

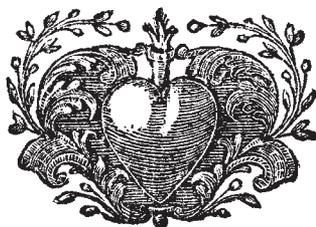
A Disclosure of  
**SECRETS OF HEAVEN**  
Contained in  
SACRED SCRIPTURE  
or  
THE LORD'S WORD  
Beginning Here with Those in  
Genesis  
*Together with Amazing Things Seen  
in the World of Spirits & in the Heaven of Angels*

by EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

Chapter I

Translated from the Latin by Lisa Hyatt Cooper

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SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

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## Six Days of Creation in the Bible: Six Stages of Transformation in Us

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This sample contains a unique interpretation of the first chapter in Genesis (the first book in the Bible). It is an excerpt from a larger work titled *Secrets of Heaven*, which was originally written and published in 1749–1756 in Latin as *Arcana Coelestia* by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772).

Although Swedenborg's best known work is his 1758 *Heaven and Hell*, this first chapter of *Secrets of Heaven* gives an essential introduction both to his way of approaching Scripture and to his view of the tremendous potential for positive change in the human spirit.

This translation was produced by Lisa Hyatt Cooper for the New Century Edition of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg, published by the Swedenborg Foundation.

Although this sample is smaller in size (5.5" x 8.5") than the New Century Edition (7" x 10"), it emulates the look of that deluxe edition, including its use of the decorative graphics reproduced from Swedenborg's original publication. The larger work contains a full translation in highly readable contemporary English and also includes introductory material and notes.

The first volume of *Secrets of Heaven*, which includes this first chapter and also covers Genesis 2 through 8, is available in deluxe paperback (\$15) or in hardcover (\$49). To order this or other works by or about Swedenborg, contact the publisher:

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First seek God's kingdom and its justice  
and you will gain all.

—Matthew 6:33



## Genesis

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**T**HE Word in the Old Testament contains secrets of heaven, and every single aspect of it has to do with the Lord, his heaven, the church, faith, and all the tenets of faith; but not a single person sees this in the letter. In the letter, or literal meaning, people see only that it deals for the most part with the external facts of the Jewish religion. 1

The truth is, however, that every part of the Old Testament holds an inner message. Except at a very few points, those inner depths never show on the surface. The exceptions are concepts that the Lord revealed and explained to the apostles, such as the fact that the sacrifices symbolize the Lord, and that the land of Canaan and Jerusalem symbolize heaven (which is why it is called the heavenly Canaan or Jerusalem [Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:16; 12:22; Revelation 21:2, 10]), as does Paradise.

The Christian world, though, remains deeply ignorant of the fact that each and every detail down to the 2

smallest—even down to the tiniest jot—enfolds and symbolizes spiritual and heavenly matters; and because it lacks such knowledge, it also lacks much interest in the Old Testament.

Still, Christians can come to a proper understanding if they reflect on a single notion: that since the Word is the Lord's and comes from him, it could not possibly exist unless it held within it the kinds of things that have to do with heaven, the church, and faith. Otherwise it could not be called the Lord's Word, nor could it be said to contain any life. Where, after all, does life come from if not from the properties of life? That is, if not from the fact that every single thing in the Word relates to the Lord, who is truly life itself? Whatever does not look to him at some deeper level, then, is without life; in fact, if a single expression in the Word does not embody or reflect him in its own way, it is not divine.

3

Without this interior life, the Word in its letter is dead. It resembles a human being, in that a human has an outward self and an inward one, as the Christian world knows. The outer being, separated from the inner, is just a body and so is dead, but the inward being is what lives and allows the outward being to live. The inner being is a person's soul.

In the same way the Word, regarded from a purely literal standpoint, is a body without a soul.

4

The Word's literal meaning alone, when it monopolizes our thinking, can never provide a view of the inner contents. Take for example this first chapter of Genesis. The literal meaning by itself offers no clue that

it is speaking of anything but the world's creation, the Garden of Eden (Paradise), and Adam, the first human ever created. Who supposes anything else?

The wisdom hidden in these details (and never before revealed) will be clear enough from what follows. The inner sense of the first chapter of Genesis deals in general with the process that creates us anew—that is to say, with regeneration—and in particular with the very earliest church; and it does so in such a way that not even the smallest syllable fails to represent, symbolize, and incorporate this meaning.

But without the Lord's aid not a soul can possibly see that this is the case. As a result, it is proper to reveal in these preliminaries that the Lord in his divine mercy has granted me the opportunity for several years now, without break or interruption, to keep company with spirits and angels, to hear them talking, and to speak with them in turn. Consequently I have been able to see and hear the most amazing things in the other life, which have never before come into people's awareness or thought.

In that world I have been taught about the different kinds of spirits, the situation of souls after death, hell (or the regrettable state of the faithless), and heaven (or the blissful state of the faithful). In particular I have learned what is taught in the faith acknowledged by the whole of heaven. All of these topics will, with the Lord's divine mercy, be explored further in what follows.



## Genesis I

1. In the beginning, God created heaven and earth.

2. And the earth was void and emptiness; and there was darkness on the face of the abyss. And the Spirit of God was constantly moving on the face of the water.

3. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

4. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God made a distinction between light and darkness.

5. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6. And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it exist to make a distinction among the waters, in the waters."

7. And God made the expanse, and he made a distinction between the waters that were under the expanse and the waters that were over the expanse; and so it was done.

8. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9. And God said, "Let the waters under heaven be gathered into one place, and let dry land appear," and so it was done.

10. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good.

11. And God said, "Let the earth cause the sprouting on the earth of the tender plant, of the plant bearing its

seed, of the fruit tree making the fruit that holds its seed, each in the way of its kind,” and so it was done.

12. And the earth produced the tender plant, the plant bearing its seed in the way of its kind, and the tree making the fruit that held its seed in the way of its kind, and God saw that it was good.

13. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14. And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to make a distinction between day and night; and they will act as signals and will be used for seasons for both the days and the years.

15. “And they will act as lights in the expanse of the heavens to shed light on the earth”; and so it was done.

16. And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule by day and the smaller light to rule by night; and the stars.

17. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens, to shed light on the earth,

18. and to rule during the day and during the night, and to make a distinction between light and darkness; and God saw that it was good.

19. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20. And God said, “Let the waters cause the creeping animal—a living soul—to creep out. And let the bird flit over the land, over the face of the expanse of the heavens.”

21. And God created the big sea creatures, and every living, creeping soul that the waters caused to creep out, in all their kinds, and every bird on the wing, of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

22. And God blessed them, saying, “Reproduce and multiply and fill the water in the seas, and the birds will multiply on the land.”

23. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24. And God said, “Let the earth produce each living soul according to its kind: the beast, and that which moves, and the wild animal of the earth, each according to its kind”; and so it was done.

25. And God made each wild animal of the earth according to its kind, and each beast according to its kind, and every animal creeping on the ground according to its kind; and God saw that it was good.

26. And God said, “Let us make a human in our image, after our likeness; and these will rule over the fish of the sea and over the bird in the heavens, and over the beast, and over all the earth, and over every creeping animal that creeps on the earth.”

27. And God created the human in his image; in God’s image he created them; male and female he created them.

28. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Reproduce and multiply, and fill the earth and harness it, and rule over the fish of the sea and over the bird in the heavens and over every living animal creeping on the earth.”

29. And God said, “Here, now, I am giving you every seed-bearing plant on the face of all the earth and every tree that has fruit; the tree that produces seed will serve you for food.

30. “And every wild animal of the earth and every bird in the heavens and every animal creeping on the

earth, in which there is a living soul—every green plant will serve them for nourishment.” And so it was done.

31. And God saw all that he had done and, yes, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

## Summary

THE six days or time periods, meaning so many consecutive stages in a person’s regeneration, are these, in outline: 6

The first stage is preliminary, extending from infancy to just before regeneration, and is called void, emptiness, and darkness. The first stirring, which is the Lord’s mercy, is the Spirit of God in constant motion on the face of the water. 7

In the second stage, a distinction is drawn between the things that are the Lord’s and those that are our own. The things that are the Lord’s are called a “remnant” in the Word. In this instance the “remnant” refers principally to religious knowledge acquired from early childhood on. This remnant is stored away, not to reappear until we arrive at such a stage. 8

At present the second stage rarely comes into play without trouble, misfortune, and grief, which enable bodily and worldly concerns—things that are our own—to fade away and in effect die out. The things that belong to the outer self, then, are separated from those that belong to the inner self, the inner self containing the remnant that the Lord has put aside to await this time and this purpose.

