

Divine Providence

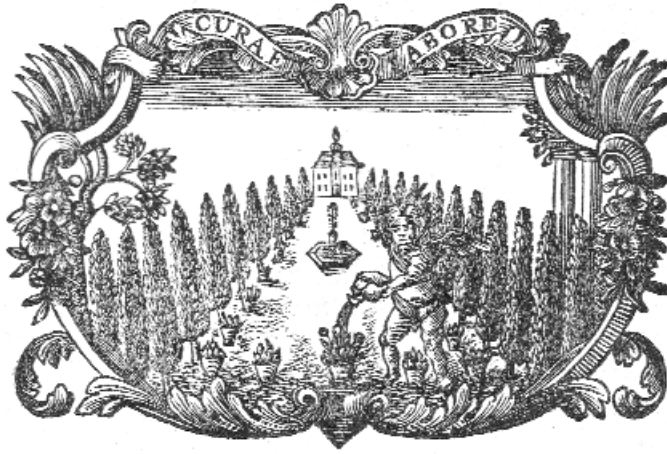
by Emanuel Swedenborg

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DIVINE PROVIDENCE





ANGELIC WISDOM ABOUT DIVINE PROVIDENCE



Divine Providence Is the Form of Government Exercised by the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom

TO understand what divine providence is—that it is the way the Lord's¹ divine love and wisdom govern us—it is important to be aware of the following things, which were presented in my book on the subject.² In the Lord, divine love is a property of divine wisdom and divine wisdom is a property of divine love (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 34–39).³ Divine love and wisdom cannot fail to be and to be manifested in others that it has created (§§47–51). Everything in the universe was created by divine love and wisdom (§§52, 53, 151–156). Everything in the created universe is a vessel of divine love and wisdom (§§54–60 [55–60]). The Lord looks like the sun to angels; its radiating warmth is love and its radiating light is wisdom (§§83–88, 89–92, 93–98, 296–301). The divine love and wisdom that emanate from the Lord constitute a single whole (§§99–102). The Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah,⁴ created the universe and everything in it from himself and not from nothing

(§§282–284, 290–295). These propositions may be found in the work entitled *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom*.⁵

2

Further, if we put these propositions together with what I said about creation in that work, it shows that the way the Lord's divine love and wisdom look after us is what we call divine providence. However, since that book was about creation and not about how the state of things was maintained after creation (which is the way the Lord is looking after us), I need to deal with that now. In this section, though, I will be dealing with the way the oneness of divine love and wisdom (or of what is good and true in divinity) is maintained in what has been created; and I will do so in the following sequence:⁶

1. The universe as a whole and in every detail was created out of divine love, by means of divine wisdom.
2. Divine love and wisdom radiate from the Lord as a single whole.
3. There is some image of this whole in everything that has been created.
4. It is the intent of divine providence that everything created, collectively and in every detail, should be this kind of whole, and that if it is not, it should become one.
5. The good that love does is actually good only to the extent that it is united to the truth that wisdom perceives, and the truth that wisdom perceives is actually true only to the extent that it is united to the good that love does.
6. If the good that love does is not united to the truth that wisdom perceives, it is not really good, but it may seem to be; and if the truth that wisdom perceives is not united to the good that love does, it is not really true, but it may seem to be.
7. The Lord does not let anything remain divided. This means that things must be focused either on what is both good and true or on what is both evil and false.
8. If something is focused on what is both good and true, then it is something; but if it is focused on what is both evil and false, it is not anything at all.
9. The Lord's divine providence works things out so that what is both evil and false promotes balance, evaluation, and purification, which means that it promotes the union of what is good and true in others.

1. *The universe as a whole and in every detail was created out of divine love, by means of divine wisdom.* I explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* that the Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah, is essentially divine love and wisdom, and that he himself created the universe and everything in it out of himself [§§28–33, 52–60, 282–295]. It then follows that the universe and everything in it was created out of divine love by means of divine wisdom.

I also explained in that work that love cannot do anything apart from wisdom and that wisdom cannot do anything apart from love [§401]. Love without wisdom (or our volition apart from our discernment)⁷ cannot think anything. It cannot actually see, feel, or say anything. This means that love apart from wisdom (or our volition apart from our discernment) cannot do anything. By the same token, wisdom apart from love (or our discernment apart from our volition) cannot think anything, see or sense anything, or even say anything. This means that wisdom apart from love (or our discernment apart from our volition) cannot do anything. If you take the love away, there is no longer any intention, so there is no action. If this is how things work for us when we do something, it was all the more true of the God who is love itself and wisdom itself when he created and made the universe and everything in it.

