

Memorable Relations—Week 3

Conjugal Love



An angel said, “This palace represents the dwelling-places of conjugal love as they are in the human mind. The highest part of it, into which the turtle doves entered, represents the highest region of the mind, where conjugal love dwells in the love of good with its wisdom. The middle part, into which the birds of paradise entered, represents the middle region, where conjugal love dwells in the love of truth with its intelligence. And the lowest part, into which the swans entered, represents the lowest region of the mind, where conjugal love dwells in the love of what is just and right with its knowledge.” (CL 270:2)

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DAY ONE: WHY WOMEN ARE BEAUTIFUL

CL 56. One time, while speaking with angels in the spiritual world, I was filled with a pleasant wish to see the Temple of Wisdom, which I had seen once before [AR 875:4-8]. So I asked the angels about the way to it.

They said, "Follow the light, and you will find it."

And I said, "What do you mean, follow the light?"

They said, "Our light grows brighter the closer we get to that temple. Follow the light, therefore, in the direction it grows brighter. For our light goes forth from the Lord as the sun of this world, and so, regarded in itself, that light is wisdom."

In the company of two angels, I then went in the direction that the light grew brighter, and I ascended by a steep path to the top of a certain hill which was in the southern zone, where I found a magnificent gate. When the guard saw the angels with me, he opened it, and behold, I saw an avenue of palm trees and laurels, which we followed. The avenue curved around and ended up at a garden, in the middle of which stood the Temple of Wisdom.

As I looked around in the garden, I saw some smaller buildings, replicas of the temple, with wise men in them. We went over to one of the buildings, and we spoke at the entrance with the host there, telling him the reason for our coming and the way we had arrived. And the host said, "Welcome! Come in, have a seat, and let us spend some time together in conversations of wisdom."

[2] I saw inside that the building was divided into two sections, and yet the two were still one. It was divided into two sections by a transparent partition, but it looked like one room because of the partition's transparency, which was like the transparency of the purest crystal. I asked why it was arranged like that.

The receptionist said, "I am not alone. My wife is with me, and though we are two, yet we are not two but one flesh."

To this I replied, "I know you are wise, but what does a wise man or wisdom have to do with a woman?"

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At this, with some feeling of annoyance, the host's expression changed, and he stretched out his hand, and suddenly, then, other wise men were present from the neighboring buildings. To them he said with amusement, "Our visitor here says he wants to know what a wise man or wisdom has to do with a woman!"

They all laughed at this and said, "What is a wise man or wisdom apart from a woman or apart from love? A wife is the love of a wise man's wisdom."

[3] But the host said, "Let us join together now in some conversation of wisdom. Let the conversation be about causes, today the reason for the beauty in the female sex."

So they then spoke in turn. And the first speaker gave this reason, that women were created by the Lord to be forms of affection for the wisdom in men, and affection for wisdom is beauty itself.

The second speaker gave this reason, that woman was created by the Lord through the wisdom of a man, because she was created from man, and that she is therefore a form of wisdom inspired by the affection of love. And because the affection of love is life itself, a woman is a form of the life of wisdom, while the male is a form of wisdom, and the life of wisdom is beauty itself.

The third speaker presented this reason, that women have been given a perception of the delights in conjugal love. And because their whole body is an instrument of that perception, the abode where the delights of conjugal love dwell with their perception cannot help but be a form of beauty.

[4] The fourth speaker gave this reason, that the Lord took the beauty and grace of life from man and transferred them into woman, and that is why a man not reunited with his beauty and grace in woman is stern, severe, dry and unattractive, and also not wise except for his own sake alone, in which case he is a dunce. On the other hand, when a man is united with his beauty and grace of life in a wife, he becomes agreeable, pleasant, full of life and lovable, and therefore wise.

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The fifth speaker gave this reason, that women were created to be beauties, not for their own sake, but for the sake of men, so that men, of themselves hard, might be softened; their dispositions, of themselves severe, might become gentle; and their hearts, of themselves cold, might grow warm. And this is what happens to them when they become one flesh with their wives.

[5] The sixth speaker offered this reason, that the universe created by the Lord is a most perfect work, but nothing is created in it more perfect than a woman, beautiful in face and becoming in manner, in order that a man may thank the Lord for that generous gift, and repay it by receiving wisdom from Him.

