

## Reflection, Perception and Enlightenment

### REFLECTION

#### Introduction

In his *Spiritual Diary* (Vol. 1, nos. 733-740) Swedenborg presents some comments on reflection that serve as a useful introduction to the topic. He presents reflection ("attending" in modern parlance) as a necessary precursor to sense perception, in much the same way as modern psychology does; and using the word reflection to mean that higher process of cogitation upon things already learned, he gives to the "doctrine of reflection" the exalted status of containing "more *arcana*... than any other whatever" (SD 733). This claim may seem rather exaggerated, for one would suppose that the doctrine of the Lord would deserve highest ranking. However, since it is through reflection (in Swedenborg's thought) that a man can exercise freedom of choice in spiritual matters—and this is what makes him a man—then the doctrine of reflection can be seen to deserve first place.

Quoting from *Spiritual Diary* 733:

I have now been in conversation with spirits and angels respecting reflection, to which I do not know whether men sufficiently attend; but if they do attend to it, they will find more *arcana* in the doctrine of reflection than in any other whatever. What reflection performs may be sufficiently evident to every one, when he considers that he perceives no sense of the body or of any of its parts, nor does he know that he has a sensation, except he reflect on that part of his body; it is then that he [first] perceives heat, cold, and pressure, yea, feels that by which he was before affected.

Here Swedenborg is using reflection to mean "to give attention to" or, in Munn's terms<sup>15</sup> to place oneself in a "preperceptive attitude" as

\*Parts I & II published in 1984, 87:1:253-262 and 87:4:380-390.

<sup>15</sup> Norman L. Munn, *Psychology*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 5th ed., 1966, p. 489.

a necessary forerunner to sensation. Then, more significantly, **we** read numbers 737 and 739 as follows:

It may also be stated that the doctrine of faith effects nothing whatever with man, except the Lord gives him to reflect. Wherefore men learn what is true and good from the Lord's Word, in order that they may thereby reflect upon themselves, [and judge] whether they are such [as the Word teaches they ought to be]. This reflection is awakened in them at certain times, especially in times of trouble. *Wherefore to know truths is of the greatest moment; [for] without the knowledges of truth there can be no reflection, and consequently no reformation* (737; emphasis added).

The doctrine of reflections is one entirely [new] without which no one can know what the interior life is, and not even what the life of the body is; yea, without reflection from the knowledge of truths no one can be reformed. Wherefore to the men of this earth, because they live in a perverse state, written truths are delivered by the Lord, whence they may derive, as from a fountain, the knowledges of truth, from which they can reflect upon themselves, or, more properly, from which, inscribed on their memory, the Lord can cause them to reflect upon their own falsities and other things of the like sort. Wherefore, without the knowledge [of truths] there can be no reformation (739).

There is contained here the essence of the ideas surrounding reflection that appear in the later theological works: the idea that men can reflect only from the source of all power, the Lord; and that truths and goods from the Word enable man to contemplate his own being, and thereby pass judgment on it and thus be led from a perverse to a truly human state.

And by way of further corroboration of the importance of reflection, and to indicate its source, we turn to *Arcana Coelestia* 977, where as an introduction to a treatment of the internal sense of Genesis, chapter IX, Swedenborg contrasts the character of the unregenerate and regenerate man, and discusses how it is that in the former the external man rules, while in the latter the internal does.

... with the unregenerate man there is only corporeal and worldly life, and his ability to think and understand what is good and true is from the Lord's life through the remains before spoken of, and it is from this that he has the faculty of

reflecting. With the regenerate the internal man has the dominion, the external being obedient and submissive; but with the unregenerate the external man rules, the internal being quiescent, as if it had no existence. The regenerate man knows, or has a faculty of knowing on reflection, what the internal man is, and what the external; but of these the unregenerate man is altogether ignorant, nor can he know them even if he reflects, since he is unacquainted with the good and truth of faith originating in charity. Hence may be seen what is the quality of the regenerate, and what of the unregenerate man, and that they differ from each other like summer and winter, and light and darkness; wherefore the regenerate is a living, but the unregenerate a dead man.

Here, the source of the ability to reflect is clearly identified, namely, the "remains" referred to above.<sup>16</sup>

### Definition

Webster defines reflection as "a fixing of the thoughts on something." This definition can be read to include both meanings applied to the term by Swedenborg—the attention necessary as a precursor to sensation, and the contemplation of oneself from knowledges from the Word, or indeed any kind of ruminatory thought about something from things known.

The definitions given in the Writings are all in accord with these, although the term becomes amplified as it is employed in a variety of contexts. We shall first present some basic definitions of the term; then discuss their ramifications.

In *Arcana Coelestia* 3661, reflection is defined as "the mental view of a thing in regard to its nature and quality, and from this comes perception." Note here that reflection precedes perception, not merely sense perception (the modern usage of the word perception) but a more interior sensation discussed below. And in *Arcana Coelestia* 5684 we read that "to reflect is to concentrate the intellectual sight, and to observe whether a thing is so, and then that it is so." This definition involves three stages in the process of reflection, each of which deserves commentary.

The expression "to concentrate the intellectual sight" involves the idea of "paying attention"—a first step, as attending is to sense

<sup>16</sup> See "New Church Epistemology" Part II, 87:4:287.

perception. But it is the "intellectual sight" that is to do this. We ask therefore, what is meant by this term? The intelligence here spoken of does not connote what, for example, Munns use of the word does when he says that "intelligence derives from the ability to learn and to utilize what has been learned in adjusting to new situations and solving new problems,"<sup>17</sup> for, quite clearly, this quality—important as it is—does not involve observing "whether a thing is so." The intellectual sight addressed here is an act of seeing mental objects (truths and falsities) in the light of heaven, as physical objects are seen in the light of the physical sun. And by intelligence here is meant what is described in *Arcana Coelestia* 3969:3: "But these arcana [discussed above in reference to Rachel in Genesis XXX] cannot be seen except by those who are in the charity of faith [who live from the truth of the Word]; for these are as to their interiors in the light of the heaven, *in which light there is also intelligence*. But they cannot be seen by those who are only in the light of the world, *for in this light there is not intelligence*, except insofar as the light of heaven is within it. To the angels who are in the light of heaven, these are among the most common things" (emphasis added). Reflection, then, as here defined refers to the process whereby men arrive at the veracity or otherwise of an idea by ruminating in the light of heaven, and thereby reaching the third stage in the process—concluding "that it is so" if indeed this is their conclusion.