9 The third stage is one of repentance. During this time, at the prompting of the inner self, we speak devoutly and reverently and yield a good harvest (acts of neighborly kindness, for instance). These effects are lifeless nonetheless, since we suppose that they come of our own doing. They are called the tender plant, then the seed-bearing plant, and lastly the fruit tree.

10 In the fourth stage, love stirs and faith enlightens us. Before this time we may have spoken devoutly and yielded a good harvest, but we did so in a state of trial and anguish, not at the call of faith and kindness. In consequence they are now kindled in our inner self and are called the two lights.

11 In the fifth stage, we *speak* with conviction and, in the process, strengthen ourselves in truth and goodness. The things we then produce have life in them and are called the fish of the sea and the birds in the heavens.

12 In the sixth stage, we *act* with conviction and therefore with love in speaking truth and doing good. What we then produce is called a living soul and a beast. Because we begin to act as much from love as from conviction, we become spiritual people, who are called [God's] image.

In regard to our *spiritual* lives, we now find pleasure and nourishment in religious knowledge and acts of kindness; and these are called our food. In regard to our *earthly* lives, we still find pleasure and sustenance in things relating to our body and our senses, which cause strife until love takes charge and we develop a heavenly character.

13 Not everyone who undergoes regeneration reaches this stage. Some (the great majority, these days) arrive only at the first stage, some only at the second, some at

the third, fourth, or fifth, very few at the sixth, and almost no one at the seventh.



## Inner Meaning

FROM this point on, the term *Lord* is used in only one way: to refer to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ; and the name “Lord” is used without any additions.

14

He is acknowledged and revered as Lord throughout heaven because he possesses all power in heaven and on earth.

He also commanded this when he said, “You address me as ‘Lord.’ You speak correctly, because so I am” (John 13:13). And his disciples called him Lord after the resurrection.

In the whole of heaven no one knows of any other Father than the Lord, since the Father and the Lord are one. As he himself said:

15

“I am the way and the truth and life.” Philip says, “Show us your Father.” Jesus says to him, “After all the time I’ve spent with you, don’t you know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen my Father. How then can you say, ‘Show us your Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in my Father and my Father is in me? Believe me, that I am in my Father and my Father is in me.” (John 14:6, 8, 9, 10, 11)

Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning, God created heaven and earth.*

16

The word *beginning* is being used for the very earliest times. The prophets frequently call them “the days of old.”

“The beginning” includes the first period of regeneration too, as that is when people are being born anew and receiving life. Because of this, regeneration itself is called our new creation [2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15]. Almost everywhere in the prophets, the words *creating*, *forming*, and *making* stand for regenerating, though with differences. In Isaiah, for example:

All have been called by my name, and I have created them for my glory; I have formed them; yes, I have made them. (Isaiah 43:7)

This is why the Lord is called Redeemer, One-Who-Forms-from-the-Womb, Maker, and Creator, as in the same prophet:

I am Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your Monarch. (Isaiah 43:15)

In David:

The people created will praise Jah. (Psalms 102:18)

In the same author:

You send out your spirit—they will continue to be created—and you renew the face of the ground. (Psalms 104:30)

*Heaven*, or the sky, symbolizes the inner self, and the *earth*, before regeneration occurs, symbolizes the outer self, as may be seen below [§§17, 24:3, 27].

Genesis 1:2. *And the earth was void and emptiness, and there was darkness on the face of the abyss, and the Spirit of God was constantly moving on the face of the water.*

17

Before regeneration a person is called the *void*, *empty earth*, and also soil in which no seed of goodness or truth has been planted. *Void* refers to an absence of goodness and *empty* to an absence of truth. The result is *darkness*, in which a person is oblivious to or ignorant of anything having to do with faith in the Lord and consequently with a spiritual or heavenly life. The Lord portrays such a person this way in Jeremiah:

My people are dense; they do not know me. They are stupid children, without understanding. They are wise in doing evil but do not know how to do good. I looked at the *earth*, and there—void and emptiness; and to the *heavens*, and these had no light. (Jeremiah 4:22, 23, 25)

The *face of the abyss* means our cravings and the falsities these give rise to; we are wholly made up of cravings and falsities and wholly surrounded by them. Because no ray of light is in us, we are like an abyss, or something disorganized and dim.

18

Many passages in the Word also call such people abysses and sea depths, which are drained (that is, devastated) before a person is regenerated. In Isaiah, for instance:

Wake up, as in the days of old, the generations of eternity! Are you not draining the sea, the waters of the great abyss, and making the depths of the sea a

path for the redeemed to cross? May those ransomed by Jehovah return! (Isaiah 51:9, 10, 11)

An individual of this type, observed from heaven, looks like a dark mass with no life at all to it.

The same words involve an individual's overall spiritual devastation—a preliminary step to regeneration. (The prophets have much more to say about it.) Before we can learn what is true and be affected by what is good, the things that stand in the way and resist have to be put aside. The old self must die before the new self can be conceived.

19

The *Spirit of God* stands for the Lord's mercy, which is portrayed as *moving constantly*, like a hen brooding over her eggs. What is being brooded over in this instance is what the Lord stores away in us, which throughout the Word is called "a remnant" [or "survivors"]. It is a knowledge of truth and goodness, which can never emerge into the light of day until our outer nature has been devastated. Such knowledge is here called the *face of the water*.

20

Genesis 1:3. *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

The first step is taken when we begin to realize that goodness and truth are something transcendent.

People who focus exclusively on externals do not even know what is good or what is true; everything connected with self-love and love of worldly advantages they consider good, and anything that promotes those two loves they consider true. They are unaware that such "goodness" is evil and such "truth" false.

When we are conceived anew, however, we first begin to be aware that our "good" is not good. And as

we advance further into the light, it dawns on us that the Lord exists and that he is goodness and truth itself.

The Lord says in John that we need to know of his existence:

Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. (John 8:24)

We need to know too that the Lord is goodness itself, or life, and truth itself, or the light, and consequently that nothing good or true exists that does not come from him. This is also found in John:

In the beginning there was the Word, and the Word was present with God, and the Word was God. Everything was made by him, and nothing that was made was made without him. In him was life, and the life was the light of humankind; but the light appears in the darkness. He was the true light that shines on every person coming into the world. (John 1:1, 3, 4, [5,] 9)

Genesis 1:4, 5. *And God saw the light, that it was good, and God made a distinction between light and darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.*

21

The *light* is said to be *good* because it is from the Lord, who is goodness itself.

The *darkness* is whatever looked like light to us before our new conception and birth, because we saw evil as good and falsity as truth; but it is actually darkness—our lingering sense of self-sufficiency.

Absolutely everything that is the Lord's is compared to the day, because it belongs to the light, and everything

that is our own is compared to the night, because it belongs to the darkness. The Word draws this comparison in quite a few places.

22

Genesis 1:5. *And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

From this we now see what evening and morning mean. *Evening* is every preliminary stage, because such stages are marked by shadow, or by falsity and an absence of faith. *Morning* is all later stages, because these are marked by light, or by truth and religious knowledge.

Evening stands in general for everything that is our own, while morning stands for everything of the Lord's. As David says, for example:

The Spirit of Jehovah has spoken in me and his words are on my tongue. The God of Israel has said, the rock of Israel has spoken to me. He is like the morning light when the sun rises, like a morning when there are no clouds, when because of the brightness, because of the rain, the tender grass springs from the earth. (2 Samuel 23:2, 3, 4)

Since evening is when there is no faith and morning is when there *is* faith, the Lord's coming into the world is called morning. The period in which he came, being a time of no faith, is called evening. In Daniel:

The Holy One said to me, "Up till [the day's second] evening, when it becomes morning, two thousand and three hundred times." (Daniel 8:14, 26)

Morning in the Word is similarly taken to mean every coming of the Lord, so that it is a word for being created anew.

Nothing is more common in the Word than for a *day* to be understood as meaning the times, as in Isaiah:

23

The day of Jehovah is near. Look—the day of Jehovah is coming! I will shake heaven, and the earth will tremble right out of its place, on the day when my anger blazes up. The time of his coming is near, and its days will not be postponed. (Isaiah 13:6, 9, 13, 22)

In the same prophet:

In the days of old she was old. It will happen on that day that Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, corresponding to the days of one king. (Isaiah 23:7, 15)

Because a day stands for a time period, it is also taken to mean the state we are in during that period, as in Jeremiah:

Doom to us! For the day has faded, for the shadows of evening have lengthened. (Jeremiah 6:4)

In the same prophet:

If you nullify my compact with the day and my compact with the night, so that there is no daytime or night at their times . . . (Jeremiah 33:20, 25)

And again:

Renew our days as in ancient times. (Lamentations 5:21)

Genesis 1:6. *And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it exist to make a distinction among the waters, in the waters."*

24

The next step occurs after the Spirit of God—the Lord’s mercy—brings out into daylight the knowledge of truth and goodness and provides the first glimmering that the Lord exists, that he is goodness and truth itself, and that nothing is good or true except what comes from him. The Spirit of God then *makes a distinction* between the inner and the outer being, and between the religious knowledge we possess in our inner selves and the secular knowledge belonging to our outer selves.