[2] Everything that meets our eyes in this world can serve to convince us that the universe and absolutely everything in it was created out of divine love by means of divine wisdom. Take any particular thing and look at it with some wisdom, and this will be clear. Look at a tree—or its seed, its fruit, its flower, or its leaf. Collect your wits and look through a good microscope and you will see incredible things; and the deeper things that you cannot see are even more incredible.⁸ Look at the design of the sequence by which a tree grows from its seed all the way to a new seed, and ask yourself, “In this whole process, is there not a constant effort toward ongoing self-propagation?” The goal it is headed for is a seed that has a new power to reproduce. If you are willing to think spiritually (and you can if you want to), surely you see wisdom in this. Then too, if you are willing to press your spiritual thinking further, surely you see that this power does not come from the seed or from our world’s sun, which is nothing but fire, but that it was put into the seed by a creator God who has infinite wisdom. This is not just something that happened at its creation; it is something that has been happening constantly ever since. Maintenance is constant creation, just as enduring is a constant coming

into being.⁹ This is like the way labor ceases if you take the intention out of the activity, the way speech ceases if you take thinking out of it, or the way motion ceases if you take the energy out of it, and so on. In short, if you take the cause away from the effect, the effect ceases.

[3] A force is instilled into everything that has been created. However, the force does not do anything on its own; it depends on the one who instilled it. Look at some other subject on our planet. Look at a silkworm or a bee or some little creature and examine it, first physically, then rationally, and finally spiritually. If you can think deeply, you will be stunned at everything. If you listen to the inner voice of wisdom, you will exclaim in amazement, “Can anyone fail to see Divinity here? These are the marks of divine wisdom!”

Beyond this even, if you look at the functions of everything that has been created, you will see how they follow in sequence all the way to humanity and from us to our source, the Creator. You will see how the connectedness of everything depends on the Creator’s union with us; and if you are willing to admit it, the preservation of everything depends on this as well.

In what follows, you will see that divine love created everything, but that it did nothing apart from divine wisdom.

4

2. *Divine love and wisdom radiate from the Lord as a single whole.* We can see this from several things that I explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, especially the following. In the Lord, reality and its manifestation¹⁰ are both distinguishable and united (§§14–17 [14–16]). In the Lord, infinite things are distinguishably one (§§17–22). Divine love is a property of divine wisdom, and divine wisdom is a property of divine love (§§34–39). Unless it is married to wisdom, love cannot accomplish anything (§§401–403). Love or volition does not do anything without wisdom or discernment (§§409–410). As spiritual warmth and light radiate from the Lord as the sun, they make a unity the way divine love and divine wisdom make a single whole in the Lord (§§99–132 [99–102]).

We can see the truth of the present proposition from what is explained in these passages. However, since people do not know how two things can act in unison if they are different from each other, I should like to show at this point that no unity occurs apart from a form. Rather, the form itself is what makes the whole. Then I should like to show that a form makes a whole more perfectly as its constituents are distinguishably different and yet united.

[2] *No whole occurs apart from a form. Rather, the form itself is what makes the whole.*¹¹ Anyone who thinks with real mental focus will see

clearly that no whole occurs apart from a form. If a whole occurs, it is a form. Whatever comes into being derives from its form what we refer to as its quality, attributes, changes of state, relationships, and the like. So anything that is not in some form is of no effect, and anything that is of no effect is of no substance.¹² The form itself is the source of all these qualities. Further, since all the constituents of a form—if the form is complete—relate to each other like link to link in a chain, it follows that the form itself is what makes the whole and therefore is the object to which we can attribute quality, state, effect, and so on, all depending on the completeness of the form.

[3] Everything we see with our eyes in this world is this kind of whole, and so is everything we do not see with our eyes, either in the depths of nature or in the spiritual world. An individual is this kind of whole, and so is a human community. Further, the church¹³ is this kind of whole, and so is the whole angelic heaven in the Lord's sight. In short, the created universe is this kind of whole not only in its entirety but also in every detail.

If the whole and every part is to be a form, it is necessary that the one who created them all should be form itself and that all the things that have been created in their particular forms should come from that essential form. That is the reason for a number of statements in *Divine Love and Wisdom*; for example, the following: Divine love and wisdom is substance and is form¹⁴ (§§40–43). Divine love and wisdom are form in and of themselves, and are therefore wholly “itself” and unique¹⁵ (§§44–46). Divine love and divine wisdom are a single whole in the Lord (§§14–17 [14–16], 18–22 [17–22]). They emanate from the Lord as a single whole (§§99–102 and elsewhere [§125]).

