

THE SPIRITUAL ORDER OF HUMAN LIFE

Spiritually, the order of life for man is to "love the neighbor as himself, and even more than himself" (AC 5850.2). What more succinct and powerful definition could we ask for? But this order does not come naturally to us.

The disordered condition of the human race is set forth most forcefully in the Writings. Order has been destroyed in man because natural things rule over celestial and spiritual things (AC 911, 1055e, 1902, 3167.2, 3702, 8552, 8553, etc.). On the other hand, the beautiful order in which man is capable of living is also presented (e.g. in AC 8988.3). Let us have no illusions about human goodness—in himself, man is worse than any animal. On the other hand, a cynical view of human nature is wrong, because man is capable of receiving great goodness from the Lord. With the Lord's help a person can become an angel, and this is what we are meant to become. This ideal should be always before us.

Regarded in himself man is much viler than the brutes. If left to himself he would rush into the ruin of himself and of all things; for he desires nothing else than what would be for the destruction of himself and of all. His order should be, that one should love another as himself. But now everyone loves himself more than others, and thus hates all others (AC 637.2, see also n. 987; HH 108, 296; SD (m) 4651).

This is a sobering statement of the human condition. It explains why there is so much war and disorder in the world, and why the human race, despite the almost universal longing for peace and order, can never seem to achieve this goal. The things we naturally desire lead only to destruction! Therefore, we must overcome this natural heredity and come into the true order of human life, which is "that one should love another as himself." It is the love of self that destroys order in a person's life (see AE 1144.3).

The love of self is diametrically contrary to the order into which man was created. Man is distinguished above the beasts by having a rational given him, to the end that every one may

*Fourth installment in the series, the first three published as follows: 88:4:559-576; 89:1:7-26; and 89:2:99-118.

will well and do well to others . . . This is the order into which man has been created, consequently it is love to God and love toward the neighbor that should be man's life, and by which he should be distinguished from brute animals. This is also the order of heaven, in which it was intended man should be while he lives in the world... (AC 2219.2; see also AC 2057, 3017, 3632).

Some spirits were told that "if they would be like the angels they must love the neighbor more than themselves" (HH 406). This may sound hopelessly altruistic to us, as it did to those spirits. But the Writings note that, while such a love may seem impossible, in the other life every love increases immeasurably, and that while this great love may be beyond most earthlings, they can grow into it in heaven if they lead lives of charity in this world. Moreover, we are told that the possibility of this love may be seen even in this world, as in a mother's love for her children, the love of husbands and wives, and even among friends when one places the other's safety above his own (see HH 406). It is also seen in love of country. "That one's country should be loved, not as one loves himself, but more than himself, is a law inscribed on the human heart" (TCR 414). An outstanding expression of this is Nathan Hale's famous statement: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Sin

I think the teaching of the Writings concerning order is much healthier and more practical than the old ideas of sin and punishment. Because the old concept of sin is viewed by many as only producing guilt and making God seem arbitrary, it has been largely discarded today. But "the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater," and even some psychiatrists are asking "whatever happened to sin?" There is such a thing as sin, or behavior which is not just antisocial or harmful to self, but actually offensive to God; and the feeling of having sinned and needing the Lord's forgiveness is essential.

But the Writings give a complete and rational understanding of *why* the Lord forbids certain things, even though people seem to incline naturally to these very things. Here is the definition of "sin" given in the Writings: "to act contrary to Divine order" (AC 5076). And Divine order, far from being arbitrary or against human nature, is the expression of, and means of communicating, Love itself and Humanity itself. Whereas the old teaching about sin

emphasized the negative side—guilt and punishment—the Writings present not just the evil which is to be shunned, but also the beautiful potential for humanity which is attainable by human beings. "Sin" is a word loaded with emotion, and sometimes that is exactly what is needed; "disorder" is a more objective and analytical term, and sometimes that is most appropriate and helpful.