After these and several other similar views were expressed, one of the wives appeared through the crystal-like partition, and she said to her husband, "Speak, if you wish."

And when he spoke, the life in his wisdom from his wife was perceived in his speech, for her love was in the tone of his voice. Thus did experience bear witness to the truth expressed.

After this we looked at the Temple of Wisdom, and also at the things in the paradise surrounding it. And being filled with feelings of joy on account of them, we departed and went along the avenue to the gate, and so descended by the way we had come.

Questions

1. Which of the six answers appeals to you the most?
2. Men, does it seem realistic and doable to thank the Lord for the gift of women, and if you are married, your wife, and "repay" this gift by receiving wisdom from Him? "Wisdom of life is... to refrain from evils because they are harmful to the soul, harmful to the civil state, and harmful to the body, and to do good things because they are of benefit to the soul, to the civil state, and to the body" (CL 130:4).
3. Women, are the thoughts about beauty expressed here inspiring, intimidating, or something else?

DAY TWO: THE ORIGIN OF BEAUTY

CL 381. Once when I looked about into the world of spirits, I saw at a distance a palace, surrounded and seemingly besieged by a crowd of people.... Three newcomers from the world had been taken up into heaven and had seen magnificent things there, including maidens and wives of astonishing beauty. Having been let down from that heaven, they had now entered the palace over there and were recounting what they had seen, especially that they had found women of such beauty, the like of which their listeners' eyes had never seen... and that they were now overcome with a desire to speak about the origin of beauty.... A multitude flocked in to hear them....

Presently one of them rose up on the step behind the pulpit to give his lecture on the origin of the beauty of the feminine sex, in which he presented the following:

CL 382. "What is the origin of beauty," he said, "other than love? When love flows into the eyes of young men and sets them on fire, it becomes beauty. Therefore love and beauty are the same thing. For love from within pours through the face of a marriageable young woman with a kind of flame, from whose radiance comes the dawn and crimson glow of her life. Who does not know that that flame emits its rays into her eyes, and from these as centers spreads out into the circumference of her face? And also descends into her breast and kindles the heart, and thus affects one standing nearby, in the same way that fire does with its warmth and light? The warmth in this case is love, and the light, the beauty of love....

"Everyone is lovable and beautiful in accordance with his love. But still the love possessed by the masculine sex is one thing, and the love possessed by the feminine sex another. The love in males is a love of growing wise, and the love in females is a love of loving that love of growing wise in a male. Consequently, in the measure that a young man exhibits a love of growing wise, in the same measure he is lovable and beautiful to a maiden; and in the measure that a maiden exhibits a love of a young man's wisdom, in the same measure she is lovable and beautiful to the young man. Accordingly, as the love of the one meets and kisses the love of the other, so also do the beauty of the one and the beauty of the other.

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I conclude, therefore, that love forms beauty into a likeness of itself.”

CL 383. After him the second speaker arose....

“I have heard [from the first speaker] that love is the origin of beauty, but I am not inclined to agree. Who among mortals knows what love is? Who has had any mental conception of it so as to examine it? Who has seen it with his eye? Tell me where he is.

“But I assert that wisdom is the origin of beauty—wisdom, which in women is inmosty hidden and concealed, which in men is apparent and visible. What makes a person human but wisdom? If it were not for wisdom, a person would be a sculpture or a painting. What does a maiden observe in a young man but the nature of his wisdom? And what does a young man observe in a maiden but the nature of her affection for his wisdom? By wisdom I mean genuine morality, because this is wisdom in life. So it is that when her hidden wisdom approaches and embraces his visible wisdom, which happens interiorly in the spirit of each, they kiss each other and unite, and this is called love; and then they appear to each other as pictures of beauty.

“In a word, wisdom is like the light or radiance of a fire, which strikes the eyes, and as it does, creates beauty.”

CL 384. After that the third speaker arose and spoke as follows:

“Love alone is not the origin of beauty, neither is wisdom alone, but the origin is a union of love and wisdom—a union of love with the wisdom in a young man, and a union of wisdom with its love in a maiden. For a maiden does not love wisdom in herself but in a young man, and on that account sees him as beautiful; and when the young man sees this in a young woman, he then sees her as beautiful. Therefore love through wisdom creates beauty, and wisdom from love receives it.