The inner self is called the *expanse*, the knowledge in the inner self is called the *waters over the expanse*, and the facts belonging to the outer self are called *the waters under the expanse*.

[2] Before we are reborn, we do not know even that an inner being exists, let alone what it is, imagining there is no difference between the two selves. This is because we are absorbed by bodily and worldly interests and merge the concerns of the inner being with those interests. Out of distinct and separate planes we make one dim, confused whole.

Therefore this verse first says that there should be an expanse in the middle of the waters, then that it should exist to make a distinction “among the waters, in the waters,” but not that it should make a distinction between one set of waters and another. The next verse says that.

[3] Genesis 1:7, 8. *And God made the expanse, and he made a distinction between the waters that were under the expanse and the waters that were over the expanse, and so it was done; and God called the expanse heaven.*

The second thing we begin to notice while being reborn, then, is that the inner self exists. We become

aware that the attributes of the inner self are good feelings and true ideas, which are the Lord's alone.

While we are being reborn, our outer self is such that it still believes we are acting on our own when we do what is good and speaking on our own when we speak what is true. The Lord uses those things—allowing them to seem like our own, since such is our mind-set—to lead us to doing what is good and speaking what is true. Consequently we first learn to distinguish what is *under the expanse*; only then do we learn to distinguish what is *over the expanse*.

Another secret from heaven is that the Lord leads us by means of things that really are our own—both the illusions of our senses and our cravings—but diverts us toward things that are true and good. So every single moment of regeneration carries us forward from evening to morning, just as it takes us from the outer self to the inner, or from earth to heaven. This is why the expanse (the inner self) is now called *heaven*.

*Spreading out the earth and stretching out the heavens* is a customary formula used by the prophets when they speak of our regeneration. In Isaiah, for example:

25

This is what Jehovah has said, your Redeemer and the one who formed you from the womb: “I am Jehovah, making all things, stretching *the heavens* out on my own and spreading *the earth* out by myself.” (Isaiah 44:24)

Again, where the Lord's Coming is spoken of openly:

A crushed reed he does not break, and smoldering flax he does not quench; he propels judgment toward truth. [In other words, he does not break

our illusions or extinguish our cravings but bends them toward truth and goodness. It continues:] God Jehovah creates *the heavens* and stretches them out. He spreads out *the earth* and the things it produces. He gives a soul to the people on it and spirit to everyone walking on it. (Isaiah 42:3, 4, 5)

Several other places could be cited as well.

26

Genesis 1:8. *And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.*

The meanings of *evening*, *morning*, and *day* are explained above at verse 5 [§§22–23].

27

Genesis 1:9. *And God said, “Let the waters under heaven be gathered into one place, and let dry land appear”; and so it was done.*

When we learn that we have an inner self and an outer, and that truth and goodness come from the inner self—or rather from the Lord by way of the inner self into the outer, even though this is contrary to appearances—this information, this knowledge of truth and goodness, is stored away in our memory. The knowledge takes its place among the secular facts we have learned, because anything instilled in our outward memory, whether earthly, spiritual, or heavenly, lodges there as a fact, and from there the Lord draws on it.

This knowledge is the *waters gathered into one place* and named seas. The outer being itself, on the other hand, is called *dry land*. Immediately afterward it is called earth, as the next verse shows.

28

Genesis 1:10. *And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of waters he called seas; and God saw that it was good.*

To find *waters* symbolizing religious and secular knowledge, and *seas* symbolizing a body of such knowledge, is quite common in the Word. In Isaiah:

The earth will be full with the awareness of Jehovah,  
like the waters covering the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)

In the same prophet, where both kinds of knowledge are portrayed as lacking:

The water will disappear from the sea, the river will  
drain away and dry up, and the streams will recede.  
(Isaiah 19:5, 6)

In Haggai, where a new church is the subject:

I am shaking *the heavens* and *the earth*, and the sea  
and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, and  
those who are the desire of every nation will come,  
and I will fill this House with glory. (Haggai 2:6, 7)

And in Zechariah, on the regenerating individual:

That will be a single day; it is known to Jehovah; it  
is not *day* or night. And it will happen that at the  
time of *evening* there will be light. And it will hap-  
pen on that day that living water will go out from  
Jerusalem, part of it to the eastern sea and part of it  
to the western sea. (Zechariah 14:7, 8)

In a passage in David depicting a devastated person  
who is being reborn and will come to revere the Lord:

Jehovah does not despise his prisoners; *the heavens*  
and *the earth*, the seas and every creeping thing in  
them will praise him. (Psalms 69:33, 34)

In the following passage in Zechariah, the *earth* symbolizes that which receives something put into it:

Jehovah is stretching out *the heavens* and founding *the earth* and forming the human spirit in the middle of it. (Zechariah 12:1)

29

Genesis 1:11, 12. *And God said, "Let the earth cause the sprouting on the earth of the tender plant, of the plant bearing its seed, of the fruit tree making the fruit that holds its seed, each in the way of its kind"; and so it was done. And the earth produced the tender plant, the plant bearing its seed in the way of its kind, and the tree making the fruit that held its seed in the way of its kind. And God saw that it was good.*

When the *earth* (a person) is so well prepared as to be able to accept heavenly seed from the Lord and to produce good and truth in some degree, that is the time when the Lord first *causes the sprouting* of something tender, called the *tender plant* or grass. Next he stimulates something more useful that reseeds itself—the *plant bearing its seed*. Finally he germinates something good, which reproduces fruitfully—the *tree making the fruit that holds its seed*, each of these *in the way of its kind*.

During regeneration we naturally suppose at first that the good we do and the truth we speak come from ourselves, when the reality is that all good and truth come from the Lord. If we imagine they come from ourselves, then, we are not yet in possession of the life force belonging to true faith (although we can receive it later). We cannot believe yet that they come from the Lord, because we are being prepared to receive the living

power of faith. This stage is represented in the story by things that have no living soul; animate creatures represent the stage of living faith to come.

[2] The Lord is the sower of seeds, the *seed* is his Word, and the *earth* is the human being, as he saw fit to say in Matthew 13:19–23, 37, 38, 39; Mark 4:14–20; and Luke 8:11–15. A similar description:

So God's kingdom is like one who tosses seed into the earth and sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; how it happens, the person does not know. For the earth bears fruit readily—first a shoot, then an ear, then the full grain in the ear. (Mark 4:26, 27, 28)

“God's kingdom” in its broadest sense means the whole of heaven. Less broadly it means the Lord's true church. In its narrow sense it refers to everyone with true faith, which is to say, all who become reborn by living out their faith. Each of these people is also called a heaven (since they have heaven in them) and God's kingdom (since they have God's kingdom in them). The Lord himself teaches this in Luke:

Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, “When is God's kingdom coming?” He answered them and said, “God's kingdom does not come in an observable way, nor will they say, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ because—look!—God's kingdom is within you.” (Luke 17:20, 21)

This is the third step in our regeneration and the stage at which we repent. The process continues to

advance from shadow to light, from evening to morning, and so it says:

[3] Genesis 1:13. *And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

30

Genesis 1:14, 15, 16, 17. *And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to make a distinction between day and night; and they will act as signals and will be used for seasons for both the days and the years. And they will be lights in the expanse of the heavens, to shed light on the earth," and so it was done. And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule by day and the smaller light to rule by night; and the stars. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens, to shed light on the earth.*

We cannot understand the identity of these great lights very well unless we first know what the essence of faith is and how it develops in those who are being created anew.

The actual essence and life of faith is the Lord alone. No one who lacks faith in the Lord can have life, as he himself said in John:

Those who believe in the Son have eternal life, but those who do not believe in the Son will not see life; instead, God's anger will rest on them. (John 3:36)

[2] The progress of faith in those who are being created anew is as follows. Initially such people are without any life, as no life exists in evil or falsity, only in goodness and truth. Afterward they receive life from the Lord through faith. The first form of faith to bring life is a memorized thing—a matter of fact. The next is faith in the intellect—faith truly understood. The last is faith in the heart, which is faith born of love, or saving faith.