Love Must Rule

The true order of human life is for good to be within, and truth, derived from it, without—"for good is in truth as the soul in its body" (AC 5355; see also HH 499, and AC 3563, 4302.3, 4585.2). When this order is established with a person, he comes into a whole new way of thinking. "When a man has become spiritual and celestial he then no longer thinks from truth, but from good" (AC 2571). Since good is interior to truth, it may also be described as all things in the external man (i.e. memory-knowledges) serving the internal man (see AC 1486). And we read further about this order:

It is the nature of memory-knowledge to desire nothing more than to introduce itself into celestial things and explore them; but this is contrary to order, for it thus does violence to celestial things. Order itself is that the celestial by means of the spiritual introduces itself into the rational, and thus into the memory-knowledge and adapts this to itself; and unless this order is observed, there cannot possibly be any wisdom (AC 1475).

The order is for the celestial to inflow into the spiritual and adapt it to itself; for the spiritual thus to inflow into the rational and adapt it to itself; and for the rational to thus inflow into the memory-knowledge and adapt it to itself. But when a man is being instructed in his earliest childhood, the order is indeed the same, but it appears otherwise; namely, that he advances from memory-knowledges to rational things, from these to spiritual things, and so at last to celestial things. The reason it so appears is that a way must thus be opened to celestial things, which are the inmost. All instruction is simply an opening of the way

Celestial and spiritual things are continually presenting themselves, and are also preparing and forming for themselves the vessels which are being opened... (AC 1495.2; see also 4939 and 911).

What does this mean, in brief, except that the Lord's love must rule a person, and, in fact, secretly does rule even through the beginning stages of regeneration?

At this day man is born into the love of self, which is the root of all disorder, and only through regeneration can this love be overcome. Before regeneration, man must be led by truth. However, within truths from the Lord there is love, which forms a new will in the understanding. These truths are not just inert, but affect a person. They influence him. This tug on a person's heart, as we might call it, is *conscience*. And since the will is the essential man, the formation of a new will is really the creation of a new man.

Love Seeks Truth

It is a love for what is good, flowing into the inmost soul of man, which seeks truth that can be conjoined with good in the rational mind. One of the ways in which this is represented in the Word is Esau's going out into the field to hunt, which represents the "endeavor of good... to procure truth..." (AC 3508; Gen. 27:5).

This love is what orders the memory-knowledges in the natural mind, chooses those that agree with it and raises them up into the service of the rational. Doctrinal things would never come into our memory and be retained there unless there were some affection for truth to introduce them and dispose them to order (see AC 3336, 3849.3; cf. 3086, 3316, 5376, 4543). If there were no affection, they would stick in the memory only a little while, "as a feather to a wall, which is blown away by the slightest breath of wind" (AC 4018). Love is also compared to a "sponge," and to an animal seeking the food proper to it, "for every love wishes to be nourished on what belongs to it, evil love by falsities and good love by truths" (HH 479.5).

In His mercy, though, the Lord has provided that even the selfish loves of the natural man may be the means for acquiring truths. Before regeneration, while in an external state, the truths of faith are acquired for selfish and worldly reasons, such as a desire to appear learned.

But when the internal man has been opened by means of regeneration, good from the Lord then flows in through it, and adopts and conjoins with itself the truths of faith which have entered through the external man, and according to this conjunction the order is inverted, that is, what had been in the

first place is put in the last. The Lord then draws to Himself all things in the man which belong to life, so that they may look upward. The man then regards as ends those things which belong to the Lord and to heaven; and the Lord Himself as the end for the sake of which are all things; and the former things, which are the delights of self-advantage and honors, he regards as means to this end (AC 9184; cf. 3701, 3702).

Love comes into the natural and orders the knowledges there, but the natural itself is regenerated with much more difficulty than the rational.

The Lord flows from the highest into the inmosts of man, and through these into his interiors, and through these again into his externals; thus He flows in mediately, and also immediately. And as the externals are further from the Divine, they are also on this account relatively without order, nor do they suffer themselves to be reduced to such order as do the internals—Therefore when man is being regenerated, he is regenerated as to the rational before he is regenerated as to the natural (n. 3493); and *the regeneration of the natural is both later and more difficult*, because in it are many things which are not in order and exposed to injuries from the body and the world (AC 3855; emphasis added).

Man becomes spiritual when order is established in the natural part of his being so that the spiritual can flow in. This begins with the acquisition of knowledge.