#### Reflection and Stages of Mental Development

Reflection is a mental process that belongs to the mature state of development, as experience testifies, and as is spelled out clearly in *Arcana Coelestia* 2280.

[2] Goods of three kinds are signified by remains, namely, the goods of infancy, the goods of ignorance, and the goods of intelligence. The goods of infancy are those which are insinuated into man from his very birth up to the age in which he is beginning to be instructed and to know something. The goods of ignorance are what are insinuated when he is being instructed and is beginning to know something. The goods of intelligence are what are insinuated when he is able to reflect upon what is good and what is true. The good of infancy exists

<sup>17</sup> Munn, *loc. cit.*, p. 113.

from the man's infancy up to the tenth year of his age; the good of ignorance, from this age up to his twentieth year. *From this year the man begins to become rational, and to have the faculty of reflecting upon good and truth, and to procure for himself the good of intelligence.* [3] The good of ignorance is that which is signified by "twenty" because those who are in the good of ignorance do not come into any temptation; *for no one is tempted before he is able to reflect*, and in his own way to perceive the nature of good and truth. Those who have received goods by means of temptations have been treated of in the two immediately preceding verses; those who have not been in temptations, and yet have good, are now treated of in this verse (emphasis added).

Note the interrelationship between becoming rational, reflecting, and becoming intelligent; each term used in the special Swedenborgian sense discussed above.

### **Reflection, Perception, and Thought**

The first definition of reflection given above—that it is the "mental view of a thing"—also presents it as a prelude to perception, that "from this comes perception." Elsewhere, however, the order is reversed, as for example in *Arcana Coelestia* 2770 where we read "all thought and the reflection therefrom comes from perception." Without expanding this comment to a full definition of perception, which is the topic of our next section, we find resolution of the conflict in *Arcana Coelestia* 5508 wherein is a statement of principle couched in reference to reflection. The principle is that since the duality of interior and exterior is a fact of life, then depending on one's point of view things may seem contradictory, depending on whether our point of view is from the external appearance or from the inner reality. Thus the external appearance is that perception of the meaning of a given statement follows our reflection upon it, whereas the reality is that all perception being from the Lord is interiorly present prior to the exercise of reflection, which brings the inner reality into conscious external view. Hence we read in *Arcana Coelestia* 5508 that "all the reflection and thence thought that the lower or exterior has, comes from the higher or interior, *although it appears to come from the lower or exterior...*" (emphasis added).

The link between reflection and perception is further amplified in *Arcana Coelestia* 2862, which in full is as follows:

*And it was told Abraham, saying.* That this signifies the Lord's

perception, is evident from the signification of "telling" as being to think and reflect; and of "saying," as being to perceive—explained often before. The Lords reflecting and perceiving, treated of in the internal sense of the Word, cannot be expressed in the historical form in any other way than by "telling and saying." In itself also reflection and perception is an internal telling and saying.

We ask, how do the external acts of telling and saying represent the mental processes of reflecting and perceiving? If we think of saying as stating something "with assurance" (Webster) then it seems appropriate to associate "perception" with it, as when we perceive something—either in the limited psychological sense of to sense, or the more expanded sense of grasping an idea—there is no doubt about it; it is an assured thing. Whereas in "telling" there is less commitment to an idea; we are simply told something upon which we may reflect; then when assurance of its veracity comes, we say we perceive it to be so.

### **The Foundations of Reflecting**

Not much reflection is required to recognize that the process itself draws on whatever is available in the exterior memory. This is portrayed symbolically in Genesis 42:27 in the Joseph series prior to Joseph's disclosure of his identity to his brothers, one of whom "opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn." Concerning this we read in *Arcana Coelestia* 5495 that:

... for provender is the food with which asses are fed, consisting of straw and chaff, and hence it denotes all reflection upon scientifics, for these are what reflections chiefly feed on (that an "ass" denotes scientifics may be seen just above, n. 5492); and from the signification of an "inn," as being the exterior natural.

### **Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, and to place reflection in the context of the mind's operations as a whole, we shall quote from *Divine Love and Wisdom* 363, a passage headed by "Love and Wisdom, and will and understanding therefrom, make the very life of man."

*Love and wisdom, and will and understanding therefrom, make the very life of man. Scarcely any one knows what life is. When one*

thinks about life, it seems as if it were a fleeting something, of which no distinct idea is possible. It so seems because it is not known that God alone is life, and that His life is Divine Love and Divine Wisdom. From this it is evident that in man life is nothing else than love and wisdom, and that there is life in man in the degree in which he receives these. . . . That love and wisdom from the Lord is life can be seen also from this, that man grows torpid as love recedes from him, and stupid as wisdom recedes from him, and that were they to recede altogether he would become extinct. There are many things pertaining to love which have received other names because they are derivatives, such as affections, desires, appetites, and their pleasures and enjoyments; and there are many things pertaining to wisdom, such as perception, reflection, recollection, thought, intention to an end; and there are many pertaining to both love and wisdom, such as consent, conclusion, and determination to action; besides others. All of these, in fact, pertain to both, but they are designated from the more prominent and nearer of the two. From these two are derived ultimately sensations, those of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, with their enjoyments and pleasures.

Thus, while reflection is placed logically within the cognitive realm, there is the association of it with the affective, and this in accord with the idea that permeates the whole Word, namely, that things of love and wisdom are mutually dependent upon one another for their existence.