[4] *A form makes a unity more perfectly as its constituents are distinguishably different, and yet united.* It is hard for our discernment to accept this unless it is raised up, because it seems as though the only way a form can make a single whole is if its constituents have some regular similarity.

I have often talked with angels about this. They have told me that this is a mystery clearly grasped by the wise among them but dimly grasped by the less wise. Still, the truth is that a form is more perfect as its constituents are distinguishably different but still united in some particular way. In support of this, angels have cited the communities in the heavens. Taken all together, these communities make up the form of heaven. They have also cited the angels in each community, saying that the more clearly individual angels are on their own—are therefore free—

and love the other members of their community on the basis of their own affection, in apparent freedom, the more perfect is the form of the community.

They have also referred by way of illustration to the marriage of what is good and what is true. The more clearly these are two, the more perfectly they can form a unity. It is the same with love and wisdom. Anything unclear is confused, and this is what gives rise to all imperfection of form.

[5] Angels have also offered abundant evidence of the way completely different things are united so that they form a single whole. They have called attention particularly to things within a person, where all the countless parts are similarly differentiated and yet are united—differentiated by membranes and united by ligaments. They have said that it is the same with love and all its components and with wisdom and all its components, which are perceived simply as unities.

There is more on this subject in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 14–22 and in *Heaven and Hell* 56, 489 [56, 71, 418].¹⁶ I include all this because it is a matter of angelic wisdom.

5

3. *There is some image of this unity in everything that has been created.* We can tell from what is presented throughout *Divine Love and Wisdom* that in everything created there is some image of the divine love and wisdom that are a whole in the Lord and that emanate from him as a whole. See especially §§47–51, 54–60 [55–60], 282–284, 290–295, 316–318 [313–318], 319–326, and 349–457 [349–357]. I have explained in these passages that Divinity is present in everything that has been created because God the Creator, who is the Lord from eternity, brought forth the sun of the spiritual world from his actual self, and by means of that sun brought forth the whole universe. This means that that sun, which is from the Lord and is where the Lord is, is not only the first but the only substance of which everything is made. Since it is the only substance, it follows that it is present in everything that has been created, but with infinite variety depending on function.

[2] In the Lord, then, there is divine love and wisdom; in the sun that comes from him there is divine fire and divine radiance; and from that sun come spiritual warmth and spiritual light, with the two making a single whole. It follows, then, that some image of this whole is present in everything that has been created.

This is why everything in the universe is based on what is good and what is true and in fact on their union, or (which amounts to the same thing) everything in the universe is based on love and wisdom and on

their union, since goodness is a matter of love and truth is a matter of wisdom. Love in fact calls everything of its own good, and wisdom calls everything of its own true.

We will see now that this union is present in everything that has been created.

It is widely recognized that there is only one substance that is the first and is the basis of everything, but the nature of that substance is a mystery. People think that it is so simple that nothing could be simpler, that it is like a dimensionless point, and that dimensional forms emerge from an infinite number of such points.¹⁷ However, this is an illusion arising from spatial thinking; spatial thinking makes the smallest element look like this. The truth is, though, that the simpler and purer anything is the greater and fuller it is. This is why the more deeply we look into anything, the more amazing, perfect, and beautiful are the things we see; so in the first substance of all there must be the most amazing, perfect, and beautiful things of all.

This is because the first substance comes from the spiritual sun, which as already noted [§5] is from the Lord and is where the Lord is. That sun itself is therefore the only substance, and since it is not in space, it is totally present in everything, in the largest and the smallest components of the created universe.

[2] Since that sun is the first and only substance that gives rise to everything, it follows that it contains infinitely more things than we can see in the substances that arise from it, which we refer to as derivative substances and ultimately matter. The reason we cannot see these things is that they come down from the sun by two kinds of level, and that all aspects of their perfection decrease by these two kinds of level. This is why the more deeply we look into anything, the more amazing, perfect, and beautiful are the things we see, as just noted.

I mention this in support of the proposition that there is some image of Divinity in everything that has been created, allowing for the fact that this image is less and less apparent as we come down level.¹⁸ It is even less apparent when a lower level, separated from a higher one by its closure, is clogged by earthly matter.

Still, all this cannot help but seem obscure unless you have read and comprehended what was explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* about the spiritual sun (§§53–172 [83–172]), levels (§§173–281), and the creation of the universe (§§282–357).

