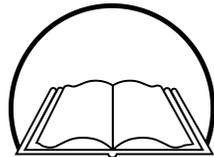


(Special Thanks to the Glenview New Church
for Collecting these Readings)

Christmas Readings 2021



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*From the Sacred Scriptures and the Heavenly
Doctrine for the New Church*

1

Willing to Be Led

There was^o in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of^o the daily ministry of Abijah; and his wife was of^o the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And^o they were both just in the sight of God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:5-6)

Those who are in a state of innocence attribute nothing of good to themselves, but regard all things as received and ascribe them to the Lord; that they wish to be led by Him and not by themselves; that they love everything that is good and find delight in everything that is true, because they know and perceive that loving what is good, that is, willing and doing it, is loving the Lord, and loving truth is loving the neighbor; that they live contented with their own, whether it be little or much, because they know that they receive just as much as is good for them—those receiving little for whom a little is useful, and those receiving much for whom much is useful; also that they do not themselves know what is good for them, the Lord alone knowing this, who looks in all things that He provides to what is eternal.

Neither are they anxious about the future; anxiety about the future they call care for the morrow, which they define as grief on account of losing or not receiving things that are not necessary for the uses of life. With companions they never act from an evil end but from what is good, just, and sincere. Acting from an evil end they call cunning, which they shun as the poison of a serpent, since it is wholly antagonistic to innocence. As they love nothing so much as to be led of the Lord, attributing all things they receive to Him, they are kept apart from what is their own [proprium]; and to the extent that they are kept apart from what is their own the Lord flows into them; and in consequence of this whatever they hear from the Lord, whether through the Word or by means of preaching, they do not store up in the memory, but instantly obey it, that is, will it and do it, their will being itself their memory. These for the most part outwardly appear simple, but inwardly they are wise and prudent. (*Heaven and Hell* 278.1-2)

It is the internal man that should command, and the external that should obey, and that does obey when the man has not the world as the end, but heaven, and not self but the neighbor, (*Arcana Coelestia* 5368)

If you walk^o in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them... I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall frighten you. (Lev. 26:3, 6).

That the conjunction and presence of the Lord is through the Word, is because the Word is the union of man with heaven, and through heaven with the Lord; for the Word is Divine truth proceeding from the Lord. Therefore they who are in this truth in respect to doctrine and life (that is, in respect to faith and love) are in the Divine proceeding from the Lord, thus are conjoined with Him. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9378.2)

25

Conjunction with the Lord

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with^Δ God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with^Δ God. All things were[◦] made[◦] by Him, and without Him was[·] not one thing[·] made[◦] that was[·] made[◦]. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light appears in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was[◦] a man sent[◦] from^Δ God; his name was John. He[◦] came for[◦] testimony, that[◦] he might testify concerning the Light, that[◦] all might believe

through him. He was not that^Δ Light, but was sent that[◦] he might testify concerning the Light. He was the true Light, which enlightens every man who comes into the world. He was in the world, and the world was[·] made[◦] by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to[◦] His[·] own^Δ, and His[·] own^Δ took[·] Him not[·] in. But[◦] as[·] many[·] as received Him, to them He gave authority to become the children of God, to those who believe in[◦] His name, who were[·] born, not of[◦] bloods⁴, nor of[◦] the will of flesh, nor of[◦] the will of a man[◦], but of[◦] God. And the Word was[·] made[◦] flesh, and dwelt[·] in[·] a[·] tabernacle among us, and we observed His glory, the glory as of the only[·] begotten of^Δ the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

But first let us consider what the Divine mercy is. The divine mercy is pure mercy towards the whole human race, to save it; and it is also unceasing towards every man, and is never withdrawn from any one; so that everyone is saved who can be saved. And yet no one can be saved except by Divine means, which means the Lord reveals in the Word. The Divine means are what are called Divine truths, which teach how man must live in order to be saved. By these truths the Lord leads man to heaven, and by them He implants in man the life of heaven.

This the Lord does for all. But the life of heaven can be implanted in no one unless he abstains from evil, for evil obstructs. So far, therefore, as man abstains from evil he is led by the Lord out of pure mercy by His Divine means, and this from infancy to the end of his life in the world and afterwards to eternity. This is what is meant by the Divine mercy. And from this it is evident that the mercy of the Lord is pure mercy, but not apart from means, that is, it does not look to saving all out of mere good pleasure, however they may have lived. (*Heaven and Hell* 522)

That the Divine truth or the Word is a covenant or conjunction, is because it is the Divine from the Lord, thus the Lord Himself. And therefore when the Word is received by man, the Lord Himself is received... That the Divine conjoins Itself with those who love the Lord, and keep His Word, may be seen in John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make an abode with him." (John 14:23). (*Arcana Coelestia* 9396.9)

Holy Fear

2

But[◦] it came[·] to[·] pass, while he served[·] as[·] priest before[◦] God in the order[◦] of his daily[·] ministry... And[◦] an angel of the Lord was seen by him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And seeing[◦] him, Zacharias was disturbed, and fear fell on him. And[◦] the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall give birth to a son for thee, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. (Luke 1:8-14)