The vessels which receive good and truth from the rational are the very truths of the natural, which are nothing else than memory-knowledges, knowledges, and doctrinal things. Goods come from the order of the things which flow in, and from the order among themselves of the things which are there; hence comes the good of the natural (AC 3508).

The Lord flows first into the knowledges of truth we acquire, and as we live by them, sets these knowledges in order. They then become vessels receptive of Divine life, and living perception grows in place of mere information (see AC 3603.2). Perception comes with the marriage of good and truth.

He who is being regenerated is led by means of truth to the intent that he may come to good, that is, may know it, and

then will it, and finally do it. But when he is being led to good by means of truth, he first comes to the good in which the truths of faith have not yet been implanted; for truths cannot be implanted until he is in good. Before this they are indeed known, because they are in the memory, but at this time they are not in good, but are outside of good. Afterward when the man receives new life, which he first receives when he is in good, the truths of faith are implanted, and as it were enter upon a marriage with good in the internal man (AC 8754).

In this way the truth becomes living and fruitful with a man.

Chaos Precedes

In man as in the universe, chaos precedes cosmos. At first, knowledges are not in order in the mind, but are in a confused, chaotic mass. They might be compared to the pieces of a broken mirror, reflecting the Divine only imperfectly, if at all. Some light still comes through the rational mind, as if through chinks in a wall, otherwise the person could not reason or speak; but he is not truly rational. He does not see the Divine reflected in nature or in the letter of the Word. The "mirror" of the Word and nature has not yet been assembled in his mind. The image and likeness of God is not yet in him; his mind has yet to be created in that image. Moreover, good and truth are mingled with evil and falsity in him (see AC 3993).

This chaotic mass of unordered knowledge is signified by the "pottage" Jacob made.

The first state of the man who is being regenerated, or in whom truth is being conjoined with good, is that first of all in his natural man, or in its storehouse called the memory, there are amassed the doctrinal things of truth without any certain order. The doctrinal things at that time may be compared to some undigested and uncompounded mass, and to a kind of chaos. But this is to the end that they may be reduced to order, for whatever is to be reduced to order is at first in this state of confusion.

These doctrinal things are not reduced to order by themselves, but by the good which flows into them— When good first longs for and desires these doctrinal things, to the end that it may conjoin them with itself, it manifests itself under the appearance of the affection of truth (AC 3316.2).

In providence, a sense of disorder in a person's life can serve a good use. The Writings compare the chaos in a man to a storm which clears the air and is followed by calm (see AC 842.3). One who recognizes that his life is spiritually out of order may be led to examine himself for the reasons why this is the case, to re-order his priorities, and to turn to the Lord and place his trust in Him.

Everything we learn and experience can contribute to the final order of our lives, but this order cannot be seen in the order of the things experienced. It appears as if the elements of our lives are without order, yet in the Divine Providence we are being prepared for the day when all these things will be brought into order by the Lord. Out of the apparent chaos, a new life is formed. The Writings compare this to the building of a house—first materials are gathered, in no particular order, but all the time the builder has a plan in mind.

The Lord's providence is in the veriest singulars of all things, but not according to such an order as man proposes to himself, because things to come are both foreseen and provided;... the case is like that of a person building a palace, who first collects materials of every kind, and lays them together in heaps, where they lie without order, while the kind of palace to be formed from them exists solely in the understanding of the architect The bricks, mortar, sand, stones ... and the like, are brought together, not in that order in which the house is to be constructed, but at a pleasure. The Lord alone knows what kind of a house may be built with these materials. All the things which are from the Lord are most essential; but they do not follow in order from necessity, but in a manner that is applicable to the freedom of man (AC 6487; cf AC 1488).

Temptation Softens

It is through temptations that we are prepared for the Lord to bring order to our lives. In this, of course, we are following the pattern set by the Lord Himself in the glorification of His Human. As the Lord humbled Himself before the Divine, so must we. Through temptations we are brought into a humble state, and thus made receptive of Divine love.