## PERCEPTION

### Introduction

Insofar as epistemology involves a quest for certainty in the acquisition of knowledge, this implies that we seek knowledge that has a high degree of verisimilitude. This aspect of the subject is at the core of the topics to be addressed in Part III. We raise that matter here, however, because the mental process we call perception involves us immediately in the question of the discrimination between the antithetical pairs of good and evil, truth and falsity, for a key definition of it is given in *Arcana Coelestia* 104 in these terms: "It [perception] is a certain internal sensation, from the Lord alone, as to whether a thing is true and good . . . ." Now although we shall be qualifying this definition below, we note now that its description as "internal sensation" matches the psychological meaning of the term

as sense perception; and indeed, the sense of smell owes its existence to the inner sensation of perception to which it corresponds.

In the Writings, although the term perception (*perceptio*) is employed in reference to a variety of mental circumstances or operations, they are consistent in their description of true perception in the terms given above. But to avoid confusion, we shall present a selection of definitive statements, commenting on each, and thereby presenting a variety of aspects of the topic that go beyond definition.

### Definition

The definition given above is as follows in full:

At this day it is unknown what Perception is. It is a certain internal sensation, from the Lord alone, as to whether a thing is true and good; and it was very well known to the Most Ancient Church. This perception is so perfect with the angels, that by it they are aware *and have knowledge* of what is true and good; of what is from the Lord, and what from themselves; and also of the quality of any one who comes to them, merely from his approach, and from a single one of his ideas. The spiritual man has no perception, but has conscience. A dead man has not even conscience; and very many do not know what conscience is, and still less what perception is (AC 104).

In reflecting on this and other definitions, we presume that there must be preexistent (with a man of the Most Ancient Church or with men in heaven) something upon which the "light of heaven" may fall. By analogy, extraterrestrial space (interplanetary or interstellar) appears black at times as though devoid of light; only by the presence in that space of something that interacts with that radiation—by reflection, refraction, electron excitation, etc.—is its presence at all known. Likewise, with men of the Most Ancient Church there had to be the physical sensation of objects in this world as a basis for perception, while with spiritual men knowledges from the Word served as the means for the interception of the "light of heaven." The point is, that although *Arcana Coelestia* 104 may be read to suggest that knowledge is something actually acquired by the process of perception ("they [angels] are aware *and have knowledge* of what is true and good"—emphasis added) we are supposing that perception concerns the discernment of the veri- and bonisimilitude of something that is already present in the mind. In other words, perception does not come to a mind *in vacuo*.

*Arcana Coelestia* 536 introduces the reader into a series (nos. 537-546) headed "Continuation Concerning Heaven and Heavenly joy." This series is given "that there may be among men some conception of what perception is." Thus we read:

As in the foregoing pages much has been said about the perception possessed by the churches that existed before the flood, and as at this day perception is a thing utterly unknown, so much so that some may imagine it to be a kind of continuous revelation, or to be something implanted in men; others that it is merely imaginary, and others other things; and as perception is the very Celestial itself given by the Lord to those who are in the faith of love, and as there is perception in the universal heaven of endless variety; therefore in order that there may be among men some conception of what perception is, of the Lord's Divine mercy I may in the following pages describe the principal kinds of perception that exist in the Heavens (AC 536).

What follows (nos. 537 *et seq.*) does not consist, as one might expect, of a classification of "kinds of perception" but rather includes descriptions of experiences Swedenborg had in the spiritual world from which the reader may gain an idea as to the general nature of "heavenly joy" and "heavenly happiness and bliss" which emanates from spiritual and celestial good; thus the spiritual equivalent of the conscious awareness of delight of an interior nature that men on earth experience when, for example, they selflessly attend to someone else's needs, or when they are relishing the beauty of, say, the Brahms Second Piano Concerto.

While the series referred to above focuses on the perception of good in heaven, the following number (AC 5097) adds to the idea of perception of good, that of truth, imaged as the light of heaven that accompanies its warmth.

The variations of the light of heaven are not variations like those of the light of the world every day and every year, but are variations of intelligence and love; for the light of heaven is nothing else than Divine intelligence from the Lord, which is bright before the eyes; and the heat of this light is the Lord's Divine love, which is warm to the sense. It is this light which gives man understanding, and this heat which gives him vital warmth and a will of good. Morning in heaven is a state of enlightenment as to those things which are of good and truth,

which state exists when it is acknowledged, and still more when it is perceived, that good is good and that truth is truth. Perception is internal revelation; hence by the "morning" is signified what is revealed; and because then that becomes clear which before was obscure, by "morning" is also signified what is clear.

Returning to earth and to perception as experienced by men there, *Apocalypse Revealed* 914 gives the definition of perception as "interior thought," thought in the light of heaven. Thus:

Interior thought is in the light of heaven, and is called perception, and exterior thought is in the light of the world; and the understanding of every man is such that it can be elevated even into the light of heaven, and also is elevated, if from any delight he wishes to see truth. That this is so, has been given me to know by much experience. For the delight of love and wisdom elevates the thought, enabling one to see as in the light that a thing is so, although he had never heard it before. This light, which enlightens the mind, flows in from no other source than out of heaven from the Lord; and as those who will be of the New Jerusalem, will directly approach the Lord, that light will flow in, by the way of order, which is through the love of the will into the perception of the understanding.

We have already drawn attention to the need to rise above the state that one is in, in order to understand that state, for "nothing can look into itself." Here, in *Apocalypse Revealed* 914, is described how mans understanding can be "elevated even into the light of heaven" which brings "perception of the understanding" that such and such is true. The absolute necessity for this becomes clear when we reflect that if it were not for our capacity to acknowledge the truths of the Ten Commandments, an acknowledgment that follows the *perception* of their verisimilitude resulting from the elevation of the understanding into the light of heaven, then society would come apart at the seams, and anarchy would inevitably follow; witness Lebanon today, where "might is right" seems to be the only operating guide to life.