In verses 3–13 the things that had no living soul represent factual faith and faith truly understood. Faith brought alive by love, however, is represented by the animate creatures in verses 20–25. Consequently this is the point at which love and the faith that rises out of it are first dealt with, and they are called *lights*. Love is the *greater light* that *rules by day*; faith springing from love is the *smaller light* that *rules by night*. And because they must unite as one, the text speaks of the lights in the singular, saying “let it exist” rather than “let them exist.”

[3] Love and faith work the same way in our inner being as warmth and light work in our outer flesh and are therefore represented by warmth and light. This is why the lights are said to be *placed in the expanse of the heavens*, or our inner being, the greater light in our will and the smaller in our intellect. But they only seem to be present there, just as the light of the sun only appears to be in physical objects. It is the Lord’s mercy alone that stirs our will with love and our intellect with truth or faith.

The fact that the *great lights* symbolize love and faith and that they are named sun, moon, and stars can be seen in many places in the prophets. In Ezekiel, for instance:

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When I blot you out I will cover *the heavens* and black out their stars; the sun I will cover with a cloud, and the moon will not make its light shine. All the lamps of light in the heavens I will black out above you, and I will bring shadow over your *land*.  
(Ezekiel 32:7, 8)

This passage is directed at Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In the Word, these people stand for sensory evidence

and factual information, and the idea here is that they used both things to blot out love and faith. In Isaiah:

The day of Jehovah [comes] to make *the earth* a desolation, since neither the stars of the heavens nor their Orions will shine their light. The sun has been shadowed over in its emergence, and the moon will not radiate its light. (Isaiah 13:9, 10)

In Joel:

The day of Jehovah has come, a day of shadow and darkness. Before him the earth trembles, the heavens shake, the sun and moon turn black, and the stars hold back their rays. (Joel 2:1, 2, 10)

[2] The following passage in Isaiah discusses the Lord's Coming and the light brought to the nations—in other words, a new church, and specifically the individuals who are in shadow but welcome the light and are being reborn.

Rise, shine, because your light has come! Look—shadows cover the earth, and darkness, the peoples. And Jehovah will dawn above you; and the nations will walk toward your light, and monarchs, toward the brightness of your rising. Jehovah will become an eternal light to you. No longer will your sun set, and your moon will not withdraw, because Jehovah will become an eternal light to you. (Isaiah 60:1, 2, 3, 19, 20)

In David:

Jehovah makes *the heavens* with understanding; he spreads *the earth* out on *the waters*; he makes the

great lights—the sun to rule during the day and the moon and stars to rule during the night. (Psalms 136:5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

In the same author:

Give glory to Jehovah, sun and moon! Give glory to him, all you shining stars! Give glory to him, heavens of heavens and waters above the heavens! (Psalms 148:3, 4)

In all these places the sources of light symbolize love and faith.

[3] Because lights represented and symbolized love for and faith in the Lord, the Jewish church was commanded to keep a light burning perpetually, from evening to morning, since every activity that was required of that church represented the Lord. The command for the perpetual light was as follows:

Command the children of Israel to take oil for the light, to make [the fire of] the lamp go up continually. In the meeting tent, outside the veil that is by [the ark of] the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall arrange it before Jehovah, from evening till morning. (Exodus 27:20, 21)

This symbolizes love and faith, which the Lord kindles and causes to shine in our inner self, and through our inner into our outer self, as will be shown in its proper place [§9783], with the Lord's divine mercy.

Love and faith are first called the great lights, then love is called the *greater light* and faith the *smaller light*. It says that love will *rule during the day* and that faith will *rule during the night*. Because this information is

unknown and less accessible than ever at this time—the end of an era—the Lord in his divine mercy has allowed me to lay open the true situation.

It is especially well hidden in these final days because the close of the age has arrived and almost no love exists, consequently almost no faith. The Lord himself predicted this event in words recorded in the Gospels:

The sun will go dark, and the moon will not shed light, and the stars will fall down from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Matthew 24:29)

The sun here means love, which has gone dark. The moon means faith, which is not shedding light. The stars mean religious concepts (the powers and forces of the heavens), which are falling down from heaven.

[2] The earliest church acknowledged no faith besides love itself. Heavenly angels too have no idea what faith is if it is not a matter of love. The entirety of heaven gives itself over to love, because no other kind of life than that of love exists in the heavens. Love is the source of all their happiness, which is so immense that not a bit of it can be put into words or grasped in any way by the human mind.

People who dwell in love do love the Lord with all their heart, but they know, say, and perceive that all love comes from the Lord and from nowhere else, as does all life (which is the product of love alone) and so all happiness. Not the smallest measure of love, life, or happiness do they claim to possess on their own.

In the Lord's transfiguration, the great light—the sun—represented the fact that he is the source of all love, since

His face shone like the sun, while his clothes became like the light. (Matthew 17:2)

The face symbolizes the deepest levels of being, while clothes symbolize the things that issue from those levels. So the sun (love) means the Lord's divinity, and light (the wisdom that rises out of love), his humanity.

Anyone can see perfectly well that no hint of life ever exists without some kind of love and that no trace of joy ever exists unless it results from love. The nature of the love determines the nature of the life and of the joy.

33

If you were to take the things you love—the things you long for (since longings are bound up with love)—and set them aside, your thought processes would come to an immediate halt and you would be like a corpse. I have learned this through experience.

Self-love and materialism produce an imitation of life and an imitation of joy, but since they are diametrically opposed to genuine love—that is, loving the Lord above all and loving our neighbor as ourselves—it stands to reason that they are not forms of love but of hatred. Notice that the more we love ourselves and worldly goods, the more we hate our neighbor and therefore the Lord.

Genuine love, then, is love for the Lord, and genuine life is a life of love received from him. True joy is the joy of that life.

Only one genuine love can exist, so only one genuine life can exist, and it gives rise to true joy and happiness, like that felt by angels in heaven.

34

Love and faith can never be separated, because they make a single unit. This is why the sources of light when first mentioned are treated as a singular in the statement, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens.” Let me report some surprising facts in this connection.

Because the Lord gives heavenly angels this kind of love, love reveals all religious knowledge to them. Love also gives them such a living and shining intelligence that it can hardly be described.

For spirits who learn the doctrinal tenets of faith but lack love, on the other hand, life is so chill and the light so dim that they cannot even approach the near side of the threshold to heaven’s entrance hall without fleeing in retreat.

Some say that they had believed in the Lord; but in actuality they had not lived as he taught. The Lord speaks of them this way in Matthew:

Not everyone saying “Lord! Lord!” to me will enter the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing my will. Many will say to me on that day, “Lord! Lord! Haven’t we prophesied in your name?” (Matthew 7:21, 22)

See also what follows, up to the end of Matthew 7.

[2] All this makes it clear that people who have love also have faith and consequently heavenly life. The same cannot be said of those who claim to have faith but do not lead a loving life.

A life of faith without love is like sunlight without warmth—the type of light that occurs in winter, when

nothing grows and everything droops and dies. Faith rising out of love, on the contrary, is like light from the sun in spring, when everything grows and flourishes. Warmth from the sun is the fertile agent. The same is true in spiritual and heavenly affairs, which are typically represented in the Word by objects found in nature and human culture.

Nonbelief and belief without love are in fact compared to winter by the Lord in Mark where he made predictions concerning the close of the age:

Pray that your flight not occur in winter, as those will be days of distress. (Mark 13:18, 19)

The “flight” refers to the final days and to an individual’s final days before death as well. “Winter” is a life devoid of love. The “days of distress” are the person’s wretched condition in the other life.

Humans have two basic faculties: will and intellect. When the will regulates the intellect, the two together make one mind and as a result one life; under those circumstances, what we will and do is also what we think and intend. When the intellect is at odds with the will, though, as when we act in a way that contradicts what we claim to believe, our single mind is torn in two. One part wants to rise up to heaven while the other leans toward hell. And since the will drives everything, we would rush into hell heart and soul if the Lord did not take pity on us.

People who have separated faith from love do not even know what faith is. When they try to picture it, some see it merely as thought. Some view it only as thoughts about the Lord. A few equate it with the teachings of faith.

But faith is more than the knowledge and acknowledgment of all that is encompassed in the teachings of faith. First and foremost it is obedience to everything that faith teaches; and the primary thing faith teaches and requires our obedience to is love for the Lord and love for our neighbor. No one who lacks this possesses faith. The Lord teaches this so clearly in Mark that no one can doubt it:

The first of all the commandments is “Listen, Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. Therefore you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your powers.” This is the first commandment. A second, similar one, of course, is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:28–34)

In Matthew he calls the former the first and great commandment and says that the Law and the Prophets depend on these commandments (Matthew 22:35–40). “The Law and the Prophets” are the teachings of faith, all-inclusively, and the whole Word.