Good cannot be conjoined with truth in the natural man without combats, or temptations. . . . Man is nothing but an organ, or vessel, which receives life from the Lord, for man

does not live from himself. . . . The life which inflows with man from the Lord is from His Divine love. This love, or the life thence derived, inflows and applies itself to the vessels which are in man's rational, and . . . in his natural. In consequence of the hereditary evil into which man is born, and the actual evil which he acquires, *these vessels are in a contrary position within him relative to the inflowing life*, yet insofar as the life which flows in can dispose the vessels to receive it, it does so dispose them. These vessels in the rational man, and in the natural, are what are called truths Good itself, which has life from the Lord, or which is life, is that which flows in and disposes (AC 3318; emphasis added).

In our hereditary condition, these vessels are "obstinantly resistant" and harden themselves against the Lord's inflowing life. It is only by means of temptations that they are softened, so that the Lord's life may flow in and order the human with us.

. . . for temptations remove all that is of the love of self and of contempt for others in comparison with self, consequently all that is of self-glory, and also of hatred and revenge on this account. When therefore the vessels have been somewhat tempered and subdued by temptations, they begin to become yielding to, and compliant with, the life of the Lord's love, which continually flows in with man . . . and the man is afterwards gifted with another nature, being made mild, humble, simple, and contrite in heart (AC 3318.3-4).

It is common to speak of a person "mellowing" as he matures. He becomes less harsh, less certain of his own rightness and strength, less judgmental of others; in short, softened. Temptations, which reveal to us our frailty and imperfection, have this softening effect.

When man has passed through temptations he is as to his internal man in heaven, while by means of temptations there is a conjunction of heaven and the world effected in man; and then the Lord in him rules his world from heaven according to order. The contrary takes place if man remains natural; he is then eager to rule heaven from the world (TCR 598).

In the conflicts or temptations of men the Lord works a particular redemption; as He wrought total redemption when in the world. By conflicts and temptations in the world the Lord glorified His Human, that is, made it Divine; in like

manner now with man individually, when he is in temptations, the Lord fights for him, conquers the evil spirits who are infesting him, and after temptation glorifies him, that is, renders him spiritual. After his universal redemption the Lord reduced to order all things in heaven and in hell; with man after temptation He does in like manner, that is, He reduces to order all the things of heaven and the world that are in him (TCR 599).

Since temptation is part of the process of regeneration, and since temptation involves feelings of unworthiness and despair, one who is regenerating may nevertheless feel that he is not, perhaps even feel that he is hopeless. Though he cannot know it, his very feeling of being unregenerate is part of the process of becoming regenerate.

The influx of good from the Lord with man is continuous; but there are evils both actual and hereditary that hinder and obstruct the reception of it; and therefore when these are removed, a new will comes into existence. This is very evident in the case of those who are in misfortune, misery, and illness; for as in these the loves of self and of the world, from which come all evils, are removed, the man thinks well about God and the neighbor, and also wishes his neighbor well. It is similar in temptations, which are spiritual pains, and hence inward miseries and despairings: by these chiefly are evils removed, and after they have been removed, heavenly good flows in from the Lord, whereby a new will is formed in the natural... (AC 5353).

In this same section, the Arcana goes on to list several other ways, in addition to removing the loves of self and the world, in which temptations are the chief means by which the multiplication of truth from good is effected. "Temptations also give quality to the perception of good and truth, by means of the opposite things which evil spirits then infuse" (AC 5356). We see the true nature of something by contrast with its opposite. In temptations, when we become aware of the evil and false things in ourselves, we can gain a new perception and appreciation of what is good and true. "Temptations also confirm goods and truths, for the man then fights against evils and falsities, and by conquering comes into a stronger affirmative." We can see the truth of this, also. One who has met and fought against some evil is much more confirmed in the opposite good than if that good had never been threatened with him.

The Word Creates Order

All creation begins with the Word. "Divine order itself is Divine truth from Divine good" (AC 5076). "To live according to order is to live according to Gods commandments" (TCR 96). The Lord has given His Word for the sake of our regeneration, or we could say to create a cosmos out of the chaos in which we are born. "Divine order is nothing but the perpetual precept of God. Therefore, to live according to the precepts of God... is to live according to Divine order and in Divine order" (AC 2634).