“The fact of this is clearly apparent in heaven. I saw maidens and wives there and observed their beauty; and I beheld one kind of beauty in the maidens and another altogether in the wives, seeing in the maidens only its sparkle, but in the wives its resplendent radiance. I saw the difference as being like that

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between a diamond sparkling with light and a ruby radiant at the same time with fire.

“What is beauty but something that gives delight to the sight? What is the origin of this delight but the interplay of love and wisdom? This interplay causes the sight to glow, and the glow radiates from eye to eye and presents beauty.

“What makes the beauty of a face but its ruddy glow and pearly radiance, and a lovely blending of the two? Is the ruddy glow not owing to love, and the pearly radiance to wisdom? For love glows with a ruddy glow from its fire, and wisdom shines with a pearly radiance from its light. I saw both qualities plainly in the faces of a married couple in heaven—a ruddy glow blended with a pearly radiance in the wife, and a pearly radiance blended with a ruddy glow in the husband. And I noticed that their looking at each other caused each to become brighter.”

When the third speaker said this, the crowd applauded and cried out, “He is the winner!” And suddenly a flaming light—which is the light of conjugal love also—filled the house with a radiant splendor, and at the same time their hearts with gladness.

Questions and Comments

1. Do you think each of the speakers has a good point, even if the third speaker had the best point? What part of each speech do you like best?
2. How does this discussion affect our ideas of a beautiful woman or man?
3. How can these (and other) passages help us raise our sense of what is beautiful and what to look for and foster in a married partner?
4. What is wisdom, that both men and women should love?
5. Can we in this world sometimes glimpse the radiance of wives?

DAY THREE: A PALACE REPRESENTING CONJUGIAL LOVE

CL 270. One morning after sleep, my thought was deeply engaged on some of the secret things of conjugal love; and finally on this: In what region of the human mind does love truly conjugal reside, and hence in what region does conjugal cold [or coldness toward marriage] reside? I knew that there are three regions of the human mind, one above another, and that natural love dwells in the lowest region, spiritual love in the higher, and celestial love in the highest, and that in each region there is a marriage of good and truth. And since good is of love and truth is of wisdom, that in each region there is a marriage of love and wisdom; and that this marriage is the same as the marriage of the will and the understanding, since the will is the receiver of love and the understanding is the receiver of wisdom.

[2] While I was in the depth of this thought, behold, I saw two swans flying towards the north, and presently two birds of paradise flying towards the south, and also two turtle doves flying in the east; and as I followed their flight with my sight I saw that the two swans bent their way from the north towards the east, likewise the two birds of paradise from the south; and that they joined the two turtle doves in the east and flew together to a certain lofty palace there, surrounded by olive trees, palm trees, and beeches. The palace had three rows of windows, one above another; and as I was directing my attention to them, I saw the swans fly into the palace through windows opened in the lowest row, the birds of paradise through windows opened in the middle row, and the turtle doves through windows opened in the highest row.

[3] As I was looking at this, an angel stood by me and said: “Do you understand the things you have seen?” I replied, “A little.”

He said, “This palace represents the dwelling-places of conjugal love as they are in the human mind. The highest part of it, into which the turtle doves entered, represents the highest region of the mind, where conjugal love dwells in the love of good with its wisdom. The middle part, into which the birds of paradise entered, represents the middle region, where conjugal love dwells in the love of truth with its intelligence. And the lowest part, into which the swans entered, represents the lowest region of the mind,

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where conjugal love dwells in the love of what is just and right with its knowledge.

[4] “The three pairs of birds also signify these same things—the pair of turtle doves signify the conjugal love of the highest region, the pair of birds of paradise the conjugal love of the middle region, and the pair of swans the conjugal love of the lowest region. The three kinds of trees around the palace, the olives, the palms, and the beeches, signify similar things. We in heaven call the highest region of the mind celestial, the middle spiritual, and the lowest natural; and we perceive them as apartments in a house, one above another, and the ascent from one to another by degrees, as by stairs. And on each story, there are as it were two sets of rooms, one for love, the other for wisdom, and in front as it were a bedroom, where love with its wisdom, or good with its truth, or, what is the same, where the will with its understanding come together in bed. In that palace all the secrets of conjugal love stand forth as in a model.”