Speaking generally, "fear" is of two kinds-fear in what is not sacred, and fear in what is sacred; fear in what is not sacred is the fear in which are the wicked; but fear in what is sacred is the fear in which are the good. This latter fear (to wit that in which are the good) is called reverential or sacred fear, and is the result of our wonder at and longing for what is Divine, and also of our love. Love that is devoid of reverential or sacred fear is as it were devoid of savor, or is like food unseasoned with salt, and consequently insipid; but love that is attended with fear is like food that is seasoned, but yet does not taste of salt. The fear of love is a fear of injuring the Lord in any way, or of injuring the neighbor in any way, thus of injuring what is good and true in any way, and consequently of injuring the sacred things of love and faith and the consequent worship. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3718)

As regards the fear of the Divine in which they who are in falsities and infest will be, be it known that fear is the only means of restraining the infernals and holding them in bonds. For fear is a common bond, both for those who are upright, and for those who are evil; but for those who are upright the fear is internal, which is fear for the sake of salvation, namely, lest they should perish as to their souls, and so lest they should do anything contrary to conscience, that is, contrary to the truth and good which are of conscience; consequently they have fear lest they should do anything contrary to what is just and fair, thus contrary to the neighbor; but this is holy fear insofar as it is conjoined with the affection of charity, and still more as it is conjoined with love to the Lord. Fear then becomes like that of little children toward the parents whom they love. Then, insofar as they are in the good of love, so far the fear does not show itself; but insofar as they are not in good, so far it shows itself, and becomes anxiety. Such is the "fear of God," so frequently spoken of in the Word. (*Arcana Coelestia* 7280)

Prepared for Good Intelligence

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the sons of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall come before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and in the prudence of the just to prepare the disobedient, a people made ready for the

Lord. (Luke 1:15-17)

It was said of this John that "he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah," and that he was Elijah, because John, like Elijah, represented the Lord in relation to the Word, and thence signified the Word, which is from the Lord; and as Divine wisdom and Divine power are in the Word, these are meant by "the spirit and power of Elijah." (*Apocalypse Explained* 724.9)

How great and of what nature is the power of Divine truth in the heavens and also on earth, is evident from what has been said in Heaven and Hell concerning the power of the angels of heaven (n. 228-233). The power of Divine truth is directed especially against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. The fight against these must be waged by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. Moreover it is by means of the truths in a man that the Lord has the power to save him; for man is reformed and regenerated and is at the same time taken out of hell and introduced into heaven, by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. This power the Lord took upon Himself, even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word down to its ultimates. (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 49)

The order of influx: as man instructs his understanding, he prepares it for the reception of light, and hence for wisdom from heaven. As man does the goods of charity, he prepares the will for the reception of the heat of heaven, or of love. Like one who cuts a diamond, he makes preparation for the splendor of light to be diffused from himself. (*Additions to True Christianity*, IV:1-3)

Gifts from the Heart

...and opening their treasures, they offered to Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)

It was a custom in ancient times to give gifts to ... the king, when they were approached ... because external gifts signified internal or spiritual gifts, namely, such as go forth from the heart, and thence are of the affection and faith; and as by these conjunction is effected, in the spiritual sense "gifts" in reference to God signify conjunction, (*Apocalypse Explained* 661.1,2)

Gifts offered to the Lord were testifications of such things as are offered by the heart, which are those of faith and of charity... the gifts that were offered to Jehovah signified such things as are offered by man from the heart unto the Lord, and are accepted by the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.1,2)

And as this was a holy ritual, signifying initiation, the wise men from the east also, who came to Jesus just after His birth, brought presents-gold, frankincense, and myrrh; "gold" signified celestial love; "frankincense," spiritual love; and "myrrh," these loves in the natural. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4262.3)

In the heavens there is a sharing of all with each and of each with all. Such sharing goes forth from the two loves of heaven, which are, as has been said, love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor; and to share their delights is the very nature of these loves. Love to the Lord is such because the Lord's love is a love of sharing everything it has with all, since it wills the happiness of all. There is a like love in everyone of those who love the Lord, because the Lord is in them; and from this comes the mutual sharing of the delights of angels with one another. (*Heaven and Hell* 399)

23

Compel Yourself

And coming into the house, they found the little Child with Mary His mother, and falling down they worshiped Him... (Matthew 2:11)

In genuine humility a man divests himself of all ability to think and do anything from himself, and wholly leaves himself to the Divine, and thus draws near to the Divine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6866)

Humility before a man produces a bowing down, according to the estimation of him; but in presence of the Divine it produces total prostration, especially when man thinks that the Divine in respect to power and wisdom is everything, and man in comparison is nothing, or that from the Divine is all good and from man nothing but evil.