The laws of order enjoined upon man are, that he should acquire for himself truths from the Word, and reflect upon them naturally, and as far as he can, rationally, and thus acquire for himself a natural faith. The laws of order on the part of God then are, that He will draw near and fill these truths with His Divine light, and thus fill the mans natural faith (which is mere knowledge and persuasion) with a Divine essence. In this and no other way can faith become saving (TCR 73.2).

The order is immutable... so far as man conjoins himself to God by a life in accordance with the laws of order, which are God's commandments, does God conjoin Himself to man, and change man from natural to spiritual (TCR 110.4).

Man is a spiritual being, created to be an image and likeness of God. But man is born into the loves of self and the world. By heredity, he is turned away from the Lord. His body is in the human form, but his mind essentially is not. He regards as good and true whatever favors his selfish and worldly loves. Therefore, he must be brought into the order of his life. And this re-creation or regeneration of man begins in his rational mind, the inmost of man's natural part, which must be formed by means of knowledges coming in by an external way. *Thus man begins in an inverted order, led not by immediate influx, but by knowledges learned from without through the senses.* It is different with animals. They are born in the order of their lives, and receive immediate influx from the spiritual world (see AC 1902, 4612, cf. 9184; emphasis added).

The man who is being regenerated and becoming spiritual is first led to good by means of truth; for man does not know what spiritual good. . . is, except through truth or through doctrine

drawn from the Word. In this way he is initiated into good. Afterward, when he has been initiated, he no longer is led to good through truth, but to truth through good, for he then not only sees from good the truths which he knew before, but also from good brings forth new truths which he did not and could not know before; for good is attended with a longing for truths, because with these it is, as it were, nourished, it being perfected by them. These new truths differ greatly from the truths which he had previously known; for those which he then knew had but little life, while those which he now acquires have life from good (AC 5804).

The Word is the Lord because it reveals His Divine truth, His Divine Mind; in this sense the Word is a Man and may be said to be in the human form. And by means of the Word this form is impressed upon our minds, and we become an image of God. In the interior memory, the Book of Life, everything we experience is engraved. If the *Word* is engraved here, the mind becomes an image of the Lord.

I think this is how the Word *creates* a man, or forms the human in him. First the rational is formed (the human begins in the inmost of the rational), and what is the rational but the *ordering* faculty of the mind? Then, by means of this faculty, the rest of life is brought into order. I would compare this to the way the sound of a musician is impressed upon a tape or phonograph record; then, when the record is played, the music is heard again. The record can make no music, but the form of the music is impressed upon it; and so, because of the order which has been impressed upon that disk, music can come from it. Similarly, the Lord, by means of His Word, engraves the truth in a person's mind and forms a true rational. A sphere of good (the music) can then go forth from that person, although its origin is no more in him than music originates on a phonograph disk. This illustration shows again why truth is essential—it forms an order receptive of good in the mind of one who makes the truth a matter of life.

It is according to order that (the regeneration of the natural in man) should be accomplished through truth, that is, through the knowledges of good and truth, for without these the natural cannot be enlightened by the rational, or through the rational; thus it cannot be regenerated, knowledges being the vessels recipient of the good and truth flowing in from the rational; and according to the quality and quantity which the vessels receive, such is the enlightenment.

The vessels which receive good and truth from the rational are the very truths of the natural, which are nothing else than memory-knowledges, knowledges, and doctrinal things. Goods come from the order of the things which flow in, and from the order among themselves of the things which are there; hence comes the good of the natural (AC 3508).

The Role of Spirits

As we have noted, animals are under general influx from the Lord. Man, in addition to this general or direct influx, also receives mediate or particular influx through spirits, and it is only by means of this mediate influx through spirits that he can be brought back into order (see HH 296-297. Many references to influx may be found in the footnotes at n. 296-297 and at the end of the book, after n. 603).

Men are not in their order... and therefore they receive particular influx; that is, there are with them angels and spirits through whom the influx comes. And unless these were with men, they would rush into every wickedness and would plunge in a moment into the deepest hell. Through these spirits and angels man is kept under the auspices and guidance of the Lord.