4. *It is the intent of divine providence that everything created, collectively and in every detail, should be this kind of whole, and that if it is not,*

6

7

it should become one. This means that there should be something of divine love and something of divine wisdom together in everything that has been created, or (which amounts to the same thing) something good and something true in everything that has been created—or a union of what is good and what is true. Since what is good is a matter of love and what is true is a matter of wisdom, as I noted in §5 above, throughout the following pages I will be talking about what is good and what is true instead of about love and wisdom, and about the marriage of goodness and truth instead of the union of love and wisdom.¹⁹

8 We can see from the preceding section that in everything that has been created by the Lord there is a kind of image of the divine love and wisdom that are a unity in the Lord and that emanate from the Lord as a single whole. Now I need to say something more specific about the unity or union that is called the marriage of goodness and truth.

(a) This marriage is in the Lord himself, since as already noted divine love and wisdom are a unity in him.²⁰ (b) It is from the Lord, since love and wisdom are completely united in everything that emanates from him. They both emanate from the Lord as the sun—divine love as warmth and divine wisdom as light. (c) Angels accept them as two, but the Lord unites them within the angels; and the same holds true for people of the church. (d) It is because of the inflow of love and wisdom from the Lord as a single whole into angels of heaven and people of the church and because of their acceptance by angels and people that the Lord is called the bridegroom and husband in the Word²¹ and the church is called the bride and wife. (e) To the extent, then, that heaven and the church in general, or angels of heaven and people of the church in particular, participate in this union, or in the marriage of goodness and truth, they are images and likenesses of the Lord. This is because these two realities are a single whole in the Lord and in fact are the Lord. (f) In heaven and the church in general, and in angels of heaven and people of the church in particular, love and wisdom are a single whole when volition and discernment (and therefore goodness and truth) form a single whole, or what is the same thing, when charity and faith form a single whole; or what is also the same thing, when a belief system from the Word and a life according to it form a single whole. (g) I have, however, explained how these two realities form a single whole in us and in all aspects of our being in part 5 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, where I dealt with our creation and especially with the correspondence²² of our volition and discernment to our heart and lungs (§§385–432 [358–432]).

9 As for the way love and wisdom form a unity in things beneath or outside us—in the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom—this will

come up throughout the following pages. I may mention three things by way of preface. First, there was a marriage of goodness and truth in the universe and in absolutely everything in it that the Lord created. Second, this marriage was broken up in us after creation. Third, it is a goal of divine providence that what has been broken apart should become a whole and therefore that the marriage of goodness and truth should be restored.

These three propositions have been given ample support in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, so there is no need of further support. Then too, everyone can see on the basis of reason that if there was a marriage of goodness and truth in everything that was created and this marriage was later broken up, the Lord would be constantly working for its restoration. This means that its restoration and therefore the union of the created universe with the Lord by means of us must be a goal of divine providence.

5. *The good that love does is actually good only to the extent that it is united to the truth that wisdom perceives, and the truth that wisdom perceives is actually true only to the extent that it is united to the good that love does.* The reason for this lies in the origin of goodness and truth. Goodness has its origin in the Lord and so does truth, because the Lord is goodness itself and truth itself, and these two form a unity in him. This is why the goodness in heaven's angels and in us on earth is not really good except to the extent that it is united to truth, and why the truth is not really true except to the extent that it is united to goodness.

We know that everything good and true comes from the Lord, so because goodness forms a single whole with truth and truth with goodness, it follows that if anything good is to be really good and anything true is to be really true, they need to form a single whole in their vessels. These vessels are heaven's angels and we who are on earth.

It is generally recognized that everything in the universe involves what is good and what is true. That is, we understand "goodness" to mean that which everywhere comprehends and comprises everything that has to do with love, and we understand "truth" to mean that which everywhere comprehends and comprises everything that has to do with wisdom. It has not been generally recognized, though, that something good is nothing unless it is united to something true and that something true is nothing unless it is united to something good.

It does seem as though something good could be real apart from something true and that something true could be real apart from something good, but this is not the case. In fact, love (all of whose elements are called good) is the reality of anything, and wisdom (all of whose elements are called true) is the manifestation of that thing that follows

from its reality, as I explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 14–16. Just as reality is nothing apart from manifestation, then, and manifestation is nothing apart from reality, so goodness apart from truth or truth apart from goodness is nothing. By the same token, what is something good apart from its relationship to something else? Can we really call it good? There is no effectiveness or perception involved in it.