When man is in this acknowledgment from the heart he comes as it were out of himself, and thence falls upon his face, and when he is thus out of himself he also is removed from the proprium [what is his own], which in itself is wholly evil; when this is removed, the Divine fills him and raises him up; (*Apocalypse Explained* 77.1)

[The angel of the Lord said to Hagar, "Return yourself to your mistress and humble yourself beneath her hands"] (Gen. 16:9). "To humble oneself" is expressed in the original tongue by a word which signifies "to afflict." That "to afflict oneself" is, in the internal sense, to compel oneself, may be seen from very many passages in the Word, and will be treated of in what follows. That man ought to compel himself to do what is good, to obey the things commanded by the Lord, and to speak truths, which is to "humble himself under" the Lord's hands, or to submit himself to the sovereign power of the Divine good and truth,... The arcanum herein contained is that a man is thus gifted by the Lord with a heavenly Own,... In all freedom there is man's life, because there is his love. Whatever a man does from love appears to him free. But in this freedom, when the man is compelling himself to resist what is evil and false, and to do what is good, there is heavenly love, which the Lord then insinuates, and through which He creates the man's Own; and therefore the Lord wills that it should appear to the man as his, although it is not his. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1937.1, 3, 6)

Be Fully Useful

4

And it came to pass, when the days of his ritual were fulfilled, that [Zacharias] departed to his own house. (Luke 1:23)

A life of charity is to will well and do well to the neighbor; to act in every work from justice and equity, from good and truth, and also in every duty; in a word, the life of charity consists in performing uses. (*Apocalypse Explained* 325.4)

Worship does not consist in prayers and in external devotion, but in a life of charity; prayers are only its externals, for they proceed from the man through his mouth, consequently men's prayers are such as they themselves are in respect to life. It matters not that a man bears himself humbly, that he kneels and sighs when he prays; for these are externals, and unless externals proceed from internals they are only gestures and sounds without life. In each thing that a man utters there is affection, and every man, spirit, and angel is his own affection, for their affection is their life; it is the affection itself that speaks, and not the man without it; therefore such as the affection is such is the praying. Spiritual affection is what is called charity towards the neighbor; to be in that affection is true worship; praying is what proceeds. From this it can be seen that the essential of worship is the life of charity, and that its instrumental is gesture and praying; or that the primary of worship is a life of charity, and its secondary is praying. From this it is clear that those who place all Divine worship in oral piety, and not in practical piety, err greatly.

Practical piety is to act in every work and in every duty from sincerity and right, and from justice and equity, and this because it is commanded by the Lord in the Word; for thus man in his every work looks to heaven and to the Lord, and thus is conjoined with Him. (*Apocalypse Explained* 324.3-4)

Piety is to think and speak piously; to spend much time in prayer; to bear oneself humbly at such times; to frequent churches, and listen devoutly to discourses there; to observe the sacrament of the Supper frequently every year, and likewise the other services of worship according to the appointments of the church. But a life of charity is to will well and do well to the neighbor; to act in every work from justice and equity, from good and truth, and also in every duty; in a word, the life of charity consists in performing uses. Divine worship consists primarily in such a life, and secondarily in a life of piety; he, therefore, who separates the one from the other, that is, who lives a life of piety and not at the same time a life of charity, does not worship God. For a life of piety is valuable so far as a life of charity is joined with it; for the life of charity is the primary thing, and such as this is, such is the life of piety (n. 124, 128). (*Apocalypse Explained* 324.4)

5

A Genuine Desire to Know

And^o in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent^o out from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary. And the angel coming^o in to her said^o, Hail, thou who art graced! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. But^o when she saw^o him she was disturbed at^o his word, and reasoned within herself what^o manner

of a greeting this should be. (Luke 1:26-29)

The Virgin also, of whom He was born, signifies the church as to the affection of truth. ...the genuine affection of truth is willing and longs to know the veriest truths of faith for the sake of good use as the end, and for the sake of life; ... But they who are in the genuine affection of truth, that is, who long to know truths for the sake of good use, and for the sake of life, also abide in the doctrinal things of the church until they arrive at the age when they begin to think for themselves; then they search the Scriptures and supplicate the Lord for enlightenment, and when they are enlightened they rejoice from the heart. (*God the Savior 37; Arcana Coelestia 8993.3-4*)

Affection or love constitutes the life of everyone; consequently those who are in the affection of truth constantly serve the Lord, even when they are in their vocations, business, and employments, for the affection that is within reigns continually and serves. ... Serving the Lord is to be in truths, and to act sincerely and justly in everything; for then the principles of truth, sincerity, and justice, that are with man, serve the Lord.

(*Apocalypse Explained 478.3*)

The spiritual man when being regenerated... first learns the doctrinal things of truth, next is affected by them (which is the good of the doctrinal things), then that by taking a mental view of these doctrinal things he is affected with the truths in them (which is the good of truth), and lastly that he wills to live according to them, which is the good of life. In this way the spiritual man when being regenerated advances from the doctrine of truth to the good of life.