The more man acts contrary to order, the greater force is required to reform him; consequently he needs more spirits, though they who are led more according to order, require fewer spirits with themselves (SD 2839).

Spirits do not introduce thoughts, but only affections—for good or evil, depending upon the kind of spirit (see HH 298). An affection for self-advantage and honor, though not good in itself, can be a *means* to good, provided these things are regarded only as such by the regenerating person. The end in view determines the quality of the means. Matters of self-advantage and honor are a curse for one in an inverted order of life (that is, who loves and seeks to serve himself above all), but a blessing for one who "seeks first the kingdom of God," as the Lord says in Matthew 6.33 (AC 9184).

An affection which is not good in itself and yet can serve a good end is called in the Writings "mediate good." Mediate goods, such as delight in being praised, for example, can serve to introduce a person into genuine good, or desire to serve the Lord and the neighbor (see AC 4063). These mediate goods by which we are led to genuine good

are really societies of spirits or angels with which we are associated, although we are unaware of them (see AC 4067).

... through [angels and spirits] the Lord acts mediately and directs men; nevertheless, it is not the angels who direct, but the Lord through them Some things also come from the angels themselves who are with man, but all the goods and truth which become . . . of the new life with man, come from the Lord alone, and also through the angels from Him. . . . The things which come from the angels themselves are such as accommodate themselves to the affection of the man, and in themselves are not goods, but still serve for introducing the goods and truths which are from the Lord (AC 8728).

... in proportion as [the regenerating person] suffers himself to be led to more interior and more perfect good, in the same proportion he is brought to more interior and perfect angelic societies. The changes of his state are nothing else than changes of societies (AC 4067.3).

As regeneration progresses, these associations change, but the change is not necessarily smooth and easy. In fact, the societies of spirits and angels who serve to inspire a mediate good in a person on earth are reluctant to give up their influence over him. They become indignant when the person withdraws from them. This is pictured in the way Laban behaved toward Jacob when Jacob proposed to leave him. It is interesting to note that even some angels (those whose use is to inspire a mediate good) are occasionally guilty of this feeling, which in itself is evil (see AC 4077).

We associate such mediate goods as a love of being praised especially with children, and the use of it in motivating them to do good is obvious, but everyone is affected by such things to a lesser or greater degree. As true understanding and spiritual rationality grow, the regenerating person comes more and more into genuine good. The missing ingredient in mediate good is genuine truth. Good becomes genuine when truths are implanted in it (see AC 3986.3). Angels are especially with us in our thoughts from the Word (see AC 2953).

Even evil spirits are employed by the Lord to serve a use in man's regeneration. "They are adjoined [to the regenerating man] for the purpose of introducing opposing ideas and feelings which are to be rejected, in order that the man may be better confirmed in truths and goods..." (AC 4110.2). Then they are separated. We could com-

pare this with vaccination, in which a small amount of a virus is introduced into the body and causes the production of antibodies which will prevent the disease from forming.

Spiritual Freedom

The order of life for man is to be free. But I think it is difficult for us fully to appreciate how essential freedom is. When we see the pain caused by disorder in our world, it is hard to understand why the Lord permits it. The teachings of the New Church provide as full and rational an explanation as possible, but in regard to specific disasters our minds rebel and it seems there must be some way in which the Lord could prevent such suffering. But the answer is... He cannot. He cannot act contrary to His own order, for this would be to act against Himself, which is an impossibility (see DP 331).

Any one of us might willingly forsake our freedom on occasion, if by so doing some hardship could be prevented; but freedom is an inherent component of human nature, and this we cannot forsake. The one choice we cannot make is to choose to abandon our free will. We cannot freely choose not to be free—aside from everything else, that is an obvious self-contradiction. Freedom is more than just something the Lord has given man; it is the very essence of what a human being *is* (see DP 71 ff., 96).

Many of the world's problems and much individual pain could be avoided if human freedom could be violated by the Lord, but it cannot be. Any suspension of it, or curtailing of the effects of the free choices people make, would make human freedom unreal; and while this might prevent a particular crime or disaster from taking place, the ultimate effect would be the destruction of humanity. Even the prevention of natural disasters by the Lord would, over time, destroy human free will and initiative. We would become as puppets, or domestic animals, never needing to think and act for ourselves.