[5] Hearing these things, and kindled with a desire to see the palace, I asked whether it is granted anyone to enter and view it, as it is a representative palace. He answered:

“To none but those in the third heaven, because to them every representative of love and wisdom becomes real. From them I heard what I have related to you. And this also, that love truly conjugal dwells in the highest region in the midst of mutual love, in the marriage chamber or apartment of the will, and also in the midst of the perceptions of wisdom, in the marriage chamber or apartment of the understanding; and that they come together in bed in the bedroom, which is at the front and in the east.”

I asked, “Why are there two marriage chambers?” He said, “The husband is in the chamber of the understanding, and the wife in the chamber of the will.”

[6] And I asked, “Since conjugal love dwells there, where then is conjugal cold?”

He answered, “That also is in the highest region, but only in the chamber of the understanding, the chamber of the will there being closed. For as often as it pleases, the understanding with its

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truths can ascend by a spiral stairway into the highest region, into its room. But if the will with the good of its love does not at the same time ascend into the companion room, this [room] is shut, and it becomes cold in the other room, and this is conjugal cold.

“The understanding, as long as there is such cold toward the wife, looks down from this highest region to the lowest, and also descends if fear doesn’t hold it back, that it may be warmed there with an illicit fire.”

Having said this, he wished to tell still more about conjugal love from the images of it in that palace, but he said:

“Enough for now. First find out whether these things are above the common understanding. If they are, why say more? But if they are not, more will be disclosed.”

Questions and Comments

1. Does the description of this palace, with the birds and the trees, help you picture your mind, its levels and its “rooms”?
2. What might we learn from the teaching that “love truly conjugal dwells in the highest region”? Surely not only celestial angels but also spiritual and natural angels have some conjugal love?
3. Conjugal cold fills the understanding if the will does not ascend along with the understanding. What does this mean, practically speaking?

CL 330. I once heard a pleasant discussion among men. It was about the female sex, whether any woman can love her man if she constantly loves her own beauty, that is, if she loves herself on account of her appearance. They agreed among themselves, first that women have a twofold beauty, one natural which is of the face and body, and another spiritual which is of love and manners. They also agreed that the two kinds of beauty are quite often divided in the natural world and that they are always united in the spiritual world, for in the spiritual world, beauty is the form of love and manners, and therefore after death it very often occurs that deformed women become beauties and beautiful women become deformed.

[2] While the men were discussing this, some wives came and said, “Let us join you, because with you, what you are discussing knowledge teaches you, while experience teaches it to us. And also, you know so little about the love of wives that it is scarcely anything. Do you know that it is the prudence of the wisdom of wives to conceal their love for their husbands in the inmost of their breast, or in the middle of their heart?”

The discussion began and *the first conclusion* by the men was that every woman wishes to appear beautiful in face and beautiful in manners because she is born an affection of love, and beauty is the form of this affection. Therefore, a woman who does not desire to be beautiful is not a woman who wishes to love and be loved, and so is not truly a woman.”

To this the wives said, “A woman’s beauty dwells in soft tenderness, and therefore in exquisite sensation. From this is the love of woman for man, and the love of man for woman. Perhaps you do not understand this?”

[3] *The second conclusion* of the men was that a woman before marriage wishes to be beautiful for men, but after marriage, if she is chaste, only for only one man and not for men.

To this the wives said, “After a husband has tasted the natural beauty of the wife, he no longer sees it, but sees her spiritual beauty and from this he returns her love; and he recalls her natural beauty, but under a different aspect.”

[4] *The third conclusion* from their discussion was that if a woman after marriage desires to appear beautiful in the same way as

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before, she loves men and not [one] man, because a woman loving herself for her own beauty continually wishes to have her beauty tasted. “And since her beauty no longer appears to [her] man, as you have said, she wishes to have it tasted by men before whom it does appear. It is clear that she has the love of the sex, and not the love of one of the sex.”

