

ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLY

by Mr. H.D.G. Groeneveld
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The Lord's New Church Which Is Nova Hierosolyma
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In the meetings we had, we were truly assembled, if in our midst was the Word of the Lord, the Third Testament. The first thing is that we see and acknowledge that nowhere in the world can there be found any good and true that is substantial and receptive to the rational understanding than in this Testament. There is a difference between a willing and thinking from this Testament and a willing and thinking from any other source, which difference is such that between the two there is an abyss. It is the difference between the willing and thinking from the Kingdom of the Lord and the willing and thinking from the kingdom of the world. That that plane of Divine Good and True is made visible to us we received as a gift from our fathers in the Church, who have struggled and given their life to the Lord, as a result of which they received the idea and were opened to see that the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are the Word of God, the Lord Himself in His Divine Human, that is, in Divine Rational form. May we also receive from the Lord genuine things which will be gifts for our sons in the Church.

The idea that the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are the Word came more down in the natural plane, and then the letter of the Word was seen as a Divine Revelation in rational form. The rational form became the principle in the Church instead of the idea that the Writings are the Word itself of the Lord. Instead of as it were in the head, the principle was laid in the feet of the Divine Human. If this thought becomes the principle, an interior development of the Church is excluded.

If we approach the Third Testament with the idea that it is the Word of the Lord, we enter it with great fear. In the longing to see the Order of the Lord in relation to the human race we feel that we have to humble ourselves. In seeing His Order in relation to the human race we may see His Order in relation to man and the to the Church, because His Order in universals is the same as His Order in particulars. We are longing to see why the Lord gave first His Old Testament, why His birth on earth, why His New Testament, why His Third Testament, because in this universal Order of saving the human race and of bringing it into a real and fixed conjunction with Him, we may see His Order of saving man as a Church in particular, and the Church as a whole, and of bringing it into a conjunction as Bridegroom and Bride.

We know from the Word that before His birth on earth the Lord had no human of His own, and that He operated by means of the Heavens. The human race had then a natural mind, that is, the rational and the natural itself, which was opened for the influx of the Lord and indeed immediately for the influx of the Good of the Lord in their external will for the true, and mediately for the influx of the True of the heavens in their external understanding. They were not in an internal understanding of the True, for we read in the Word that the Churches before the Coming of the Lord were not in the True, and that they were representative Churches.

To get an internal understanding of the True, besides the celestial degree, the spiritual

and the natural degrees of the human mind had to become active too, but on account of the fall of the human race they have to become active separated from the evils and falsities of every former degree. By the opening of the degrees the Lord had to be present more externally in their will, while the interiors of the their external will were more and more closed; and at the same time the Lord had to descend with the True itself more externally in the Heavens. At last the Heavens and the earth would meet each other. A total destroying of the Heavens and the earth would be at hand, because there would be no power in the human for the conjunction of the heavens and the earth with the Lord. This was the moment that the True itself of the Lord made His conjunction with the human. The Lord made then a plane in His Human for the influx of the Good itself.

The meeting of the Heavens and the earth we see represented in the New Testament by the betrothal of Joseph and the virgin Mary. According to the Word Joseph represents the true of the Heavens and the virgin Mary the love of the true. That Mary represents the love of the true we can see because the immediate influx was the influx of the Good in the external will for the true. We read in the New Testament, (Matthew 1:19,20): “Then Joseph her husband (man?) being (a) just (man), and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary they wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” And in verse 24, we read, “then Joseph, being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.” Here we see that the True of the Heavens in the natural was minded to leave a conjunction with the human race, because, being just, it was unable to see that another True could being the human race on a real plane of life, but after being in a dream, that is, in an unconscious natural state, the True of the Heavens saw the new plane of life on which it has to operate. We hear here the word of the Lord, “O Father, not My will but Thine be done.” The mediate influx of the True of the Heavens was no longer now in the external, but in the interior understanding of the human race.

If we see the Order in relation to man, the Lord operates thus before His birth as it were in man mediate through the True of Heaven in man in his external understanding and immediately in his external will for the True. That there is an operation through the True of Heaven we can see in the Word where we read that the understanding can be raised into the light of heaven. This True of Heaven is the objective of man, and the objectives of the man of the Church make the objective of the Church. The objectives of the men of the Church being in the beginning external must be led and instructed out of the light of the Doctrine of the Church, being spiritual out of celestial origin. This leading and instruction is thus a leading and instruction of the understanding of the men of the Church.

By the influx of the True of heaven into the external understanding of man his understanding is open for the truths for the real plane of life in the natural mind. In this mind all evils and falsities are hidden which prevent man from seeing not only the real plane of life but also the genuine true of heaven, thus a more interior objective. For this plane of life there must be leading and instruction by those who are called by the Lord to lead the human race by the truths to the good of life. Truths must come into existence which will be come as laws, in the beginning as external laws, later as interior laws, by which man may see that by surpassing them he prevents the coming into existence of his genuine plane of life, and thus prevents the influx of the Lord in his external will for the true.

When the true of heaven becomes more concrete to man, that is, to the natural plane, and the influx of the Lord has come in the outermost of his external will, the Lord forms in

man a new plane, an internal plane, and indeed heaven itself. The objective becomes the subjective and this interior understanding is now open for the genuine doctrinals and for the interior things of heaven.

If we now see after ten years the development of the Church, we see that out of the principle of the Church, that is, that the Third Testament is the Divine Human of the Lord and thus that there is an internal sense in the Word to which must be given form by the Doctrine of the Church, there has been a descending in the Church by degrees, thus through the celestial, spiritual and natural state, till at last it came into a state in which the truths cannot but be falsified. In relation to this we may see what is written in the Word about the Adamic Church. This Church went through its golden, silver, copper, and iron ages and came at last into an age about which it is said that iron was mingled with clay. In the golden age the natural mind was opened for all the good and truths of heaven. The natural mind was a ground in which the seeds of the good and of the true could grow, and the mind appeared in all its actions of the body. In the descending of the degrees evils and falsities came into existence. The natural mind directed itself more and more to the body, till at last the corporeal things were the only things to which attention was paid. At that moment the Lord closed the celestial heaven and opened a new spiritual heaven with which the human race could come into conjunction, if it came upon a new plane of life. As a means for this the human race received a written Word by which it was able to see the order of life and thus the evil things which must be shunned.

As has been said, the Doctrine of the Church has to enter the different degrees of the mind that the evils and falsities may come out which prevent a real plane of life. When the idea that the Third Testament has an internal sense came more down in the natural plane, that sense was seen in the letter of the Word, in this regard, that for every word the spiritual meaning must be taken. By doing this the principle is as it were laid, instead of in the head, in the feet of the Divine Human, present in the Third Testament. With this principle an interior development is not possible, because it does not enter the natural quality, and by putting this out of sight it does not need a priesthood whose function it is to lead by the truths to the good of life. In coming still more to the natural plane it appeared that the mind was directed to the body alone and indeed to corporeal things. All the feelings for a so called beauty of the body, and all personal things, have in the corporeal things their origin for their existence.

The Church can only come into an interior development if the evils and falsities in the former state are shunned and the mind is directed to the Word. A new plane of life will come into existence and a spirit from a new substance out of the Doctrine of the Church will be with us. Then the Lord will lead us that we may live in Him and He in us. Then we will glorify His Name, for the Lord alone is Life.