[2] The element that has an effect when it is united to goodness, the element that makes perception and sensation possible, involves what is true because it involves what is in our discernment. Say to someone simply “goodness” without saying that some particular thing is good—is that “goodness” really anything? It is something only because of the particular thing that we identify with it. The only place this identification occurs is in our discernment, and our discernment involves what is true.

The same holds true for intending. To intend without knowing, perceiving, and considering what we intend is nothing, but together with these functions it is something. All our intending is a matter of love and involves what is good; and all our knowing, perceiving, and considering is a matter of discernment and involves what is true; so we can see that “intending” is nothing. Intending something in particular, though, is something.

[3] It is the same with all acts of service, because acts of service are good. Unless an act of service is focused on some benefit that is integral to it, it is not really an act of service, so it is nothing. It gets its focus from our discernment; and what is therefore united to or associated with the act involves what is true. This is where the act of service gets its quality.

[4] We can tell from these few examples that nothing good is really anything at all apart from something true, and that nothing true is anything at all apart from something good. We say that goodness together with truth, or truth together with goodness, is something. It follows, then, that evil together with falsity, or falsity together with evil, is nothing. This is because they are opposites to goodness and truth, and an opposite is destructive. In this case, it destroys the “something.” But more on this later [§19].

12

However, there is a marriage of goodness and truth in a cause, and from that cause there is a marriage of goodness and truth in an effect. The marriage of goodness and truth in a cause is a marriage of our volition and discernment, or of our love and wisdom. This marriage is happening in everything we intend and think and therefore decide and focus on.

This marriage enters into the effect and makes it happen, but as it makes it happen the two aspects seem like different events because

something that is simultaneous is working itself out by stages. For instance, when we intend and consider providing ourselves with food, clothing, or shelter, or engaging in our job or some task or in social interaction, then at first we are intending and considering it (or deciding and focusing on it), both at the same time. When we express these intentions in specific effects, though, one action follows another, even though in our intent and thought they still form a single whole.

The services that are performed in these effects are the results of love or of goodness. The means to these services are the effects of discernment or truth. Anyone can support these general observations by specific examples, provided there is a clear sense of what belongs to the good that love can do and what belongs to the truth that wisdom perceives, and provided there is a clear grasp of how they are reflected in a cause and how they are reflected in an effect.²³

I have stated on occasion that love is what constitutes our life, but this does not mean love separated from wisdom, or what is good separated from what is true in the cause. This is because love by itself, or what is good by itself, is nothing. Consequently, the love that constitutes our deepest life, the life that comes from the Lord, is love and wisdom together. So too, the love that constitutes our life to the extent that we are open to it is not love by itself in the cause, though it is by itself in the result. Love is incomprehensible apart from its quality, and its quality is wisdom. That quality or wisdom can come only from its underlying reality, which is love. This is why they are a single whole; and the same holds true for what is good and what is true.

Now since what is true comes from what is good the way wisdom comes from love, both together are called love or good. Love in its form actually is wisdom, and what is good in its form is true. Form is the one and only source of quality.²⁴

We can therefore conclude that what is good is actually good only to the extent that it is united to what is appropriately true, and that what is true is actually true only to the extent that it is united to what is appropriately good.

6. *If the good that love does is not united to the truth that wisdom perceives, it is not really good, but it may seem to be; and if the truth that wisdom perceives is not united to the good that love does, it is not really true, but it may seem to be.* The truth of the matter is that nothing good occurs that is really good unless it is united to something true that is appropriate to it, and nothing true occurs that is really true unless it is united to something good that is appropriate to it.

Still, there is such a thing as something good separated from what is true and something true separated from what is good. This happens with hypocrites and flatterers, with all kinds of evil people, and with people who are involved in good on the earthly²⁵ level but not at all on the spiritual level. All of these people can do things that are good for church, country, community, and fellow citizen, for the poor and needy, and for widows and orphans. They can understand truths, too, and can think about them discerningly and talk about them and teach them. However, those good and true characteristics are not particularly deep, so they are not essentially good and true for the people who display them. They are outwardly good and true, and therefore are only facades.²⁶ They exist solely for the sake of themselves and the world and not for the sake of goodness itself and truth itself, which means that they are not derived from what is good and true. They come simply from the mouth and the body, then, and not from the heart.