At this the wives were silent, but murmured these words, “What woman is so free from vanity as not to wish to appear beautiful to men also, at the same time as to her only one?”

Listening to this were some wives from heaven, who were beautiful because they were heavenly affections, and they confirmed the three conclusions of the men. But they added, “Let them love their own beauty and adornments for the sake of their husbands, and from them.”

CL 331. Those three wives, annoyed that the three conclusions of the men had been confirmed by wives from heaven, said to the men, “You have asked whether a woman who loves herself for her own beauty loves her husband. Therefore we in turn will consider whether a man who loves himself for his own intelligence can love his wife. Come and listen.”

And they formed this *first conclusion*: “No wife loves her man for his face, but for the intelligence in his occupation and in his manners. Know, therefore, that a wife unites herself with the intelligence of the man, and thus with the man. If then a man loves himself for his own intelligence, he draws it back from his wife to himself, which results in disunion and not union. Besides, to love his own intelligence is to be wise from himself, and this is to be insane; therefore, it is to love his own insanity.”

To this the men said, “Perhaps the wife unites herself with the man’s virility.” The wives laughed at this, saying, “A man does not lack virility as long as he loves the wife from intelligence, but he loses it if [he loves] from insanity. Intelligence is to love only the wife, and this love does not lack virility; but it is insanity not to love the wife, but the sex [in general], and this love does lack virility. [Surely] you comprehend this.”

[2] *The second conclusion* was: “We women are born into the love of the intelligence of men. If then men love their own proprial

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intelligence, the intelligence cannot be united with its genuine love, which is with the wife. And if the intelligence of the man is not united with its own genuine love, which is with the wife, his intelligence becomes insanity from pride, and conjugal love becomes cold. What woman then can unite her love with cold? And what man can unite the insanity of his pride with the love of intelligence?"

"But," said the men, "from what does a man have honor from his wife unless he magnifies his own intelligence?" But the wives answered, "From love; for love honors. Honor cannot be separated from love; but love can be from honor."

[3] Afterwards they came to this *third conclusion*: "You seem as if you love your wives, and do not see that you are loved by your wives, and thus that you love in return, and that your intelligence is the receiver [of their love]. If then you love your own intelligence within you, that becomes the receiver of your love; and the love of what is one's own, because it does not tolerate an equal, never becomes conjugal love, but so long as it prevails, it remains scortatory [*or licentious*]."

At this the men were silent, but murmured, "What is conjugal love?"

Certain husbands in heaven heard these things and thence confirmed the three conclusions of the wives.

Questions and Comments

1. It says it was a "pleasant discussion," which probably means the husbands and wives enjoyed teasing each other. Does the format of a discussion help the points they made stay with you?
2. One takeaway is that both men and women need to learn to direct their love away from themselves to their married partner in order to love marriage. This is a gradual process. But do the points here ring true?

CL 208. While I was in meditation upon the secrets of conjugal love stored up with wives, a golden rain appeared again as described above [no. 155], and I remembered that it fell upon a hall in the east where three conjugal loves dwelt, that is, three married pairs who tenderly loved each other. Seeing this, as if invited by the sweetness of meditation on that love, I hurried there. And as I approached, the rain from being golden became purple, then scarlet, and when I came near it was opaline like dew. I knocked, and the door was opened, and I said to the attendant, “Please tell the husbands that the one who came before with an angel is here again, asking to be permitted to enter for a conversation.” The attendant returned and signified the assent of the husbands, and I went in. The three husbands with their wives were together in an open court, and on being greeted, kindly returned the greeting. And I asked the wives whether the white dove appeared afterwards at the window [as before, described in no. 155].

They said, “It did this very day, and it spread its wings too, from which we anticipated your coming and your request for the disclosure of one more secret about conjugal love.”

I asked, “Why do you say one, and yet I have come here to learn many?”