(*Arcana Coelestia 3332.2*)

The truly Christian man whose faith and life is ... turned towards heaven. The Lord leads his will, or love, and gives him the affection of good, that is, the faculty of being affected, or made glad, by reason of good; he also leads his understanding, so that he may be affected with truth, and so that, immediately he hears it, he is also gladdened, and it is implanted in his life; and, so far as he learns the truth, so far it abides in him, and, by its means, he is led by the Lord. (*Spiritual Diary 5796*)

Make Gradual Progress

22

Then Herod, privately calling the Magi, precisely^o inquired of^o them at what time^o the star appeared. And sending them to^o Bethlehem, he said^o, Go and search^o earnestly for^o the little^o Child; and^o when^o you have found Him, report to me, so^o that I^o also may come and worship Him. And^o when they had heard the king, they went out; and behold^o, the star which they saw^o in the east went^o before them, till it came and stood over where the little^o Child was. And^o having seen^o the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly^o great joy. (Matthew 2:7-10)

For every man is born into two diabolical loves, the love of self and the love of the world, from which loves all evils and all falsities therefrom pour forth as from their own fountains; and as man is born into these loves he is also born into evils of every ... Because man, in respect to his self is such, means have been given by the Divine mercy of the Lord, by which man can be withdrawn from his self; these means are given in the Word; and when man cooperates with these means, that is, when he thinks and speaks, wills and acts, from the Divine Word, he is kept by the Lord in things Divine, and is thus withheld from self; and when this continues there is formed with man by the Lord as it were a new self, both voluntary and intellectual, which is wholly separated from man's self; thus man becomes as it were created anew, and this is what is called his reformation and regeneration by truths from the Word, and by a life according to them. (*Apocalypse Explained 585.2-3*)

the conjunction of the Lord and man is reciprocal; and because it is reciprocal it necessarily follows, that man ought to conjoin himself to the Lord, in order that the Lord may conjoin himself to man; and that otherwise conjunction is not effected, but withdrawal and a consequent separation, yet not on the Lord's part, but on man's part. In order that such reciprocal conjunction may exist, there is granted to man freedom of choice, giving him the ability to walk in the way to heaven or in the way to hell. From this freedom that is given to man flows his ability to reciprocate, which enables him to conjoin himself with the Lord, (*True Christian Religion 371.2*)

Neither with men nor with angels can any love ever become pure. ... But since it is the intention which is of the will that is primarily regarded by the Lord, therefore, so far as a man is in this intention and perseveres therein, so far he is initiated into the purity and holiness of this love and successively progresses in it. (*Conjugal Love 71:2*)

21

“We Have Come to Worship Him”: Live from the Lord and with Him

And^o when Jesus was^o born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold^o, there came^o Magi^l from the east into Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For^o we have seen^o His star in the east, and are come to worship Him. (Matthew 2:1-2)

There is a love of ruling arising from love of the neighbor, and a love of ruling arising from love of self. Those who are in the love of ruling from love of the neighbor seek dominion to the end that they may perform uses to the public and to individuals; and to such, therefore, dominion is entrusted in the heavens. Emperors, kings, and noblemen who have been born and brought up to positions of authority, if they humble themselves before God, [can be in this love.] (*True Christian Religion* 405.1-2)

"To follow the Lord" has a similar signification as "to go or to walk after Him." That "to go or walk after the Lord," signifies to acknowledge, to obey, and to act and live from Him and with Him... To acknowledge the Lord's Divine Human and to do His commandments is to follow Him, because only those who do this can be conjoined to the Lord. (*Apocalypse Explained* 864.1-2)

A "star" signifies the knowledges of internal good and truth, which are from the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.3)
The signification of "journeys," [is] what is progressive of spiritual life ... thus the order of that life ... it denotes receiving the life of heaven, because that life is a gift of the Lord to man by means of the temptations...
The life of heaven is to be led of the Lord by means of good. In order that a man may come to that life, good must be implanted by means of truth; that is, charity by means of faith. So long as this is being done, the man is in the way to heaven, but is not yet in heaven. And in order that at that time the truths which are of faith may be confirmed, and may also be conjoined with good, the man is let into temptations, for these are the means of the conjunction of good and truth. When therefore the man is in good, that is, in the affection of doing good for the sake of good, thus for the sake of the neighbor, he is uplifted into heaven, for he is in the order of heaven, and is led of the Lord by means of good. From all this it can be seen what is meant by "the life of heaven." (*AC* 8559)

Do Good Things

6

And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. And behold^o, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring^o forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. But^o Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man^o? And the angel answering said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that which shall be born of thee Holy shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:30-35)

In the internal sense "to bring forth" denotes:
The things of the spiritual birth(*Arcana Coelestia* 4586)
Procreation of such things as pertain to the church..... (*Apocalypse Explained* 721.16)
Coming into existence of good and truth.....(*AC* 3298)
To acknowledge in faith and act....(*AC* 4070)
To make truths fruitful by doing them, from which comes reformation..... (*AE* 721.16-17)

