

THE STORY OF CREATION IN GENESIS THE THIRD DAY OF CREATION

**From
"The Seven Days of Creation"
by
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The seeds of truth and their growth.

On the first day of the new creation of the heart and the spirit, God gives to man the light of truth: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." This first light of the spirit is given to man by the spirit of God moving upon the faces of the waters. In our first lecture it was shown that by the faces of the waters were signified the things of religion which one imbibed in one's childhood, memories and affections about our Lord which impressed our childish minds, and which are now revived by the "Spirit of God", with the result that man receives the first light of truth.

On the second day the subject is the dividing between the waters, and the expanse between the waters below and the waters above; the expanse or firmament being called heaven. In our last lecture it was shown that the waters signify the truths of God, that the waters below the expanse signify these truths in our memory. whereas the waters above the expanse signify the truths of the spirit: truths which belong to what our Lord called "the kingdom of heaven within you".

Turning now to the third day which is the subject of the present lecture, we read: "And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let the dry appear: and it was so. And God called the dry, land." (*)

In the first two days or states of a man's new creation or rebirth, the mind is directed towards the truths of religion; he comes into light, he sees the things of the spirit as all-important. In these states he is delighted with the vision of the love and wisdom of God. These things must not remain things of the understanding, things of sight or vision merely, but must affect man's life. There must be good ground, a solid foundation on which the things of the spirit, things of spiritual life, can rest and from which the life can grow. Wherefore God said, "Let the dry appear and God called the dry, land."

Waters, in the Word of God, as was shown in our last lecture, stand for or signify truths. These flow through the mind. But if man remains absorbed in truths and does not look to the ground of life, he is like a world with nothing but sea and sky.

(*) We use a more literal translation than that of the King James version of the Bible.

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He has no resting place. He must have land, looking towards the Paradise of God. He must have something firm, a determination, a fixed direction to his life, and now to a new life; for a vision of God without a fixed determination to make one's life new, a determination to lead a Godly life, a life of love to God and love to the neighbor, is of no use. We often see religious people who are all sky and sea but no land, who have no ground in which things can take root and grow. Such are carried away by an abstract vision, but have nothing concrete. Such are all who do not order their natural life, who have not an ordered life in relation to the world in which they live, upon which the things of the spirit can rest.

When a man has a determination to lead a new life, to lead a daily life of service to God and the neighbor, he has the beginning of good ground in which seeds can grow, and which in time will bear fruit, in a rich and noble life. Wherefore the description of the second day continues: "And God said, Let the land bring forth the tender herb, the herb seeding seed, and th~ fruit tree bearing fruit whose seed was in itself, after its kind and God saw that it was good."

It was well known that by seed is meant the Word of God; for the Lord in explaining the parable of the Sower who went forth to sow, said in so many words, "The seed is the Word of God," Luke 8:11, and "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." Math. 13:37.

In the *Arcana Coelestia*, written by Emanuel Swedenborg, we read: "When the 'land' or man has thus been prepared to receive celestial seeds from the Lord, and to produce something of what is good and true, then the Lord first causes some tender thing to spring forth, which is called the tender herb; then something more useful which again bears seed in itself, and which is called the herb seeding seed, and at length something

good which becomes fruitful, and which is called the tree bearing fruit whose seed is in itself." *Arcana Coelestia* No. 29.

Because mankind reflects so little on the spiritual growths which take place in the mind, and does not see what is their nature, it is difficult to illustrate the difference between these three kinds of things which grow in man in the third day of his spiritual creation. The point, however, which is clear, is that if man will let the Lord implant the seeds of truth in good ground, they have the power of growing into a Paradise of wisdom and of multiplying immensely, just as plants and trees multiply by means of their seeds. Therefore seed is so frequently mentioned in the description of the third day.

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Here it is to be noted that the herbs and trees here spoken of are to be distinguished from the tree of life, and fruit trees which are spoken of as being in the Garden of Eden on the seventh day, after birds, animals and man had been created.

On this third day of creation, according to the description given, there was as yet no sun or moon, no fish, birds, or animals, and no man. Thus this day signifies a state of life in man in which the things of life with man are not as yet truly animate, that is, there is nothing truly moving or living with animate life. Concerning this we read in the Writings of Swedenborg: "The man who is being regenerated is at first of such a quality that he supposes the good which he does and the truth which he speaks to be from himself, so that whoever supposes them to be from himself has not as yet the life of true faith; which nevertheless he can afterwards receive, for he can not as yet believe that they are from the Lord. This state is here represented by things inanimate and the succeeding one of the life of faith by animate things." *Arcana Coelestia* No. 29.

This is "a state of repentance, in which a man, from his internal man, speaks piously and devoutly, and brings forth goods, like the works of charity, but which nevertheless are inanimate because he thinks they are from himself. These goods are called the tender grass, the herb seeding seed and afterwards the tree bearing fruit." *Arcana Coelestia* No. 9.