37

The words *the lights will act as signals and will be used for seasons both for the days and for the years* contain more hidden information than can be spelled out in the present work, even though none of it appears in the literal meaning. The only thing to be said at this time is that spiritual and heavenly things—as a group and individually—go through cycles, for which the daily and yearly cycles are metaphors. The daily cycle begins in the morning, extends to midday, then to evening,

and through night to morning. The corresponding annual cycle begins with spring, extends to summer, then to fall, and through winter to spring.

These changes create changes in temperature and light and in the earth's fertility, which are used as metaphors for changes in spiritual and heavenly conditions. Without change and variation, life would be monotonous and consequently lifeless. There would be no recognition or differentiation of goodness and truth, let alone any awareness of them.

The celestial cycles are called "statutes" in the prophets, as in Jeremiah:

The word spoken by Jehovah, who gives the sun as light for the day, the statutes of moon and stars as light for the night: "These statutes will not depart from before me." (Jeremiah 31:35, 36)

And in the same prophet:

This is what Jehovah has said: "If my compact with day and night should cease, if I should cease to set the statutes of heaven and earth . . ." (Jeremiah 33:25)

But the subject will be explored further at Genesis 8:22 [§§933–936], the Lord's divine mercy permitting.

Genesis 1:18. . . . *and to rule during the day and during the night, and to make a distinction between light and darkness; and God saw that it was good.*

*Day* means goodness and *night* evil, so in common parlance the good things people do are associated with the day, while the bad things they do are called deeds of the night.

*Light* means truth and *darkness* falsity, as the Lord says:

People loved darkness more than light. One who does the truth comes to the light. (John 3:19–21)

Genesis 1:19. *And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.*

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Genesis 1:20. *And God said, “Let the waters cause the creeping animal—a living soul—to creep out. And let the bird flit over the land, over the face of the expanse of the heavens.”*

After the great lights are kindled and placed in the inner self, and the outer self is receiving light from them, the time arrives when we first start to live. Earlier, we can hardly be said to have been alive, thinking as we did that the good we perform and the truth we speak originate in ourselves. On our own we are dead and have nothing but evil and falsity inside, with the result that nothing we produce from ourselves has life. So true is this that by our own power we cannot do anything good—at least not anything inherently good.

From the doctrine taught by faith, anyone can see that we cannot so much as think a good thought or will a good result or consequently do a good deed except through the Lord’s power. After all, in Matthew the Lord says:

The one who sows good seed is the Son of Humankind. (Matthew 13:37)

Good cannot come from anywhere but this same unique source, as he also says:

Nobody is good except the one God. (Luke 18:19)

[2] Still, when the Lord brings us back to life, or regenerates us, he at first allows us to harbor these mistaken ideas. At that stage we cannot view the situation in any other way. Neither can we be led in any other way to believe and then perceive that everything good and true comes from the Lord alone.

As long as our thinking ran along these lines, the truth and goodness we possessed were equated with a tender plant or grass, next with a plant bearing seed, then with a fruit tree, none of which has a living soul. Now, when love and faith have brought us to life and we believe that the Lord brings about all the good we do and the truth we speak, we are compared initially to *creeping animals of the water* and *birds flitting over the land* and later to beasts. All these are animate and are called *living souls*.

The *creeping animals* that the *waters* breed symbolize facts that the outer self knows. *Birds* in general symbolize logical reasoning; they also symbolize matters that we truly understand, which belong to the inner self.

The following verses in Isaiah demonstrate the symbolism of the *creeping animals of the waters*—fish—as facts:

I came and there was no man. In my censure I will dry up the sea; I will make the rivers a desert; their fish will stink from lack of water and die of thirst; I will dress the heavens in black. (Isaiah 50:2, 3)

[2] Evidence still clearer appears in Ezekiel, where the Lord describes a new temple, the general meaning of which is a new church and an adherent of the church

or person reborn (since everyone who is reborn is a temple to the Lord).

The Lord Jehovah said to me, “That water, which will go out to the boundary toward the east and go toward the sea, will be channeled down into the sea, and the water [of the sea] will be cured. And it will come about that every living soul that creeps out in any place where the water of the rivers goes will survive; and the fish will be very numerous, because that water goes there and will be cured, and everything will live, wherever the river goes. And it will happen that the fishers will stand over it from En-gedi to En-eglaim; they will be there spreading their nets. Their fish will be of all kinds, like the fish of the great sea, very numerous.” (Ezekiel 47:8, 9, 10)

“Fishers from En-gedi to En-eglaim spreading their nets” symbolize people who are to teach the earthly plane of the human mind about the truths that make up faith.

[3] Passages in the prophets establish the fact that birds symbolize logical reasoning and concepts truly understood. In Isaiah, for example:

I am calling the winged creature from the sunrise, the man I planned on, from a faraway land. (Isaiah 46:11)

In Jeremiah:

I looked and there, not a human! And every bird of the heavens had fled. (Jeremiah 4:25)

In Ezekiel:

I will plant a cutting of the tall cedar, and it will lift its branch and make fruit and become a majestic

cedar. And every bird of every wing will live under it; in the shade of its branches they will live.  
(Ezekiel 17:[22,] 23)

And in Hosea, where the subject is a new church, or the regenerate person:

And I will strike a pact with them on that day—  
with the wild animal of the field, and with the bird  
in the heavens and the creature that moves on the  
ground. (Hosea 2:18)

The wild animal obviously does not mean a wild animal or the bird a bird, because the Lord is sealing a new pact with them.

Nothing that is a person's very own has any life in it. When presented to view, it looks hard as bone, and black. Everything that comes from the Lord, on the other hand, has life. It has a spiritual and heavenly quality and looks like something living and human.

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Incredibly, perhaps (although it is absolutely true), each word, each mental image, and each scintilla of thought in an angelic spirit is alive. Passion received from the Lord, who is life itself, permeates every single thing about such a spirit.

Things that come from the Lord, then, contain life because they contain faith in him, and they are symbolized here by *a living soul*. Additionally, they have the equivalent of a physical body, symbolized by *that which moves* or *creeps*. This information remains obscure to the human mind, but since the verse talks about a living soul that moves, I need at least to mention it.

Genesis 1:21. *And God created the big sea creatures, and every living, creeping soul that the waters caused to*

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*creep out, in all their kinds, and every bird on the wing, of every kind; and God saw that it was good.*

Fish symbolize facts, as already stated [§40]. In this instance they symbolize facts animated by faith that is received from the Lord, which therefore possess vitality. *Big sea creatures* symbolize general categories of facts, from which come subcategories. (Not one thing exists anywhere in the world that does not belong to some general category. The category allows the particular item to come into being and continue in existence.)

The prophets mention sea monsters or whales a number of times, and when they do, these symbolize general categories of facts. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, representing human wisdom or understanding (that is, factual information in general), is called a large sea creature, as in Ezekiel:

Here, now, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, you great sea creature, lying in the middle of your rivers, who has said, "The river is mine, and I have made myself." (Ezekiel 29:3)

[2] Another:

Raise a lamentation over Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and you are to tell him, "But you are like a monster in the seas; and you have emerged among your rivers and churned the waters with your feet." (Ezekiel 32:2)

This image symbolizes those who want to use facts (meaning they want to use their own powers) to initiate themselves into religious mysteries. In Isaiah:

On that day Jehovah, with his steely and great and mighty sword, will exact punishment on Leviathan

the stretched-out serpent and on Leviathan the coiled serpent; and he will kill the monsters that are in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1)

Killing the monsters that are in the sea means leaving such people without awareness even of general facts. In Jeremiah:

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured me, has churned me up; he has rendered me an empty container, like a sea monster he has swallowed me down, filled his belly with the savors of me, hurled me out. (Jeremiah 51:34)

In other words, “Nebuchadnezzar” has swallowed up all religious knowledge (the “savors”) as the sea monster did to Jonah. In Jonah’s case the monster stood for people who possess the broad outlines of this knowledge in the form of facts and who wolf them down.

Genesis 1:22. *And God blessed them, saying, “Reproduce and multiply and fill the water in the seas, and the birds will multiply on the land.”*

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Everything with life from the Lord in it reproduces and multiplies beyond measure—not so much during our physical lives, but to an astounding degree in the next life.

In the Word, *reproducing* or being fruitful applies to the elements of love, and *multiplying*, to the elements of faith. Fruit born of love holds the seed by which it multiplies so prolifically.