For as before said, the "seed" is the truth of faith, and "conception" is reception, and reception is effected when truth which is of the understanding passes into good which is of the will, or when truth which is of faith passes into good which is of charity; and when it is in the will, it is in its womb, and is then first produced; and when man is in good in act, that is, when he produces good from the will, thus from delight and freedom, it then goes forth from the womb or is born-which also is meant by being reborn or regenerated. From this it is evident what is signified in the spiritual sense by "being with child."
(*Arcana Coelestia* 4904)

As to its being said, "Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and be ye multiplied therein" the case is this: nothing is multiplied with the regenerate man in his external man, that is, nothing of good and truth receives increase, except as the effect of charity. Charity is like heat in the time of spring or summer, which causes grass and plants and trees to grow. Without charity, or spiritual heat, nothing grows
(*Arcana Coelestia* 1016)

7

A Spirit of Co-Operation

And^o Mary said, Behold^o, the maidservant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy saying. And the angel departed^o from her. (Luke 1:38)

The Lord does indeed demand humility, adoration, thanksgivings, and many other things from man, which appear like repayings, and thus not gratuitous; but the Lord does not demand these things for His own sake, for the Divine has no glory from man's humility, adoration, and thanksgiving. In the Divine, anything of the love of self is utterly inconceivable-that such things should be done for His own sake; but they are for the sake of the man himself; for when a man is in humility he can receive good from the Lord, because he has then been separated from the love of self and its evils, which are the obstacle; and therefore the Lord wills a state of humility in man for his own sake; because when he is in this state the Lord can flow in with heavenly good.

(Arcana Coelestia 5957)

I have talked much with angels about innocence, and have been told that innocence is the being [esse] of all good, and that good is therefore so far good as it has innocence in it, consequently that wisdom is so far wisdom as it partakes of innocence; and the same is true of love, charity, and faith... Innocence is a willingness to be led by the Lord.

(Heaven and Hell 281)

A new birth or creation can only be brought about by the Lord through charity and faith as the two means with the person's co-operation. *(True Christian Religion 576)*

Pray for Good Things in Life

And there was Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was advanced in many days, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she^o was a widow of about[^] eighty-four years, who stood[·] not[·] back from the temple, serving[^] God with fastings and prayers^o night and day. (Luke 2:36-37)

Prayer, regarded in itself, is speech with God, and some internal view at the time of the matters of the prayer, to which there answers something like an influx into the perception or thought of the mind, so that there is a certain opening of the man's interiors toward God; but this with a difference according to the man's state, and according to the essence of the subject of the prayer. If the man prays from love and faith, and for only heavenly and spiritual things, there then comes forth in the prayer something like a revelation (which is manifested in the affection of him that prays) as to hope, consolation, or a certain inward joy. *(Arcana Coelestia 2535)*

In holy worship the church prays that God may be present and lead the thoughts of the discourse. The case herein is this. When a man is in genuine worship, then the Lord flows into the goods and truths which are with him, and raises them to Himself, and with them the man, insofar and in such a manner as he is in them. This elevation does not appear to the man unless he is in the genuine affection of truth and good, and in the knowledge, acknowledgment, and faith that everything good comes from above, from the Lord. *(Arcana Coelestia 10299.2)*

20

19

My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation: A Will to Act

And a response was made to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents were bringing in the little Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he even received

Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now Thou sendest Thy servant away in peace, O Lord, according to Thy saying; for my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for a revelation for the nations, and the glory of Thy people Israel. (Luke 2:26-32)

That by "Jehovah hearing," from which Simeon was named, in the interior sense is signified obedience, and in the internal sense faith in the will from the Lord alone. They who have faith of the will, receive life; wherefore it is said, "they that hear shall live." (*Arcana Coelestia* 3869.4)

The good of truth which is with those who are of the spiritual kingdom is implanted in the intellectual part, for there is formed by the Lord in this part a new will, which is that the man wills to do according to the truth that he has drawn from the teaching of his church; and when he wills and does this truth, it becomes with him good, and is called "spiritual good," and also "the good of truth." (*Arcana Coelestia* 8521.2)

A man is not in heaven until he is in good. If he is only in the truths which are called matters of faith, he merely stands before the door; and if from these truths he looks to good, he enters into the vestibule; but if from these truths he does not look to good, he does not see heaven, not even from afar. It is said that a man is not in heaven until he is in good, because while a man is in the world he ought to have heaven in himself, in order that he may enter into it after death. For heaven is in man, and is in mercy given to those who, while they live in the world, suffer themselves to be brought through the truths of faith into charity toward the neighbor and into love to the Lord; that is, into good. ... a man is not in heaven until he is in the state of being led by the Lord by means of good, ... By "good" is meant the good of life, and the good of life is to do what is good from willing it, and to will good is from love; for that which a man loves he wills. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9832)

Instruct me, O Jehovah, in the way of Thy statutes; And I will observe it to the last. (Psalm 119:33)