[2] They replied, “They are secrets; and some so far transcend the wisdom of you men that the understanding of your thought cannot apprehend them. You exult over us on account of your wisdom, but we do not exult over you on account of ours; and yet ours excels yours, in that it enters into your inclinations and affections, and sees, perceives, and feels them. You know nothing at all about the inclinations and affections of your love, although it is from these and according to them that your understanding thinks, and from these and according to them, therefore, that you are wise. And yet wives know them in their husbands so well that they see them in their faces, hear them in the tones of the speech out of their mouths, they even feel them on their breasts, arms, and cheeks. But from the zeal of love for your happiness and at the same time for our own, we pretend not to know them. And yet we moderate them so prudently that we follow whatever is to the liking, pleasure, and will of our husbands, by allowing and enduring it, and redirecting only when possible, but never compelling.”

DAY FIVE: THE WISDOM OF WIVES

[3] I asked, “How is it that you have this wisdom?”

They answered, “It is inherent in us from creation, and thence from birth. Our husbands liken it to instinct; but we say it is of the Divine Providence, to the end that men may be made happy by their wives. We have heard from our husbands that the Lord wills that the male man shall act from freedom according to reason; and that therefore, since his freedom has regard to his inclinations and affections, the Lord Himself moderates his freedom from within, and by means of his wife from without; and that thus He forms the man with his wife into an angel of heaven. And besides, love changes its essence and becomes not that love if it is compelled.

“But we will speak of these things more openly. We are moved to this—that is, to prudence in moderating the inclinations and affections of our husbands, so discreet that they appear to themselves to act from freedom according to their own reason—because we have delight from their love, and love nothing more than that they shall have delight from our delights. But if these [feelings] become matters of indifference to them, they also begin to fade with us.”

[4] That said, one of the wives went into her bedroom and on returning she said, “My dove still flutters its wings, which is a sign that we may disclose more.” And they added, “We have observed various changes of the inclinations and affections of men. For example, they are cold toward their wives when husbands think vain thoughts against the Lord and the church. They are cold when in pride on account of their own intelligence. They are cold when they look upon other women from lust. They are cold when they are reminded by their wives of love, and many other [situations] besides. And they are cold with varied cold. We observe this from a shrinking back of the sense from their eyes, ears, and body at the presence of our senses.

“From these few examples you can see that we know better than men whether it is well or ill with them. If they are cold to their wives, it is ill with them, and if they are warm towards their wives, it is well with them. Wives are therefore continually turning over in their minds ways for their men to be warm to them and not cold, and they do this with a keenness of perception incomprehensible to men.”

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[5] After these words a sound was heard as if the dove were moaning; and then the wives said, “This is an indication to us that we are eager to divulge more secret arcana, but it is not permitted to tell them. Perhaps you will disclose to men the secrets you have heard?”

I answered, “I intend to do this. What harm can come from it?”

After conversing together about it the wives said, “Publish them if you wish. The power of persuasion that wives possess is not hidden from us. For they will say to their husbands, ‘That man is fooling you. They are fables. He is jesting from appearances and the usual nonsense of men. Do not believe him, believe us. We know that you are the lovers and we are the obedient ones.’ Publish them then if you wish. But husbands will not depend on your mouth, but on the mouths of their wives, which they kiss.”

Questions and Comments

1. The angel wives say that wives pretend not to know their husband’s affections and inclinations. Perhaps wives might like to discuss this secret. Is it sometimes portrayed in literature or movies?
2. Do some or all girls growing up need to be taught to hide their affections and perceptions, and to draw on feminine wisdom?
3. Is there a special sense in which the male man should act from freedom according to reason? CL 90:3 says, “The actions of his life... are directed by reason—or if they are not, he wants them to appear so. A masculine exercise of reason is also visible in his every virtue.”
4. What is the goal of a wife’s special perceptive wisdom?

DAY SIX: CONVERSATION WITH WIVES IN A ROSE GARDEN

CL 293. I was once looking through a window toward the east and saw seven women sitting on a bank of roses by a certain fountain, drinking water.... one of them by a nod invited me.... They said, “We are wives, and are having a conversation here about the delights of conjugal love; and from much confirmation we conclude that those delights are also the delights of wisdom”

CL 293:7. After this there appeared from afar off as it were a dove with a leaf of a tree in its mouth; but as it came near, in place of a dove was seen a little boy with a paper in his hand. And coming up to us he held it out to me, and said, “Read this to the virgins of the fountain.”