The Lord’s *blessing* in the Word also symbolizes fruitfulness and multiplication, because these are its result.

Genesis 1:23. *And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

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Genesis 1:24, 25. *And God said, "Let the earth produce each living soul according to its kind: the beast, and that which moves, and the wild animal of the earth, each according to its kind"; and so it was done. And God made each wild animal of the earth according to its kind, and each beast according to its kind, and every animal creeping on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.*

Like the earth, we are unable to produce any good unless we have first been sown with religious insights, which enable us to see what to believe and do.

The role of the intellect is to hear the Word, while the role of the will is to do it. To hear the Word and not act is to claim we believe it although we do not live by it. People who act like this separate the two and split their minds. The Lord says they are stupid:

Everyone who hears my words and does them I compare to a prudent man who built his house on rock. But everyone who hears my words and does not do them I compare to a stupid man who built his house on sand. (Matthew 7:24, 26)

What the intellect grasps is symbolized, as shown [§40], by creeping animals that the waters cause to creep out and birds flying over the land and over the face of the expanse. What the will is intent on is symbolized by the *living soul* that *the earth* is to *produce*, by the *beast* and *that which creeps*, and by the *wild animal of the earth*.

45

People who lived in the earliest times used the same kinds of symbols for the contents of the intellect and the will. In consequence, the different types of creature have a similar representation in the prophets and throughout the Old Testament Word.

Beasts are of two kinds: bad (because they are dangerous) and good (because they are tame). Bad animals—bears, wolves, and [feral] dogs, for instance—symbolize evil things in us. Good animals—young cattle, sheep, lambs—symbolize the good, gentle things in us. Because the present theme concerns people who are being reborn, the beasts in this verse are the good, tame ones, symbolizing feelings of affection.

The traits in us that belong to a lower order and rise more out of our body are called the wild animals of the earth; they are cravings and appetites.

Many examples from the Word can clarify the fact that *beasts* or animals symbolize the feelings we have—negative feelings if we are evil, positive feelings if we are good. Take these verses in Ezekiel:

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Here, now, I am yours, [mountains of Israel,] and I will turn to face you, so that you may be tilled and sown; and I will multiply human and animal upon you, and they will multiply and reproduce; and I will cause you to live as in your ancient times. (Ezekiel 36:9, 10, 11)

This speaks of regeneration. In Joel:

Do not be afraid, animals of my field; because the living-places of the desert have become grassy. (Joel 2:22)

In David:

I was dull-witted; I was like the animals, in God's sight. (Psalms 73:22)

In Jeremiah:

Look! The days are coming when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the

seed of human and the seed of animal; and I will watch over them to build and to plant. (Jeremiah 31:27, 28)

This speaks of regeneration.

[2] *Wild animals* have the same symbolism. In Hosea, for example:

I will strike a pact with them on that day—with the wild animal of the field, and with the bird in the heavens and the creeping animal of the earth. (Hosea 2:18)

In Job:

Of the wild animal of the earth you are not to be afraid, as you will have a compact with the stones of the field, and the wild animal of the field will be peaceful toward you. (Job 5:22, 23)

In Ezekiel:

I will strike a pact of peace with you and bring an end on the earth to the bad wild animal, so that people may live securely in the wilderness. (Ezekiel 34:25)

In Isaiah:

The wild animal of the field will honor me because I have put water in the desert. (Isaiah 43:20)

In Ezekiel:

In its branches nested every bird of the heavens, and under its branches bred every wild animal of the field, and in its shade lived all the great nations. (Ezekiel 31:6)

This describes Assyrians, who symbolize a person with a spiritual focus and who are being compared to the Garden of Eden. In David:

Give glory to Jehovah, all you angels of his; give glory from the earth, you sea creatures, fruit tree, wild animal, and every beast, creeping animal, and bird on the wing. (Psalms 148:2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10)

This lists exactly the same things [as the present chapter]: sea creatures, fruit tree, wild animal, beast, creeping animal, and bird. Unless they symbolized living things in us, they could never be said to give glory to Jehovah.

[3] The prophets draw a careful distinction between the animals *of the earth* and the animals of the field.

It is good things that have been called animals up to this point, just as the people closest to the Lord in heaven are termed living creatures both in Ezekiel and in John:

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell down before the throne on their faces and worshiped the Lamb. (Revelation 7:11; 19:4)

People to whom the gospel is to be preached are also called created beings, since they are to be created anew:

Go throughout the world and preach the gospel to every created being. (Mark 16:15)

More evidence that these words enfold the mysteries of regeneration can be seen in differences between the present verse and the last. The last says that the earth produced the living soul, the beast, and the wild animal of the earth. The present one employs a different order,

saying that God made the wild animal of the earth and then the beast. At first we produce results as if on our own, as we do later, too, before developing a heavenly nature. Regeneration, then, starts with the outer self and moves to the inner, which is why a change in the order occurs, and outermost things come first.

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All this verifies the premise: In the fifth stage we speak with conviction (an attribute of the intellect) and in the process strengthen ourselves in truth and goodness. The things we then produce have life in them and are called the fish of the sea and the birds in the heavens. And in the sixth stage we act with conviction (an attribute of the intellect) and therefore with love (an attribute of the will) in speaking truth and doing good. What we then produce is called a living soul, an animal. Because this is the point at which we begin to act as much with love as with conviction, we become spiritual people, who are called [God's] image—the very next subject.

49

Genesis 1:26. *And God said, "Let us make a human in our image, after our likeness; and these will rule over the fish of the sea and over the bird in the heavens, and over the beast, and over all the earth, and over every creeping animal that creeps on the earth."*

To members of the earliest church, whom the Lord addressed face to face, he appeared as a human being. (Many things could be told about these people, but this is not the right time.) As a consequence, they used the term *human* for none but him, or for his qualities. They did not even call themselves human, excepting whatever they could tell he gave them, such as all the good embraced by love and all the truth espoused by faith. These traits they described as human, because they were the Lord's.

[2] As a consequence, the terms *human being* and *son of humankind* in the prophets have the Lord as their highest meaning. At a lower but still internal level, the meaning is wisdom and understanding and accordingly everyone who has been reborn. An example from Jeremiah:

I looked at the earth, and there—void and emptiness; and to the heavens, and there—no light in them! I looked, and there—not a human! And all the birds of the heavens had fled. (Jeremiah 4:23, 25)

At the inner level, the following passage in Isaiah uses a human being to mean one reborn, and on the highest level the Lord himself, as an exemplar:

This is what Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel and its fashioner, has said: “I made the earth, and the human being on it I created. My hands stretched out the heavens, and to their whole army I gave commands.” (Isaiah 45:11, 12, 13)

[3] For this reason, the prophets saw the Lord as a human being. Ezekiel was one who did:

Above the expanse was a seeming appearance of sapphire stone, like a throne, and on the likeness of a throne was what looked like the appearance of a person on it, high above. (Ezekiel 1:26)

When Daniel saw the Lord, he called him a “Son of Humankind,” or human being, which is the same thing:

I looked, and there! In the clouds of the sky, it was as if the Son of Humankind was coming. And he

came to the Ancient One, and they brought him before [the Ancient One]. And he was given power to rule, and glory, and kingship; and all peoples, nations, and tongues will serve him. His ruling power is eternal, a power that will not pass away, and his kingship one that will not perish. (Daniel 7:13, 14)

[4] In fact, the Lord often calls himself a Son of Humankind, or human; echoing the prophecy in Daniel that he will come in glory, he says:

They will see the Son of Humankind coming in the clouds of the sky with strength and glory. (Matthew 24:23, 30)

“The clouds of the heavens” (or sky) is what the literal meaning of the Word is called. “Strength and glory” are terms for the Word’s inner meaning, which at each and every point focuses exclusively on the Lord and his kingdom. This focus is what gives the inner meaning strength and glory.

50

What the people of the earliest church meant when they spoke of the Lord’s *image* involves more than can be put into words.

People have no idea whatever that the Lord governs them through angels and spirits, or that at least two spirits and two angels accompany each of them. The spirits create a link with the world of spirits, and the angels create one with heaven. Unless we have a channel of communication open to the world of spirits through spirits and to heaven through angels (and in this way to the Lord through heaven), we have absolutely no chance at

life. Our life depends totally on such a connection. If the spirits and angels withdrew from us, we would be destroyed in a second.