Experience the Joy of Others as Joy in Yourself

8

And Mary stood up in those days, and went with haste into the hill-country, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and greeted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a great voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for gladness. And happy is she who has believed that there shall be a performance of those things which were spoken to her from the Lord. (Luke 1:39-45)

Love consists in this, that its own should be another's; to feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47)

The delight of everyone in heaven to share his delights and blessings with others; (*Heaven and Hell* 399)

The life of charity consists in thinking kindly of another, and in wishing him well; and in perceiving joy in oneself from the fact that others also are saved. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2284.5)

The state of the Divine when good is done to heaven and the angels there, and also to the church and the man there, is expressed in the Word by "joy," but the quality of this joy is beyond comprehension, because it belongs to the Infinite. That there is also infinite joy on account of the reception of good by those who are in heaven and the church, can be seen from the Divine love, which is infinite toward the human race (*Arcana Coelestia* 8672)

9

“He Has Done Great Things for Me”

And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord;
and my spirit has leapt· for· joy in God my Saviour;
for He has looked upon the lowliness of His maidservant; for
behold^o, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For He who is powerful has done for me great things, and holy
is His name. And His mercy is to generations of generations, to
those who fear Him.

He has made might by^o His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thought^o of their
heart. He has taken· down the powerful from thrones, and has exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent· away^o empty.
He has accepted His servant⁴ Israel, to remember mercy,
as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for^o ever.
(Luke 1:46-55)

Humility is the essential of all adoration and of all worship, for without humility
the Lord cannot be worshiped and adored, for the reason that the Divine of the
Lord cannot flow into a proud heart, that is, into a heart full of the love of self, for
such a heart is hard; and is called in the Word a "heart of stone." But the Divine of
the Lord can flow into a humble heart, because this is soft, and is called in the
Word a "heart of flesh." Such a heart is receptive of the influx of good from the
Lord, that is, of the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9377)

In heaven the man who knows, acknowledges, and believes from the heart-that is,
from affection-that he has no power from himself, but that all the power he has is
from the Lord, is said to be the least, and yet is the greatest, because he has power
from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4459.4)

The more a man is in humility; ... the more he is in adoration, that is, in true wor-
ship, and the more he is in love and charity, and the more in happiness. (*Arcana
Coelestia* 1153.2)

Wait Patiently for Good Things

18

And when the days of her purification were fulfilled, accord-
ing· to the Law of Moses, they brought· Him· up^o to Jerusa-
lem, to present Him to the Lord, even· as it is written in the
Law of the Lord, that every male opening the womb^Δ shall be
called holy to the Lord; and to give the sacrifice according· to
what is said^Δ in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtle· doves,
or two young^o doves. And behold^o, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was
Simeon; and this man was just and circumspect, waiting for the consolation of Is-
rael; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (Luke 2:22-25)

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints, signifies that through these comes
temptation, and afterwards the implantation of truth from good with those who are
made spiritual by the Lord. ... "The patience of the saints" signifies the temptation
of the faithful, or of those who are made spiritual by the Lord, because "patience"
signifies spiritual patience, which is patience in sustaining temptations;
(*Apocalypse Explained* 813.1-2)

In respect to temptations, which are also meant here by "patience," there are spiri-
tual temptations which those undergo who receive genuine charity from the Lord;
(*Apocalypse Explained* 893.3)

When man is in a state of love, or of celestial affection, he is in an angelic state,
that is to say, as if not in time, provided there is no impatience in the affection;
for impatience is a corporeal affection, and insofar as man is in it, so far he is in time;
but insofar as man is not in it, so far he is not in time. This appears in a kind of im-
age from all the delights and gladnesses that belong to affection or love, in that
when man is in them, he takes no note of time, for he is then in the internal man.
By the affection of genuine love man is withdrawn from bodily and worldly things,
for his mind is elevated toward heaven, and thus is withdrawn from the things of
time. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3827)

In your patience possess ye your souls. (Luke 21:19)

17

And let him that heareth say, Come!

And^o when they had seen^o, they made^o known^o abroad the saying which was spoken to them concerning this little^o Child. And all who heard marveled at those things which were spoken to them by the shepherds. But^o Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen^o, as it was spoken to them. (Luke 2:17-20)

The Lord from the Divine love and thence from Divine zeal calls and calls together all who are in the spiritual affection of truth, and who think of heaven, to the New Church, and to conjunction with Himself, and thus to eternal life. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 831)

“Rejoice, ye heavens and ye that dwell in them,” signifies the salvation and consequent joy of those who become spiritual by the reception of Divine truth.... “The heavens” signify those who are spiritual, because all who are in the heavens are spiritual; and because men who have become spiritual are likewise in the heavens, although in respect to the body they are in the world, so “ye that dwell in the heavens” means not only angels, but also men. For every man with whom the interior mind, which is called the spiritual mind, has been opened, is in the heavens, yea, sometimes he even appears among the angels in the heavens. (*Apocalypse Explained* 751)