In exposition of part of the Joseph series in the Old Testament Word, *Arcana Coelestia* 5937 presents an expanded definition of perception as follows:

As the celestial which Joseph represents is internal, and the natural which Pharaoh represents is external, therefore the perception is of the natural from the internal celestial, for all perception is from within, and in no case is there any perception of what is interior from without; for whence the influx, thence the perception. [2] What the perception is that is so often mentioned shall here be briefly stated. There is with every man a faculty of perceiving whether a thing is so or is not so. The capacity of drawing a conclusion within himself, or in his own mind, causes a thing to be perceived. This capacity is utterly impossible unless there is influx from the spiritual world. In this gift one man excels another. Those who excel less are those who within themselves or in their own mind conclude and thus perceive but little; but say that a thing is so because others in whom they have faith have said so. But those who excel more are those who see, not from others, but from themselves, that the thing is so; *for in very deed the perception which exists with every man is one in worldly things*, but not at the present day with any one in spiritual things. The reason is that the spiritual which flows in and causes perception has been obscured and almost extinguished by the delights of the love of the world and of self; and therefore neither do they care for spiritual things, except insofar as is of duty and of custom; and if fear from duty, and delight from custom, were taken away, they would spurn, feel aversion for, and even deny them. [3] *He who would have perception in spiritual things must be in the affection of truth from good, and must continually long to know truths.* Thereby his intellectual is enlightened, and when the intellectual has been enlightened, then it is given him to perceive something inwardly within himself. But he who is not in the affection of truth, knows that which he knows to be so, from the teaching of the church to which he joins his faith, and because a priest, presbyter, or monk has said so. From all this it is evident what perception is, *and that it exists in worldly things, but not in spiritual things*; as is further evident from the fact that every one remains in the doctrine in which he was born, even those who were born Jews, and also those who are outside the church, although they live within it. Moreover those who are in any heresy, if told the veriest truths, and if these were also confirmed, they would nevertheless perceive not one whit of their truth: they would appear to them as falsities.

Here, perception is defined as "the faculty that every man has to discern whether a thing is so or not." But then, whereas the term was applied before only to our ancient forebears or to our possible future state in heaven, now it is applied to all of us, here and now, albeit only in worldly things, for "in very deed the perception which exists with every man is one in worldly things," and "from all this it is evident what perception is, and that it exists in worldly things, but not in spiritual things." The extremes, then, of perception are thus drawn: the angelic perception of spiritual truth and good, and the worldly person's ability to "draw conclusions within himself"—something we are doing all the time, but without a clear appreciation of the truthfulness and goodness of our conclusions.

In the next and final definition of perception, the reference is to the perception of truth and good, perception in the highest sense, as it exists in different planes of life. The distinctions drawn are, in our estimation, very important. For this reason *Arcana Coelestia* 2831 is quoted at length.

[2] As regards perception in general, since few know what perception is, this must be declared. *There is perception of what is good and true in celestial and spiritual things; there is perception of what is just and equitable in civil life; and there is perception of what is honorable in moral life.* As regards the perception of what is good and true in celestial and spiritual things, the interior angels have this perception from the Lord, the men of the Most Ancient Church had it, and the celestial, who are in love to the Lord, have it. These know at once, from a kind of internal observation, whether a thing is good and whether it is true; for this is insinuated by the Lord, because they are conjoined with Him by love. Spiritual men, however, have no such perception of good and truth in celestial and spiritual things, but instead of it have conscience which dictates; but as before said, this conscience is formed from the knowledges of good and truth which they have imbibed from their parents and masters, and afterwards from their own study in doctrine and in the world; and in these, even though not entirely good and true, they put their faith. Hence it is that men can have conscience from any doctrine whatever; even the Gentiles have something not unlike conscience from their religion. [3] That the spiritual have no perception of the good and truth of faith, but say and believe that to be true which they have learned and apprehended, is sufficiently evident from the fact that every one

says that his own dogma is true, heretics more than others; and that they are not able to see the truth itself, still less to acknowledge it, although thousands of things should declare it. Let every one explore himself and see if he is able to perceive from any other source whether a thing is true; and if when a thing most true is made manifest to him he still does not fail to acknowledge it. As for example, one who makes faith the essential of salvation, and not love: even if all should be read before him which the Lord spoke concerning love and charity (see n. 2373), and if he should know from the Word that all the Law and the Prophets hang upon love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, he will nevertheless remain in the idea of faith, and will say that this alone saves. It is otherwise with those who are in celestial and spiritual perception. [4] As regards the perception of what is just and equitable in civil life however, those in the world who are rational have this, and also the perception of what is honorable in moral life. These two perceptions distinguish one man from another, but by no means do such men for this reason have the perception of the good and truth of faith, because this perception is higher or more internal, and flows in from the Lord through the inmost of the rational. [5] The reason also why the spiritual have no perception of the good and truth of faith, is that good and truth are not implanted in their will part, as with celestial men, but in their intellectual part (see n. 863, 875, 927, 1023, 1043, 1044, 2256). Hence it is that the spiritual cannot arrive at the first degree of the light in which the celestial are (n. 2718), but have what is obscure in comparison (n. 1043, 2708 at the beginning, 2715).

Note here the idea that, except for people ruled by love to the Lord, the rest of us have only conscience as our guide—a conscience, or new will in the understanding, isolated from the perversity of our inherited, native will—a conscience built on the basis of whatever we have imbibed from parents and teachers as truths of religion. And even the ability to discern what is just, equitable, and honorable is possible with anyone who is "rational," bearing in mind that this term here means a state based on truths from the Word, not the faculty to reason only.

Finally, we quote *Arcana Coelestia* 6040 by way of emphasis of the idea that perception, at whatever level it is operating, has its source in the "internal celestial" represented by Joseph, and that this in turn

springs from the Lord Himself.