[2] As long as we are unregenerate, we are governed in a completely different way than the regenerate. Before regeneration we have with us evil spirits whose grip on us is so strong that the angels, though present, can achieve hardly any results. All they can do is head us off from rushing into the worst kind of evil and divert us toward some form of good. They even use our own appetites to lead us toward good, and the illusions of our senses to lead us toward truth. Under these circumstances we communicate with the world of spirits by means of the spirits around us but not so much with heaven, since the evil spirits are in charge and the angels only deflect their influence.

[3] When we are regenerate, on the other hand, the angels are in charge, inspiring us with all kinds of goodness and truth and instilling a horror and fear of evil and falsity.

Angels do give us guidance, but they are mere helpers; the Lord alone governs us, *through* angels and spirits. Since angels have their assisting role, the words of this verse appear in the plural—“Let us make a human in our image.” But since only the Lord rules and manages us, the next verse uses the singular—“God created the human in his image.” The Lord states his role clearly in Isaiah:

This is what Jehovah has said, your Redeemer and the one who formed you from the womb: “I, Jehovah, make all things, stretching *the heavens* out

on my own, spreading *the earth* out by myself.”  
(Isaiah 44:24)

The angels themselves confess that they have no power but act only at the Lord’s behest.

51

As far as an *image* is concerned, it is not the likeness of another thing but is *after a likeness* of it, which explains the wording, “Let us make a human in our image, after our likeness.” A person with a spiritual character is an image, but a person with a heavenly character is a likeness or exact copy. Genesis 1 deals with the spiritual person, Genesis 2 with the heavenly person.

The Lord calls the person of spiritual character (or an “image”) a child of light, as he does in John:

Those who walk in the dark do not know where they are heading. As long as you have the light, believe in the light, in order to be children of light. (John 12:35, 36)

He also calls such a person a friend:

You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:14, 15)

But the person of heavenly character (or a “likeness”) he calls God’s child in John:

As many as did accept him, to them he gave the power to be God’s children, to those believing in his name, who had their birth not from blood or from the flesh’s will or from a man’s will but from God. (John 1:12, 13)

52

As long as we are spiritual, we rule the outer self first and from this the inner, as illustrated here in Genesis 1:26: *and they will rule over the fish of the sea and*

*over the bird in the heavens, and over the beast, and over all the earth, and over every creeping animal that creeps on the earth.* When we become heavenly, though, and do good because we love to, we rule the inner self first and from it the outer. The Lord describes this as being true of himself; and as it is true of him, it is also true of the heavenly type of person, who is a likeness of him. The words appear in David:

You have made him rule over the works of your hands; all things you have put under his feet: the flock and all the herds, and also the animals of the fields, the bird in the heavens, and the fish of the sea—that which travels the paths of the seas. (Psalms 8:6–8)

In this passage, animals receive the first mention, next the bird, then the fish of the sea, because the heavenly person proceeds from love, which belongs to the will. Things are different with the spiritual person, for whom the fish and birds come first and the animals follow; fish and birds are associated with the intellect, which concerns itself with faith.

Genesis 1:27. *And God created the human in his image; in God's image he created them.*

53

*Image* comes up twice in this verse because faith, which belongs to the intellect, is called *his* image, but love, which belongs to the will, is called *God's* image. Love comes second in the spiritual person but first in the heavenly person.

*Male and female he created them.*

54

The inner meaning of male and female was very familiar to the earliest church, although their successors lost touch with this secret when they lost sight of any deeper import to the Word.

These earliest people found their greatest happiness and pleasure in marriage. Whenever they could possibly draw a comparison between something else and marriage, they did so, in order to perceive the happiness of marriage in that other entity. Being people of depth, they enjoyed only the deeper aspects of things. External objects were just for looking at; their thoughts were occupied instead with the things those objects represented. External objects, then, were nothing to them, serving only as a springboard for reflection on inner realities, and these for contemplation of heavenly realities and so of the Lord, who was everything to them. The same process caused them to reflect on the heavenly marriage, which they could tell was the source of the happiness in their own marriages.

As a result, they called the intellect in the spiritual being *male* and the will there *female*; and when the two worked together, they called it a marriage.

That religion initiated the practice, which became quite common, of calling the church Daughter or Virgin (as in “the Virgin Zion,” “the Virgin Jerusalem”) and also Wife, on account of its desire for good. For more on this, see the treatment of Genesis 2:23 and 3:15 [§§156, 253].

55

Genesis 1:28. *And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Reproduce and multiply, and fill the earth and harness it, and rule over the fish of the sea and over the bird in the heavens and over every living animal creeping on the earth.”*

The earliest people called the interconnection of intellect and will or of faith and love a marriage, so the generation of any good from that marriage they termed

*reproduction*, and the generation of any truth they termed *multiplication*. Because they did so, the prophets did so too; in Ezekiel, for instance:

I will multiply human and animal upon you, [mountains of Israel,] and they will multiply and reproduce; and I will cause you to live as in your ancient times. And I will do good to you beyond that at your beginnings, and you will know that I am Jehovah. And I will cause *humankind*—my people Israel—to walk upon you. (Ezekiel 36:8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

Humankind here means the spiritual being, which is also called Israel; the ancient times mean the very earliest church; and the beginnings mean the ancient church, which followed the Flood. The multiplying (of truth) comes before the reproducing (of good) because these verses describe the person who is being reborn, not the one who has been reborn already.

[2] When the intellect couples with the will in us, or faith with love, the Lord through Isaiah calls us a married land:

No longer will your land be named Devastated; but you will be called I Am Well Pleased with Her, and your land, Married, since Jehovah will take pleasure in you. And your land will be married. (Isaiah 62:4)

The fruits of truth produced by this marriage are called sons, while the fruits of goodness are called daughters, as occurs quite often in the Word.

[3] The *earth is filled* when truth and goodness proliferate, because when the Lord *blesses* and *says things*

(that is, operates), goodness and truth grow beyond measure. As he states:

The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed that you have taken and sown in your field, which to be sure is the smallest of all the seeds; but when it has grown, it is bigger than all the plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches. (Matthew 13:31, 32)

The mustard seed is the good we have before developing a spiritual orientation; it is the smallest of all the seeds, because we suppose that we do good on our own. Anything we do on our own is evil through and through, but since we are engaged in the process of being reborn, we have a trace—the smallest possible trace—of goodness. [4] Later, as faith becomes more closely connected with love, it grows larger—a plant. When the connection is completed, it turns into a tree, and then the birds of the heavens (which here as before are true ideas, or the contents of the intellect) nest in its branches (the facts we know).

When we are spiritual people or are becoming spiritual, we are subject to conflict; and this is why it says *harness the earth, and rule.*

56

Genesis 1:29. *And God said, "Here, now, I am giving you every seed-bearing plant on the face of all the earth and every tree that has fruit; the tree that produces seed will serve you for food."*

A person whose nature is heavenly enjoys only heavenly things, which are called heavenly food because they harmonize with the life such a person lives. A person

whose nature is spiritual enjoys spiritual things, which are called spiritual food because they harmonize with the life this person lives. A person focused on the physical world similarly enjoys earthly things, which are called food because they are vital to such a person; these are mainly facts.

As spiritual people are the subject at present, their spiritual food is depicted by the representative items here. *The seed-bearing plant* represents a spiritual type of this food, as does *the tree that has fruit*; the more general term for both is *the tree that produces seed*. These people's earthly food is described in the next verse.

*The seed-bearing plant* is every true idea that looks toward a useful goal. *The tree that has fruit* is religious good; the fruit is what the Lord gives the heavenly person, but the seed leading to new fruit is what he gives the spiritual person, which is why it says *the tree that produces seed will serve you for food*.

57

The next chapter, treating of the heavenly type of person, will demonstrate that heavenly food is called the fruit from a tree. Here the Lord's words through Ezekiel will suffice:

Beside the river, on its bank, on this side and that, grows every food tree. Its leaf will not fall, and its fruit will not be devoured. Month by month it is reborn, because its waters are going out from the sanctuary. And its fruit will serve as food, and its leaf, as medicine. (Ezekiel 47:12)

“Water from the sanctuary” symbolizes the living energy and mercy of the Lord, who is the “sanctuary.” The fruit

symbolizes wisdom, which is food to people of heavenly character. The leaf is intelligence, which is given to them for a purpose referred to as “medicine.”

The idea that spiritual food is called a plant (or grass), though, is expressed in David:

My shepherd, I will lack nothing. In grassy pastures  
you make me lie down. (Psalms 23:1, 2)

58

Genesis 1:30. “*And every wild animal of the earth and every bird in the heavens and every animal creeping on the earth, in which there is a living soul—every green plant will serve them for nourishment*”; and so it was done.

