanting to be rich, powerful or famous when they grow up, how do we respond in a way that cooperates with the Lord? (See DP 183 on what the Lord does when people seek honor and wealth, HH 357-365 for the connection between wealth and uses, and CL 266 on pursuing high office from the love of use).