*And Joseph said unto his brethren.* That this signifies the perception of truths in the natural, is evident from the signification of "saying" as being perception (of which often above); from the representation of the sons of Israel, as being spiritual truths in the natural (n. 5414, 5879); and from the representation of Joseph, as being the internal celestial (n. 5869, 5877). Hence it is evident that by "Joseph said unto his brethren" is signified the perception of truths in the natural from the internal celestial. That by "Joseph said," is not signified *his* perception, is because Joseph is the internal, and all perception flows in through the internal into the external or natural. For of itself the natural perceives nothing whatever, but its perceiving is from what is prior to itself; nay, neither does the prior perceive from itself, but from what is still prior to itself, thus finally from the Lord, who Is of Himself. Such is the nature of influx, and therefore such is the nature of perception. It is with influx as it is with coming forth (*existentia*) and subsistence. *Nothing comes forth (existit) of itself, but from what is prior to itself, thus finally all things form the First, that is, from the Esse and the Existere of Itself.* And also from the same all things subsist, for it is with subsistence as with coming forth, for to subsist is perpetually to come forth (emphasis added).

## ENLIGHTENMENT

### Introduction

Enlightenment, reflection, perception, and thought are closely related processes, and separation of them, while necessary for analytic study, is somewhat artificial. However, once they are analyzed, we will be in a position to indulge in some synthetic thought and to see them in their mutual relationships. We shall treat the subject of enlightenment under the following headings: prerequisites to enlightenment; definition; and perception and enlightenment.

### Prerequisites

There are several essential prerequisites to enlightenment. Initially, truths from the Word must be present in mans rational degree of the mind; and furthermore, the degree of enlightenment is dependent upon the quality of the truths there. Thus in *Arcana*

*Coelestia* 2531 we read:

What is Divine is incomprehensible, above all understanding, even the angelic; but still this Divine, which in itself is incomprehensible, can flow in through the Lord's Divine Human into man's rational; and when it flows into his rational, it is there received according to the truths which are therein; thus variously, and not with one as with another. Insofar therefore as the truths with a man are more genuine, so far the Divine which flows in is received more perfectly, and so far the man's understanding is enlightened.

This implies that the truths spoken of are from the Word, and that the rational degree of the mind is, at least to some extent, open. By contrast, *Arcana Coelestia* 8941 makes clear that without the Word (received in the rational) enlightenment is out of the question.

[3] There are in the world two religiosities which are from self-intelligence—one in which the love of self and of the world is everything, which religion is that which is called in the Word "Babel"; it is inwardly profane from the love of self and of the world, and outwardly holy from the Word which has been applied to confirm. The other religiosity is that in which the light of nature is everything; they who are in this acknowledge nothing as truth which they do not apprehend. Some from this religiosity acknowledge the Word, but they apply it for confirmation, thus to serve. Some, however, do not acknowledge the Word; but these make the Divine to consist in nature, for their light, being of nature, falls into nature, and cannot be enlightened by the light of heaven, because they reject the Word from which is all enlightenment.

The truth alone, however, is not enough; for, as already noted, in regard to the opening of the higher degrees of the mind,<sup>19</sup> there must be present a higher affection. In this case it is the affection of truth which has the good of life as an end that accomplishes the opening, as indicated in the passage below.

As regards enlightenment and the consequent confirmation of truths, be it known that they who are in externals without an internal (as were the jews and the Israelites) cannot be enlightened, thus neither can they be confirmed in truths; whereas when they who are in externals and at the same time in internals read the Word, they are enlightened, and in their

enlightenment see truths, in which they are afterward more and more confirmed; and, wonderful to say, every one has such enlightenment as is his affection of truth; and such affection of truth as is his good of life (AC 7012).

### Definition

The fullest definition and classification of enlightenment is given in *Divine Providence* 168, presented here in its entirety.

As few know anything about the enlightenment that the understanding of a man who is taught by the Lord is in, something shall be said about it. There is an interior and exterior enlightenment from the Lord; and there is an interior and exterior enlightenment from man. By interior enlightenment from the Lord a man perceives at the first hearing whether what is said is true or not true. Exterior enlightenment is from this in the thought. Interior enlightenment from man is from mere confirmation; and exterior enlightenment from man is from mere knowledge. About each one of those something shall be said.

[2] *A man who is rational from interior enlightenment from the Lord* immediately perceives, when he hears them, whether many things are true or not true; for example, that love is the life of faith, that is, that faith lives from love. Also by interior enlightenment man perceives that whatever one loves he wills, and what he wills he does, consequently that to love is to do; and again, that whatever man believes from love, this too he wills and does, consequently to have faith is to do; also that a wicked man cannot have love of God, thus neither faith in God. By interior enlightenment a rational man perceives as soon as he hears it that God is One; that He is omnipresent; that all good is from Him; also that all things have relation to good and truth; and that all good is from Good itself, and all truth from Truth itself. Man perceives these things and other like things interiorly in himself when he hears them; and he has this perception because he has rationality that is in the light of heaven, which gives enlightenment. [3] *Exterior enlightenment* is an enlightenment of the thought that is from the interior enlightenment; and the thought is in such enlightenment so far as it continues in the perception that it has from interior enlightenment, and also so far as it has knowledges of truth and good; for from these it draws the reasons by means of

which it confirms. Thought from this exterior enlightenment sees a thing from both sides; on the one it sees the reasons that confirm, on the other the appearances that invalidate; the latter it disperses, the former it collects.

[4] *Interior enlightenment from man* is wholly different. By it man sees a subject on one side and not on the other; and when he has confirmed it he sees it in a light apparently like the light spoken of above, but it is a winter light. For example, a judge who judges unjustly because of gifts or for the sake of gain, when he has confirmed his decision by the laws and by reasons, sees nothing but justice in it. To some the injustice may be evident, but as they do not wish to see it they mystify and blind themselves, and thus do not see. The same is true of a judge who is influenced in his decisions by friendship, or by a desire to gain favor or by the ties of relationship. [5] Such men regard in the same way every thing that they hear from the lips of a man in authority, or a man of celebrity, or that they have hatched out from their own intelligence. They are rationally blind; for they have their vision from falsities, which they confirm; and falsity closes the sight, while truth opens it. Such see no truth from the light of truth, and no justice from a love of justice, but only from the light of confirmation, which is a delusive light. In the spiritual world they appear like faces without heads, or like faces that resemble human faces behind which there are wooden heads; and they are called rational animals, because they have rationality potentially. Those have *exterior enlightenment from man*, who think and talk from mere knowledge impressed on the memory. Such are scarcely able to confirm any thing from themselves.