And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that thirsteth come, and let him that willeth take the water of life freely, signifies that he who knows anything of the Lord's coming, and of the New Heaven and New Church, thus of the Lord's kingdom, should pray that it may come, and that he who desires truths, should pray that the Lord may come with light, and that he who loves truths, will then receive them from the Lord without his own work. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 956)

Evangelization is annunciation about the Lord, His coming, and the things that are from Him which belong to salvation and eternal life.. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9925.2)

Do Things the Lord's Way

10

And^o to Elizabeth was fulfilled the time^o that she should bring^o forth; and she gave^o birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the young child, and they called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said, Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her, There is no one of thy kinsfolk who is called by this name. And^o they beckoned to his father, what he willed to have him called. And he asked for a tablet, and wrote, saying, John is his name; and they all marveled. And^o immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were talked of in all^o the hill-country of Judea. And all who heard put them in their hearts, saying, Who then shall this little^o child be? And the hand of the Lord was with him. (Luke 1:57-66)

In order that the External Man may be reduced into order, it must be made subordinate to the Internal Man, and it is made subordinate when it obeys. So far as this is effected, so far the External Man also is wise. This is meant by the old man with its evil affections needing to die in order that the man may become a new creature. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9708)

In order that He may make a man blessed and happy, the Lord wills a total submission, that is, that he be not partly his own and partly the Lord's, for then there are two lords, which no one can serve at the same time (*Arcana Coelestia* 6138.2)

Everything of the church is called the "good of faith," that has to do with life and use from what the doctrine of faith of the church teaches; in a word everything that has to do with willing it and doing it from obedience; for the truths of faith of the church become goods by willing and doing them. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9230)

11

Be Good, Honest, and Fair

And^o the birth of Jesus Christ was in^o this^o way: His mother Mary, being betrothed to Joseph, before they came^o together, was found with child from^o the Holy Spirit. And^o Joseph her husband, being just, and not^o willing to expose^o her^o to^o public^o infamy, intended to send^o her^o away privately. And^o while he thought on these^o things, behold^o, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in^o a dream, saying, Joseph, son of

David, fear not^o to take^o to^o thee Mary thy wife, for^o that which is begotten in her is from^o the Holy Spirit. And^o she shall bring^o forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus¹; for^o He shall save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:18-21)

Heavenly love consists in loving what is good, honest, and just, because it is good, honest and just, and in doing this from love; and those that have this love have a life of goodness, honesty, and justice, which is the heavenly life.

(*Heaven and Hell* 481.1)

The Lord's presence with man is in good, and therefore in what is just and equitable, and further in what is honorable and becoming (what is honorable being the complex of all the moral virtues; and what is becoming being simply its form); for these are goods which succeed in order, and are the planes in man on which conscience is founded by the Lord, and consequently intelligence and wisdom (*Arcana Coelestia* 2915)

All those are in the good of charity who have conscience (that is, who are unwilling to depart in any degree from what is just and fair, and good and true, and this for the very sake of what is just and fair, and good and true, for this principle is from conscience), and who from having conscience think well of the neighbor and desire his welfare, even should he be an enemy; and this without any recompense. These are they who are in the good of charity, whether they be without the church or within the church. If within the church, they adore the Lord, and willingly hear and do the things that He has taught.

(*Arcana Coelestia* 2380.2)

Find Spiritual Success

16

And it came^o to^o pass, as the angels went^o away^o from them into heaven, the men, the shepherds, said^o one^o to^o another, Let us now go even to^o Bethlehem, and see^o this saying that has come^o to^o pass, which the Lord has made^o known to us. And they came in^o haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. (Luke 2:15-16)

In proportion as anyone loves the truth, in the same proportion he desires to know it, and in the same proportion is affected at heart when he finds it. No one else comes into wisdom. (*Doctrine of Life* 89)

While man is being regenerated... he is affected with truth for the sake of the end that he may become intelligent ...when he has been regenerated... [he is affected with truth] that he may become wise; or what is the same, in the former state he is affected with truth for the sake of doctrine, but in the latter for the sake of life; (*Arcana Coelestia* 6247)

But he who is being regenerated is led by degrees from this more remote life (that is, moral life), into a life nearer to Divine doctrinal things; that is, into spiritual life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3690.4)

15

The Lord and the Neighbor: Top Priorities in Life

And suddenly there was^o with^o the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace, good^o will among men. (Luke 2:13-14)

[Some spirits] said that heavenly joy consists solely in praising and glorifying the Lord, being a life destitute of any doing of the goods of charity, and that this is an active life. But they were told that praising and celebrating the Lord is not such an active life as is meant, but is an effect of that life; for the Lord has no need of praises, but wills that they should do the goods of charity, and that it is according to these that they will receive happiness from the Lord. But still these best instructed persons could form no idea of joy, but of servitude, in doing these goods of charity. But the angels testified that such a life is the freest of all, and that it is conjoined with happiness unutterable.