Every man may know, since the fact is self-evident, that all life is from God, and that man is not the origin of the life which is in him. God is love, and it is the nature of all love, and especially of the Divine Love, to give of Itself to others, to give them gifts. The greatest gift of God to man is life. God cannot, however, give to man Life Itself, for to give this to man would be to make man God. But He does give to man life in such a way that man feels life in himself as if it were his own. If man did not feel life in himself as if it were his own life, he would not be a man. This is the supreme gift of God to man. But God is the only source of life. He must continually give life to man. He gives it like the talent which the Lord gave to his servants to use; but the servant, though he was to use and as it were administer his Lord's talents, was to give account and to acknowledge

that it belonged to his Lord.

So it is with life. God gives to man life and all the things of life, as if they were man's own. Man must administer these things like a good and faithful servant, but he should acknowledge that they are our Lord's and only as it were loaned to him. He must not steal them by claiming them for his own.

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And yet the things of man's life, the truths which man thinks and speaks, the good things which one loves and does, appear so much his own, that at first he can not realize that they are the workings of God in him, for man in this state has not advanced far enough to realize, in any full sense, the presence of God and how He works the good things which man loves and does, and the true things which man thinks and speaks. God in this third day or third state of regeneration does not hold man guilty for this kind of theft of His gifts. Nevertheless, the good things man does and the true things man says remain as it were inanimate; they do not fully live. For it is only when all things of man's mind and of man's life are filled with the spirit and the presence of the Lord in such a way that man actually feels that God alone is the source of life and all things of life, that man's acts, his works and his speech become living or animate.

We will now turn to a consideration of some of the things which the Lord said about the seed. In explanation of the parable concerning the sower, He said: "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which receiveth seed by the wayside. But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth." Math. 13:19, 23.

The emphasis here is on the understanding of the Word, the understanding of truth, and thence willing and doing it. Many think that it is not necessary to understand the Word and doubt that it can be truly understood, thinking it is sufficient to have faith. Yet if one does not understand a thing, how can he know whether it is true or not, or if one does not understand the Word of God, what use is it, and how can one apply it to his life? Because the Word of God, which is called the Bible, has not been understood, many have lost interest in it; others have come to doubt it. If religion does not include the understanding of the Word, it remains merely an emotional religion, and as such is unstable. Man particularly wishes to understand that which he believes. Because the Word is not generally understood, and it is often thought that it cannot be understood, women predominate in the churches, and men often turn away, and the churches direct themselves largely to a merely emotional appeal.

Of those who hear but do not understand, it is said that the birds came and devoured up the seeds. In the lecture on the

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fifth day of creation, which treats of the creation of birds, we will show that birds signify the enlightened rational mind, or the inspiration brought by rational understanding of the things of the spirit; but here the devouring birds have the opposite signification, namely, mere reasoning, reasoning from fallacies and false appearances. If one does not understand the Word of God, one may be led astray by all manner of false reasoning.

The parable next treats of seed in stony places which sprang up, but on account of the lack of earth were parched by the sun. Such the Lord said, "is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he no root in himself and dureth for awhile; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended." Math. 13:20, 21.

If one accepts the Word of God "in spirit and in truth", one finds oneself opposed to the sham society which to large extent surrounds him. Such a one is averse to popular conceptions. He sees the mockery of what is often mistaken for culture and civilization. He makes for himself enemies of those who persecute him for showing up the mockeries that have such a strong popular appeal. If he has not sufficient depth of ground to withstand the tide of popular opinion with its false standards of approval and condemnation, he gets carried away, and the seeds of truth which sprang up with joy wither away.

Concerning the third type of reception we read: "He that receives seed among thorns is he that heareth the Word, and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word and he becometh unfruitful." Math. 13:22.

Now it is known that with some wealth proves a snare, and that all who put their heart primarily in the riches of this world are carried away. But it is also known that the poor are often discontented with their lot and bitter against God or society. Those who are primarily meant by the poor are those who in "The Ten Blessings" are called "poor in spirit" and by the rich are meant the rich in spirit, that is, those rich in the things of heaven.

We read in the Revelation of John that the "Son of Man" says, "Buy of me gold that thou mayest be rich." Rev. 6:15.

But in the parable of the sower as in other places the riches are those which "choke the Word". What are the spiritual riches which "choke the Word"? Spiritual riches are knowledges of religion, knowledges from the Word of God, theological learning. There are many to whom such knowledge, such learning,

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proves a snare. This applies to all who are proud of their theological learning, proud or vain of their knowledge of religion, proud of the amount of study they have given to the Bible; all such see only the letter and not the spirit of the Word of God. They indeed have a wealth of spiritual knowledge or learning, but it is useless wealth, wealth gathered for their own satisfaction and pride; such people proud of their own understanding tend to bring all religion into disrepute before the eyes of the superficial.

On the other hand, those who are poor in spirit are those who are humble, those who know that what they understand is hardly anything compared to the immense treasure within the Word of God; those who know that what they do understand is from the mercy of God and not their own cleverness.

The parable of the sower ends with the words: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience." Luke 8:15.

Here it is shown that the good ground is an honest and good heart, a humble obedience and keeping of the Word, with patience and endurance.

Can not any one who is willing see that the land and ground which was created on the third day is the same ground that the Lord said was "an honest and good heart", and that the seeds planted on that day are the seeds of truth, or the Word of God, which can bear fruit only in such ground? in the so-called Christian world how often the Word is not received in "ground" which is "an honest and good heart", but is received on shallow ground — shallow lives. This is why the world is what it is.