It is evident from this that interior and exterior enlightenment from man do not constitute true enlightenment, although viewed exteriorly they appear as such. Elsewhere, enlightenment from man is called blindness, as in *Arcana Coelestia* 2588:

[8] From these examples we may see what it is to enter into the things of reason and memory-knowledge from truths, and what it is to enter into truths from the things of reason and memory-knowledge; and that the former is according to order, but the latter contrary to order; and that when we do that which is according to order we are enlightened; but when we do that which is contrary to order, we are made blind. All of which shows of how great concern it is that truths should be

known and believed; for man is enlightened by truths, but is made blind by falsities. By truths there is opened to the rational an immense and almost unbounded field; but by falsities comparatively none at all, although this does not appear to be so. It is because the angels are in truths that they enjoy wisdom so great; for truth is the very light of heaven. [9] They who have blinded themselves by not being willing to believe anything which they do not apprehend by the senses, until at length they have come to believe nothing, were in old times called "serpents of the tree of knowledge"; for such reasoned much from sensuous things and their fallacies, which easily fall into man's apprehension and belief, and thereby they seduced many (see no. 195, 196). . . . .

### **How Enlightenment Occurs in the Natural Mind**

The process whereby the natural degree of the mind is enlightened is represented in the Old Testament Word by the circumstances surrounding Rebekah when she drew water from the well for Jacob's camels, as described in *Arcana Coelestia* 3102:

*And it came to pass when the camels had done drinking.* That this signifies acknowledgment from enlightenment in general memory-knowledges, is evident from the fact that the two expressions, "it came to pass," and "had done," signify what is successive, and involve the end of the act that precedes and the beginning of the act that follows (see above, no. 3093); here therefore they signify acknowledgment, as shown just above. The same is evident also from the signification of "camels" as being general memory-knowledges (see n. 3048, 3071); and from the signification of "drinking" as being here the same as "drawing waters" (see n. 3097), and also the same as "giving to drink" (see n. 3058, 3071), namely, being enlightened. Hence it is evident that by these words, "and it came to pass when the camels had done drinking," is signified the *acknowledgment of truth Divine from enlightenment in general memory-knowledges*. [2] The case is really this: Every truth that is elevated out of the natural man, that is, out of memory-knowledges (or out of knowledges and doctrinal things, for these are of the natural man) into the rational, and there received, must first be acknowledged for what it is, and whether it is in agreement with the good that is in the rational or not; if it is in agreement, it is received; and if not, it is rejected. There are many apparent truths in a single

company; but only those are conjoined which acknowledge the good there, and thus which mutually love each other. In order, however, that they may be acknowledged to be such, there must be enlightenment in the natural man, by which all things there both in general and in particular may be seen at one view, and that thus there may be choice. This enlightenment in the natural man is from good, but still is by means of truth (see n. 3094). It is this enlightenment that is signified by Rebekah's drawing for the camels, and making them drink, or giving them to drink.

The sequence of events leading to enlightenment in the natural mind indicated above is confirmed and spelled out clearly in *Arcana Coelestia* 3128 as being from the Divine good flowing into man's rational (recall that this is the plane between the human internal, and the natural mind consisting of memory, sensation, and imagination) thence into the natural and finally into the external memory. Thus we read:

[3] Concerning the enlightenment from good through truth in the natural man, which is here called the "mother's house," the case is this: Divine good with man inflows into his rational, and through• the rational into his natural, and indeed into its memory-knowledges, that is, into the knowledges and doctrinal things therein, as before said; and there by a fitting of itself in, it forms truths for itself, through which it then enlightens all things that are in the natural man. But if the life of the natural man is such that it does not receive the Divine good, but either repels it, or perverts it, or suffocates it, then the Divine good cannot be fitted in, thus it cannot form for itself truths; and consequently the natural can no longer be enlightened; for enlightenment in the natural man is acquired from good through truths; and when there is no longer enlightenment, there can be no reformation. This is the reason why in the internal sense the natural man also is much treated of in regard to its quality; thus whence truth is, namely, that it is from good there.

The analog of this in the material plane is the process of generation, the implantation of seed corresponding to the influx of Divine good, the egg corresponding to knowledges of good and truth out of which the life-imparting good "forms truth for itself through which it then enlightens all things that are in the natural man"—just as the

birth of the Lord into the world was from Jehovah, the Divine Good, whereby the Lord came to "lighten the world." Further confirmation of the all-important process is gained from the following passages from *Arcana Coelestia* 3508 and 3665, as follows:

It is according to order that this 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 3508e).

And:

The knowledges which are learned from infancy to childhood are like most general vessels, which are to be filled with goods, and in proportion as they are filled the man is enlightened. If the vessels are such as to admit into them, genuine goods, then the man is enlightened from the Divine that is within them, and this successively more and more; but if they are such that genuine goods cannot be in them, then the man is not enlightened. It does appear that he is enlightened, but this is from a fatuous light, which is that of falsity and evil, whereby, he is more and more darkened in respect to good and truth (AC 3665:3).

It may well be asked, if enlightenment does occur as so described, why is there not conscious recognition of it? The question is addressed in *Arcana Coelestia* 10551, where too, the role of reflection and interior thought, perception and natural ideas are seen operating together in the whole process of enlightenment.

[2] It must here be told what it is to see from without, and what to have perception from within. Those who when reading the Word are in enlightenment, see it from within, for their internal is open, and when the internal is open it is in the light

of heaven. This light flows in and enlightens, although the man is unaware of it. The reason why he is unaware of it, is that this light flows into the knowledges that are in the man's memory, and these knowledges are in natural light. And as the man thinks from these knowledges as from himself, he cannot perceive the influx, nevertheless from various indications he is able to know that he has been in enlightenment. But yet every one is deceived who believes himself to be in the enlightenment, unless he loves to know truth for the sake of truth and for the sake of the good of life, thus unless he loves Divine truth for the sake of life, because to live according to Divine truths from the Word is to love the Lord, and all enlightenment comes from the Lord when He is loved. [3] But those cannot possibly be in any enlightenment who have not as their end a life according to Divine truths from the Word; but who have as their end honor, gain, and reputation; and who thus regard the Divine truths of the Word as means; for this end is worldly and bodily, and not spiritual and heavenly; and it therefore closes the internal man, and when this is closed, no light can flow in from heaven and enlighten....