(*Arcana Coelestia* 456)

Spiritual power is to will the good of another, and to will to convey to another as far as possible what is with oneself. (*Apocalypse Explained* 79)

Heaven does not consist in a desire to be least for the purpose of being greatest, for that would be aspiring and longing to be the greatest; but it consists in desiring from the heart the good of others more than one's own, and in serving others with a view to their happiness, not with recompense as an end, but from love. (*Heaven and Hell* 408)

Nothing is more pleasing to one who loves anyone, and who believes anyone, than to will and do what the other wills and thinks, for it is his sole desire to know his will and thought, thus his good pleasure. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10143.5)

A Will to Obey

12

And^o Joseph, being^o awakened from sleep^o, did as the angel of the Lord had directed him, and took^o to^o him his wife, and knew her not, until she brought^o forth her firstborn Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matthew 1:24-25)

The truth of faith is external, and the good of charity is internal. In order that the truth of faith may live, it must be introduced into the will, that it may there receive life; for truth does not live from knowing, but from willing. Life flows in from the Lord through the new willing that He creates in man. The first life manifests itself by obedience, which is the first of the will; the second by the affection of doing the truth, which is the progression of the will, and which exists when delight and bliss are perceived in doing the truth. Unless there takes place such a progress of faith, truth does not become truth, but becomes a separate affair from life, (*Arcana Coelestia* 3870.1)

Man's external or natural ought to serve his internal or spiritual. Moreover, the natural was created for service; for it does not live from itself, thus can do nothing from itself; but from the internal or spiritual, that is, through this from the Lord. From this it is also evident that man's external or natural is nothing unless it is of service to the internal or spiritual, and that it becomes something in proportion as it is of service. To be of service is to obey, and the natural obeys when it does not take for itself from the understanding reasons which favor the evils of the loves of self and of the world; but when it complies with the dictates of reason and the doctrine of the church, which declare that good and truth ought to be done, not for the sake of self and the world as ends, but for the sake of good and truth itself. In this manner the Lord does these through man's heaven, that is, through his internal; for all good and truth are from the Lord, insomuch that good and truth with man are the Lord Himself. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9776)

13

Make a Daily Effort

And° it came· ·to· ·pass in those^ days, that there went· ·out^ a decree from^ Caesar Augustus that all the world° should be enrolled. This enrolling was· first· ·made° when Kurenius was· ·governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, everyone° to° his· ·own^ city. And° Joseph also went· ·up from Galilee, out· ·of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to° the city of David,

which° is called Bethlehem, because he was from° the house and family of David, to be enrolled with° Mary his betrothed wife, being great· ·with· ·child. And° it came· ·to· ·pass, that while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should bring· ·forth; and she brought· ·forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped· Him ·in· ·swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

The signification of "conceiving and bearing," [is] in the internal sense to be regenerated; for the man who is being regenerated is conceived and born anew, wherefore regeneration is called a new birth, but spiritual. Man is indeed born of his parents as a man, but he does not become a man until he is reborn of the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3860)

Hence "flesh wherein is the breath of lives" signifies a regenerated man, for in his Own there is the Lord's life, which is the life of charity and faith. Every man is only "flesh;" but when the life of charity and faith is breathed into him by the Lord, the flesh is made alive, and becomes spiritual and celestial, and is called a "new creature" (Mark 16:15), from having been created anew. (*Arcana Coelestia* 780)

When man is being regenerated, he is then becoming altogether another, and is being made new; therefore also when he has been regenerated, he is called "born again," and "created anew." Then, although he has a similar face and a similar speech, yet his mind is not similar; his mind, when he is regenerate, is open toward heaven, and there dwells therein love to the Lord and charity toward his neighbor, together with faith. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3212.3)

Keep Watch and Discover What is Good

14

And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, and keeping watch¹ over their flock by night. And behold°, the angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they feared with great fear. And the angel said° to them, Fear not°; for° behold°, I bring· you ·good· ·tidings of great joy which° shall be to all the people. For to you is born this· ·day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be the sign to you: you shall find the Babe wrapped· ·in· ·swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-12)

A "shepherd," or one who feeds the flock, denotes one who teaches the good of charity and leads to it; (*Arcana Coelestia* 4713)

"Night" signifies what is obscure ... and obscurity in the spiritual sense is that truth does not appear. "night" denotes the last time of an old church and the first of a new one...speaking of the coming of the Lord, which is the "morning," which coming was when there was no longer any spiritual truth in the earth, and which is "night." (AC 6000.1, 4, 6)

In the Word "night" signifies the time and state when there is no longer any light of truth, but merely falsity and evil. AC 2353;

A watchman with God" signifies the understanding of the Word. (*Apocalypse Explained* 624.12)

"One crieth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night" (Isa. 21:11, 12); by the "watchman" in the internal sense is meant one who observes the states of the church and its changes, thus every prophet; by "night" is meant the last state of the church; by "morning" its first state; (*Arcana Coelestia* 10134.11)