And I read these words: “Tell the inhabitants of the earth with whom you are that there is a love truly conjugal, the delights of which are myriads, scarcely any of which the world as yet knows, but it will know them when the church betroths herself to her Lord and marries.”

CL 294. After some days I again saw the seven wives in a rose garden, but not the same one as before.... [*Swedenborg reported that he had shared what he had learned from them with some wives on earth, but they said he was joking, about their continually thinking about their husband's love for them, and conjugal love being delightful.*]

[3] To this the wives sitting in the rose garden replied, “Friend, you do not know the wisdom and prudence of wives, because they entirely conceal it from men, and they conceal it to no other end than that they may be loved. For every man who is not spiritually rational and moral but only naturally so is cold towards his wife. Cold is latent with him in inmosts. This coldness the wise and prudent wife exquisitely and keenly observes, and to that extent conceals her conjugal love, and draws it into her bosom and hides it there so deeply that not the least of it appears in her face or voice or gesture. The reason is that in the degree that the love appears, the man's coldness toward marriage pours forth from the inmosts of his mind where it resides into its ultimate [expressions], and induces a total frigidity of the body, and a consequent urge towards separation from bed and bedroom.”

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[4] Then I asked, “Where does such cold come from, which you call conjugal cold [or coldness toward marriage]?”

They answered, “It is from their insanity in spiritual things; and every man who is insane in spiritual things is inmosty cold to his wife, and inmosty warm towards harlots. And as conjugal love and scortatory [or licentious] love are opposite to each other, it follows that conjugal love becomes cold when scortatory love is warm. And when cold rules within him, a man cannot bear from his wife any sense of love, and thus no breath of it. For this reason. the wife so wisely and prudently conceals it, and as far as she conceals it, by denying and refusing him, so far the man is revived and restored by the inflowing meretricious [or wanton] sphere....

[5] “Every chaste wife loves her husband, even if he is unchaste. But because only wisdom is receptive to that love, therefore the wife uses every effort to turn his insanity into wisdom, that is, that he may not lust after others besides herself. She does this in a thousand ways, taking the greatest care that none of them shall be discovered by the man, for she knows well that love cannot be compelled but is insinuated in freedom. Therefore, it is given to women to know every state of mind of their husbands from sight, from hearing, and from touch; but it is not given to husbands, on the other hand, to know any state of mind of their wives.

[6] “A chaste wife can look at her husband with a stern expression, speak to him in a sharp voice, and even be angry and quarrel, and yet in heart cherish a gentle and tender love for him....”

[7] After the seven wives had said these and many more things of the kind, their husbands came with clusters of grapes in their hands, some of which were of delicious flavor, and some of offensive taste; and the wives said, “Why have you also brought bad or wild grapes?”

The husbands replied, “Because we perceived in our souls, with which yours are united, that you were speaking with that man about love truly conjugal, that its delights are delights of wisdom; and also about scortatory love, that its delights are the pleasures of insanity....”

DAY SIX: CONVERSATION WITH WIVES IN A ROSE GARDEN

[8] After this the little boy came again with a paper in his hand and held it out to me, saying, “Read.” And I read this:

“Know that the delights of conjugal love ascend to the highest heaven, and on the way and in that heaven, they conjoin themselves with the delights of all heavenly loves, and so enter into their felicity, which endures to eternity. The reason is that the delights of that love are also the delights of wisdom. And know also that the pleasures of scortatory love descend even to the lowest hell, and on the way and in that hell, they conjoin themselves with the pleasures of all infernal loves, and thus enter into their unhappiness, which consists in the deprivation of all the enjoyments of heart. The reason is that the pleasures of that love are also the pleasures of insanity.”

After this the husbands departed with their wives and accompanied the little boy even to the way of his ascent into heaven. And they knew the society from which he was sent, that it was a society of the New Heaven, with which the New Church on the earth will be conjoined.

Questions and Comments

1. What lessons can a man draw from this story?
2. Why is denial of the Lord and marriage, and pride in one's own intelligence, called “insanity?”
3. Do all men start out with a dose of spiritual insanity? Can the Lord heal us, with the help of our wife if we are married?
4. How does the Church betroth herself to the Lord and marry [Him]? (See Revelation 19:7-8, 21:2, AR 881, CL 81:5, for example.)