[5] It shall also be briefly stated how the influx from which comes enlightenment is effected. Equally with men, the angels also perceive the Word when it is read; but the angels perceive it spiritually, and men perceive it naturally. The man whose internal is open also perceives the Word spiritually; but while he lives in the world he is unaware of this, because his spiritual thought flows into the natural thought in the external man, and there presents itself to view. Nevertheless it is this interior thought which enlightens, and by means of which the influx from the Lord is accomplished. By looking into their thoughts and by reflections thereon, some of the learned have noticed that there is in man an interior thought which does not appear, and therefore they have called the ideas of this thought immaterial and intellectual, and they have made a distinction between these ideas and those of the exterior thought which appear; and they have called these latter natural and material. But they have not known that the ideas of the interior thought are spiritual; and that when these flow down they are turned into natural ideas, and appear under a different shape, and under a different condition. From all this it can in some measure be seen how the influx, through which comes enlighten-

ment, is brought about.

From this it is clear that man cannot have a direct, conscious sensation of the process of enlightenment, since he will always have conscious thought clothed in images taken from experience (sensations) in this world. We could add to this the need to preserve the sense of self-life as a necessity for the preservation of man's freedom. But as we shall see below, people who do love "to know truth for the sake of truth and for the good of life" do experience "clear perception" (AC 8106).

### **The Light of the World**

By way of contrast, we draw attention to the nature of the "light of the world" and the relationship that it may have with the "light of heaven." In *Arcana Coelestia* 10201 it is pointed out that "by intelligence and wisdom is not meant the ability to think and reason on every subject, for this exists equally with the evil as with the good—" This, plainly, describes what is meant by the light of the world—exterior thought from experience, ultimately from physical sensation, in the material world. This light, however, does not always carry undesirable connotations, for if what is seen in the light of the world is illuminated from the light of heaven, then there is a state of order. By way of illustration: in the light of the world it appears as though the eye sees; but the Word teaches that it is the spirit that sees by means of the eye. This latter viewpoint, if acknowledged to be the case, represents the light of heaven illuminating the knowledge of what the eye does on its level of material being. This process is described in *Arcana Coelestia* 3108 in reference to the internal sense of Genesis 24: 21, 22. "And the man marveling at her, withheld himself, to know whether Jehovah had prospered his way or not. And it came to pass when the camels had done drinking, that the man took a jewel of gold, of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, ten shekels of gold their weight."

These two verses treat of the initiation of truth into good; but what is the nature of this initiation does not easily fall into the idea of thought with any one who has been enlightened only by such things as are of the light of the world, and not at the same time by such things as are of the light of heaven, from which light the things which are of the light of the world may themselves be enlightened. They who are not in good, and thence in faith, have no other ideas of thought than those

which have been formed from objects of the light of the world. These do not know that there is anything spiritual, nor indeed what the rational is in the genuine sense, but only the natural to which they attribute all things; and this is the reason why these things which are said in the internal sense concerning the initiation of truth into good, are to them too remote to appear to amount to anything; when yet to those who are in the light of heaven these are among their precious things. As regards the initiation of truth into good the case is this: Before truth has been initiated and rightly conjoined, it is indeed *with* man, but it has not been made as it were of him, or as his own; but as soon as it is being initiated into his good, it is appropriated to him; and it then vanishes from his external memory, and passes into the internal memory; or what is the same, it vanishes from the natural or external man, and passes into the rational or internal man, and puts on the very man, and makes his human, that is, his quality as to the human. Such is the case with all truth that is being conjoined with a man's good; such also is the case with the falsity that is being conjoined with evil which he calls good; but the difference is that the former opens the rational, and so makes the man rational; whereas the latter closes the rational and makes the man irrational; although he seems to himself, in the darkness in which he then is, to be preeminently rational (emphasis added).

### Enlightenment and Perception

In regard to these processes, and because they are closely related, care must be taken in discriminating between them. To do this, we shall proceed from plain statements in the Word to the obscure ones. *Arcana Coelestia* 10290 makes the distinction between these two in terms of the nature of the affection that activates them, either the love of truth for the sake of truth, or for the sake of good.

*And Jehovah said unto Moses.* That this signifies again enlightenment and perception by the Lord through the Word, is evident from the signification of "saying," when by Jehovah, as being enlightenment and perception (that it denotes enlightenment, see n. 7019, 10215, 10234; and that it denotes perception, n. 1791, 1815, 1819, 1822, 1898, 1919, 2080, 2862, 3509, 5877); and from the representation of Moses, as being the Word (n. 6752, 7014, 7089). That "Jehovah" in the Word denotes the Lord, see at the places cited in n. 9373. Hence it is plain that by

"Jehovah said unto Moses" is signified enlightenment and perception by the Lord through the Word. [2] That this is signified is because the Lord speaks with the man of the church in no other way than through the Word, *for He then enlightens man so that he may see truth, and also gives him perception to perceive that it is so; but this is brought about according to the quality of the desire for truth with the man, and the desire for truth with a man is according to his love of it. They who love truth for the sake of truth are in enlightenment, and they who love truth for the sake of good are in perception* (what perception is, see at n. 483, 495, 521, 536, 597, 607, 784, 1121, 1387, 1919, 2144, 2145, 2171, 2515, 2831, 5228, 5920, 7680, 7977, 8780; emphasis added).

This says, in effect, that the spiritual man (in the love of truth for the sake of truth) is in enlightenment, and the celestial man (in the love of truth for the sake of good) is in perception.