This verse depicts the spiritual person’s earthly food. The *wild animal of the earth* symbolizes such a person’s earthly plane of existence, as does the *bird in the heavens*, both of which received for *nourishment* the *green plant* or grass. Concerning this person’s two kinds of food—both physical and spiritual—David has the following to say:

Jehovah causes grain to sprout for the beast and  
plants for the service of humankind, to bring bread  
from the earth. (Psalms 104:14)

“The beast” stands for the wild animal of the earth and at the same time for the bird in the heavens, both of which David mentions in verses 11 and 12 of the same Psalm.

59

In this verse the nourishment of the earthly self is restricted to *green plants* for the following reason.

While we are being reborn and learning to concern ourselves with the spirit, we are in constant battle (which is why the Lord’s church is described as militant).

Up to this point our cravings have controlled us, because our whole being is cobbled together out of nothing but those cravings and the distorted ideas they spawn. We cannot rid ourselves of those longings and distortions instantaneously during regeneration; to do so would destroy us completely, since we have not yet acquired another way of life. Consequently, evil spirits are left with us for a long time to trigger our appetites, which then break down in countless different ways, and break down so thoroughly that the Lord can turn them into something good. This is the way we reform.

In the time of battle, evil spirits leave us no other nourishment than the equivalent of green plants. (Those spirits hold an absolute hatred for everything good and true—for anything having to do with love for the Lord and faith in him, these being the only good and true things that exist—because such things hold eternal life within them.) But from time to time the Lord gives us additional food that can be compared to seed-bearing plants and fruit trees: calm and peace, with their accompanying joy and happiness.

[2] If the Lord were not protecting us every moment, every split second, we would be wiped out instantly. Hatred against any aspect of love for the Lord or faith in him dominates the world of spirits, and the hatred is so deadly that it defies description.

I can testify to the truth of this absolutely. For several years now I have visited the next world and the spirits there, though remaining in my body, and the evil ones (the worst, in fact) have crowded around me, sometimes numbering in the thousands. They have been allowed to spew out their venom and harass me in every

possible way, but still they were unable to hurt a single hair on my head, so closely did the Lord guard me.

All these years of experience have taught me a great deal about the nature of the world of spirits and about the conflict that those who are being reborn inevitably suffer if they are to win the happiness of eternal life.

No one, however, can learn enough from a general description to develop an unshakable belief in this information, so the details, with the Lord's divine mercy, must come in what follows.

60

Genesis 1:31. *And God saw all that he had done and, yes, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

This time it says *very good* but previously it said simply *good*, because now the components of faith combine with those of love to make one entity. A marriage between spiritual and heavenly things has taken place.

61

“Spiritual” is the adjective for anything having to do with religious knowledge. “Heavenly” applies to everything having to do with love for the Lord and for our neighbor. Spiritual things fall in the province of our intellect; heavenly, in that of our will.

62

The periods and stages of our regeneration—both the whole process and individual cycles within it—divide into *six*, and these six are called our days of creation. Step by step we advance from being nonhuman to being somewhat human, though only a little, then more and more so up to the sixth day, when we become [God's] image.

63

All the while the Lord is constantly fighting on our behalf against evil and falsity and through these battles

strengthens us in truth and goodness. The time of conflict is when the Lord is at work (for which reason the prophets call a regenerate person the work of God's fingers [Psalms 8:3, 6; Isaiah 19:25; 29:23; 45:11; 60:21; 64:8; Lamentations 4:2]), and he does not rest until love takes the lead. Then the conflict ends.

When the work progresses so far that faith is united with love, it is called *very good*, since the Lord now makes us likenesses of himself.

At the end of the sixth day, evil spirits retreat and good ones take their place. We are led into heaven, or the Paradise of heaven, described in the next chapter.



THIS, then, is the Word's inner meaning, the true and genuine life in it, which does not reveal itself at all in the literal meaning. But the number of secrets hidden within is so large that volumes would fail to unfold all of them. I have offered just a few, of a type confirming that regeneration is the theme and that it progresses from outer to inner self.

That is what angels see in the Word. They know nothing whatever of the literal contents, or the most obvious meaning of even one word, still less the names of different lands, cities, rivers, and people that come up so frequently in the narrative and prophetic parts. All they picture are the things those words and names symbolize. Adam in Paradise, for instance, brings the earliest church to their minds—and not even the church itself but its belief in the Lord. Noah brings up the picture of that church's remnant among its successors, lasting up to

Abram's time. Abraham never makes them think of a man who lived long ago but of a saving faith, which he represented. And so on. In sum, they see spiritual and heavenly realities in the Word, completely separate from the words and names.

65

Several people found themselves carried up into heaven's outermost entry hall while I was reading the Word, and they spoke to me from there. They said that they had no inkling of a single word or letter there but saw only the things symbolized on the next deeper level of meaning. These things, according to their description, were so beautiful, followed in such a perfect sequence, and affected them so deeply that they called it glory.

66

The Word has four major modes of writing:

1. The mode of [the people in] the earliest church. Their method of expressing themselves involved thought of the spiritual and heavenly things represented by the earthly, mundane objects they mentioned. Not only did they express themselves in words representing higher things, they also spun those words into a kind of narrative thread to lend them greater life. This practice gave the earliest people the fullest pleasure possible.

This early manner of writing is meant in Hannah's prophecy: "Speak deeply, deeply; let what is ancient come out of your mouth" (1 Samuel 2:3). David calls those representative signs "enigmas from ancient times" (Psalms 78:2, 3, 4). Moses received the present accounts of creation and the Garden of Eden, extending up to the time of Abram, from the descendants of the earliest church.

[2] 2. The narrative mode. This mode is used in the books of Moses from Abram's story on, and in Joshua,

Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The historical events in these books are exactly what they appear to be in the literal sense, but as a whole and in detail they still contain an entirely different meaning on the inner plane. What follows will, with the Lord's divine mercy, explain that meaning in order.

3. The prophetic mode. The inspiration for this was the mode used by the earliest church, a manner of writing [the authors] revered. But the prophetic mode lacks the cohesiveness and semi-historical quality of the earliest. It is choppy, and almost completely unintelligible except on the inner level, which holds profound secrets forming a well-connected chain of ideas. They deal with our outer and inner beings, the many stages of the church, heaven itself, and—at the very core—the Lord.

4. David's Psalms. This mode is midway between the prophetic mode and people's usual way of speaking. The inner meaning speaks of the Lord under the character of David when he was king.

## Biographical Note

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**E**MANUEL SWEDENBORG (1688–1772) was born Emanuel Swedberg (or Svedberg) in Stockholm, Sweden, on January 29, 1688 (Julian calendar). He was the third of the nine children of Jesper Swedberg (1653–1735) and Sara Behm (1666–1696). At the age of eight he lost his mother. After the death of his only older brother ten days later, he became the oldest living son. In 1697 his father married Sara Bergia (1666–1720), who developed great affection for Emanuel and left him a significant inheritance. His father, a Lutheran clergyman, later became a celebrated and controversial bishop, whose diocese included the Swedish churches in Pennsylvania and in London, England.

After studying at the University of Uppsala (1699–1709), Emanuel journeyed to England, Holland, France, and Germany (1710–1715) to study and work with leading scientists in western Europe. Upon his return he apprenticed as an engineer under the brilliant Swedish inventor Christopher Polhem (1661–1751). He gained favor with Sweden's King Charles XII (1682–1718), who gave him a salaried position as an overseer of Sweden's mining industry (1716–1747). Although he was engaged, he never married.

After the death of Charles XII, Emanuel was ennobled by Queen Ulrika Eleonora (1688–1741), and his last name was changed to Swedenborg (or Svedenborg). This change in status gave him a seat in the Swedish House of Nobles, where he remained an active participant in the Swedish government throughout his life.

A member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, he devoted himself to scientific studies and philosophical reflections that culminated in a number of publications, most notably a comprehensive three-volume work on mineralogy (1734) that brought him recognition across Europe as a scientist and philosopher. After 1734 he redirected his research and publishing to a study of anatomy in search of the interface between the soul and body, making several significant discoveries in physiology.

From 1743 to 1745 he entered a transitional phase that resulted in a shift of his main focus from science and philosophy to theology. Throughout the rest of his life he maintained that this shift was brought about by Jesus Christ, who appeared to him, called him to a new mission, and opened his perception to a permanent dual consciousness of this life and the life after death.

He devoted the last decades of his life to studying Scripture and publishing eighteen theological titles that draw on the Bible, reasoning, and his own spiritual experiences. These works present a Christian theology with unique perspectives on the nature of God, the spiritual world, the Bible, the human mind, and the path to salvation.

Swedenborg died in London on March 29, 1772, at the age of eighty-four.