Ironically, one of the things which must be permitted for the sake of preserving human freedom is the violation of peoples freedom—at least on the natural plane—by other men. This raises many questions, but without going into a whole discussion of Divine Providence, we would simply note here that an essential fact which must always be remembered is that life in this world is not all there is, and that our *eternal* well-being is the supreme goal of the Lord's providence. Without that belief, life in this world really would seem absurd, as some modern philosophers have maintained.

There is an order into which man was created, namely, that blessing or curse depends for him upon his freedom of choice in spiritual things; for it is impossible to create a man without freedom of choice, nor even a beast, a bird, or a fish. But beasts have only a natural freedom of choice, while man has... also spiritual freedom of choice (TCR 502e).

The Lord could convince anyone to believe in Him in a moment, but this would violate man's freedom of choice in spiritual things, which is absolutely essential since conjunction with the Lord is reciprocal (see TCR 500). For man to become an image and likeness of God, he must freely choose what is good and true. His will must be healed.

It would have been possible for the Lord to heal the understanding in every man, and thus cause him to think what is good and not what is evil, and this by fears of various kinds, by miracles, by conversations with the dead, and by visions and dreams. But to heal the understanding alone is to heal man only from without It is the will itself that must be healed, not by means of an influx into it of the understanding, for that is not possible, but by means of instruction, and exhortation by the understanding (DP 282).

Only faith and charity that are implanted in freedom endure (see AC 8700.3, 1937e, 9588). But it is not contrary to freedom for a person to compel himself to do what is good and speak what is true (see AC 1937, 1947).

While man is being regenerated, he, from the freedom with which he is gifted by the Lord, exercises self-compulsion, and humbles and even afflicts his rational, in order that it may submit itself, and thereby he receives a heavenly Own, which is afterwards gradually perfected by the Lord, and is made more and more free, so that it becomes the affection of good and thence of truth, and has delight, and in both the freedom and the delight there is happiness like that of angels (AC 1947).

All freedom is of love (see DP 73.2). To be able to do what you will to do is to be free. But as the nature of love varies, so there are different kinds of freedom; there is heavenly freedom and infernal freedom. Heavenly freedom is to be led by the Lord; infernal freedom is to be led by self, and is really slavery (see AC 2884, 8866.2, 9589-90, 10409; DP 44).

The importance of truth in attaining freedom is clear from the Lord's statement: "If you abide in My word... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). What does this mean? Obviously a person has to have information in order to make a choice, but more than this is the fact that truth is the form of love. Truth is love appearing to the mind and taking on a form there. The quality of the truth in a person's mind affects the quality of the love which motivates him (see LJ 38). Truth disciplines and directs and orders the affections flowing from a person's will. Therefore, since all freedom is of love, the quality of truth in a person determines the quality of the freedom he is in.

Knowing the truth will not in itself transform a person's will from evil to good, and thus make him genuinely free; but if the truth is sincerely accepted and lived—if he "abides" in it—it will be like a seed planted in good ground, which will grow and give fruit. And this truth—truth implanted in the will, truth which has become a matter of love—will indeed "make you free." It makes for heavenly freedom, which comes from heavenly love.

But think of what this means! One who is in this state has submitted his will to the Lord's. He wills what the Lord wills. The love in his heart—though with him it is finite, of course—is in harmony with the Lord's Divine love. His freedom, then, is one with Freedom Itself. If one wants only what the Lord wants, how can he ever be frustrated? He cannot be, except insofar as his understanding is limited, and insofar as the Lord Himself is "frustrated." By this I mean that, although in a larger sense the Lord is never restricted or disappointed or fails to attain His ends, still He does grieve when His love is not received. This was represented by His weeping over Jerusalem, and at the tomb of Lazarus. I am reminded, too, of Swedenborg's sadness because the wonderful new knowledges revealed through him were on earth "esteemed as of no value" (CL 533). So even one whose heart is filled with heavenly love will feel a certain sorrow when this love is frustrated, and I suppose in that sense is not entirely free. But still, such freedom as I'm speaking about here is almost beyond imagination!

(To be concluded)