In another passage, enlightenment and perception are associated in a sequence, the latter following the former in a kind of cause-effect relationship. Thus in *Arcana Coelestia* 8685 we find the following:

For the man who is being regenerated and becoming a church has two states; in the first state he acts from truth, in the second from good (on which see n. 8516, 8539, 8643, 8648, 8658). In both states the man is led by the Lord; but in the first by immediate influx, and in the second by influx both immediate and mediate. (Concerning the influx of good and truth from the Lord, immediate and mediate, see n. 6472-6478, 6982, 6985, 6996, 7054-7058, 7270.) Immediate influx is represented by Moses judging the people alone; but influx both immediate and mediate, by the princes of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens, being chosen, to judge small affairs, and to refer great affairs to Moses (of which below). But these are arcana which scarcely any one can understand, *except one who is in enlightenment from the Lord, and through enlightenment in perception*. These two kinds of influx, and also the consequent effects, can indeed be described, but still they do not fall rightly into the thought unless there is perception from heaven; and perception from heaven is not given except with those who are in the love of truth from good; and not even then unless they are in the love of truth from genuine good (emphasis added).

This cause and effect relationship is further illustrated in the follow-

ing passage, where too, the terms in question are applied to a person "who is in good."

[2] By "revelation" is meant enlightenment when the Word is read, and perception then; for those who are in good and long for truth are taught in this way from the Word; but those who are not in good cannot be taught from the Word, but can only be confirmed in such things as they have been instructed in from infancy, whether true or false. The reason why those who are in good have revelation, and those who are in evil have no revelation, is that in the internal sense each and all things in the Word treat of the Lord and of His kingdom, and the angels who are with man perceive the Word according to the internal sense. *This is communicated to the man who is in good, and reads the Word, and from affection longs for truth, and consequently has enlightenment and perception* (AC 8694:2; emphasis added).

In the following passage from the *Doctrine of Faith* 5 there is a similar expression of the relationship between the processes in question. The idea expressed is analogous, we suggest, to the lighting of a candle; the activation energy (supplied by the match) is analogous to the affection of truth; the burning candle brings light to the surrounding objects; the seeing of these represents perception.

5. A spiritual idea (about which few know anything) inflows into those who are in the affection of truth, and inwardly tells them that what they hear or read is true, or is not true. In this idea are those who read the Word in enlightenment from the Lord. To be in enlightenment is nothing else than to be in the perception, and in the consequent internal acknowledgment, that this or that is true. These are they who are called "the taught of Jehovah" (Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 45); and of whom it is said in Jeremiah:

Behold, the days come that I will make a new covenant: this shall be the covenant: I will put My law in their inward parts, and upon their heart will I write it, and they shall teach no more every man his companion, or every man his brother, saying, Know (*Cognoscite*) Jehovah; for they shall all know (*cognoscent*) Me (Jer. xxxi. 31, 33, 34).

Elsewhere, evil people are said to have perception but no enlight-

enment. This obviously represents a contradiction to what has gone before, a circumstance that can only be resolved by supposing that the evil in question can have perception only of a borrowed kind, by virtue of their association with "those who are in heaven." But let *Arcana Coelestia* 7680 speak for itself.

*All that day, and all the night.* That this signifies everything of the perception both obscure and not obscure with the infesters, namely, there was destruction, is evident from the signification of "day," as being a state of perception not obscure; and from the signification of 'ng a state of obscure perception; for the times of the day—morning, noon, evening, and night—correspond to the states of enlightenment that belong to intelligence and wisdom (see n. 5672, 6110), thus to perceptions; and so in general do day and night. It is here said "perceptions," not "states of enlightenment," because the evil who infest have no enlightenment, and yet have perception; but they have perception only so long as any knowledge of truth and good from the church in which they have lived remains with them, for by means of truth and good they communicate with those who are in heaven. But when they have been deprived of these knowledges, which is done when they have been devastated, they then no longer have any perception. The infernals can indeed confirm their evils, and also their falsities, but this is not perception. Perception is to see that truth is truth, and good good; and also that evil is evil, and falsity falsity; but it is not perception to see truth as falsity and good as evil; or the reverse, evil as good and falsity as truth. They who do this, instead of perception, have phantasy, which produces an appearance of perception, whereby such know how to confirm falsities and evils by such things as are obvious to the sense and are in favor of concupiscences.

Notice, too, that evil people are said to have fantasy and not perception, analogous to the distinction made between true imagination that draws on real experience, and fantasy that represents distortions of reality—just as the falsity of evil represents the perversion of truth.

In conclusion, we note the special kind of enlightenment which follows spiritual temptation—when after wilderness states man finds water to quench his thirst (the longing for truth) and shady trees to protect him from searing desert heat (anxieties that accom-

pany active selfish loves), as the children of Israel "came to Elim." This state is described in *Arcana Coelestia* 8367, as follows with added emphasis:

*And they came to Elim.* That this signifies a state of enlightenment and of affection, thus of consolation, after temptation, is evident from the signification of "Elim," as involving and signifying the state and the quality of the thing that is treated of; like all the other places to which the sons of Israel came (see n. 2643, 3422, 4298, 4442); here the state after temptation, namely, a state of enlightenment and of affection, thus of consolation. *For after all spiritual temptation there come enlightenment and affection, thus pleasantness and delight; pleasantness from enlightenment through truth, and delight from the affection of good.* [2] That consolation follows after temptations, see n. 4572, 5246, 5628, 6829; the reason is that by means of temptations truths and goods are implanted and are conjoined, consequently the man as to his spirit is introduced interiorly into heaven, and to the heavenly societies with which he had previously been associated. *When the temptation is ended, communication with heaven is opened, which had previously been partly closed, consequently enlightenment and affection, and consequently pleasantness and delight; for then the angels with whom communication is given, flow in by means of truth, and by means of good.* Enlightenment by means of truth, and the consequent pleasantness, are signified by the "twelve springs of waters," for "springs" signify truths; the affection of truth from good, and the consequent delight, are signified by the "seventy palm trees" (of which below).

In Part IV of this series we will explore what the Writings have to say about thought and reason.

(To be continued)