[2] We might compare them to gold or silver that has been overlaid on slag, rotten wood, or dung, and we might compare the uttered truths to our breath, which dissipates, or to a will-o'-the-wisp that vanishes. Outwardly, they may still seem genuine. While these truths have one guise for the people themselves, however, they can look very different to people who hear and accept them without knowing their source. The way we are affected outwardly depends on what lies within us. Some truth enters the hearing of others, and no matter whose mouth it has come from, the way the other minds grasp it depends on their own state and quality.

It is much the same for people who by reason of their heredity are involved in something that is good on the earthly level but not in something that is spiritually good. What lies within anything good and anything true is spiritual, and this banishes whatever is false and evil. Still, what is solely earthly sides with what is evil and false, and siding with evil is not in harmony with doing good.

15

The reason that goodness can be separated from truth and truth from goodness and that they still seem good and true even when separated is that we have an ability to act, called freedom, and an ability to discern, called rationality. It is by the misuse of these abilities that we can seem different outwardly than we actually are inwardly, so that an evil individual can do what is good and say what is true, and so that a devil can pretend to be an angel of light.²⁷

On this subject, see the following propositions from *Divine Love and Wisdom*. The origin of evil is in the abuse of the abilities proper to us

called rationality and freedom (§§264–270). These two abilities exist in both evil and good individuals (§425). If love is not married to wisdom (or if goodness is not married to truth), it cannot accomplish anything (§401). Love or volition does not do anything without wisdom or discernment (§409). Love or volition marries wisdom or discernment to itself and arranges things so that wisdom or discernment marries it willingly (§§410–412). Because of the power given it by love, wisdom or discernment can be raised up, can accept things in heaven's light, and can grasp them (§413). Love can be raised up in the same way and can grasp things in heaven's warmth provided it loves its spouse, wisdom, to that degree (§§414–415). Otherwise, love pulls wisdom or discernment back from its height so that they act in unison (§§416–418). If they are raised up together, love is cleansed in our discernment (§§419–421). Love that has been cleansed by wisdom in our discernment becomes spiritual and heavenly, and love that has been polluted in our discernment becomes limited to our senses and our bodies (§§422–424). It is the same for charity and faith and their union as it is for love and wisdom and their union (§§427–430). What charity in the heavens is (§431).²⁸

7. *The Lord does not let anything remain divided. This means that things must be focused either on what is both good and true or on what is both evil and false.* The first of the goals toward which the Lord's divine providence works is that we should be engaged in what is good and what is true together. That is our "good" and our love and that is our truth and our wisdom, because that is what makes us human and images of the Lord. However, since while we are living in this world we can be engaged simultaneously in what is good and what is false, or in what is evil and what is true—even in what is at once evil and good, and therefore double—and since this division destroys that image and therefore our very humanity, the Lord's divine providence is trying to get rid of this division in everything it does.

Further, since it is better for us to be engaged in something evil and something false than in something good and something evil at the same time, the Lord lets the first of these pairings occur. He does so not from intent but from an inability to prevent it because of the ultimate goal, which is our salvation. It is because of these two factors—our ability to be engaged in something evil and something true at the same time, and the Lord's inability to prevent this because of the goal, which is our salvation—that our discernment can be lifted up into heaven's light and see what is true or recognize it when we hear it even while our love remains down below. This means that we can be in heaven in our discernment

and in hell in our love; and we cannot be denied this possibility because we cannot be deprived of the two abilities that make us human and distinguish us from the beasts, the two abilities that alone make our rebirth and salvation possible, namely, our rationality and our freedom. These two abilities, that is, are what enable us to act in keeping with wisdom or to act in keeping with a love that has no wisdom. These are what enable us to look down from wisdom on our love below and therefore see our thoughts, intentions, and feelings, to see what is evil and false and what is good and true in our life and our beliefs. If we could not recognize and admit these things in ourselves, we could not be remade. I have already discussed these abilities [§15] and will have more to say about them later [§§71–99].

This is how we can be engaged in what is good and what is true together and in what is evil and what is false together, and do this alternately.

17

It is hard for us to attain union or unity (of what is good and what is true or of what is evil and what is false) in this world, because as long as we are living here we are kept in a state of reformation or rebirth. We all attain one union or the other after death, though, because then we can no longer be remade or reborn: we keep the quality of the life we led in the world, that is, the quality of our primary love. If our life was governed by evil love, anything true we have learned in this world from teachers, sermons, or the Word is taken away. Once it is gone, we soak up the falsity that agrees with our evil the way a sponge soaks up water.

Conversely, if our life has been governed by good love, then everything false we have picked up from what we have heard and read in the world without intentionally adopting it is taken away, and in its place we are given the truth that agrees with our good.

This is the intent of these words of the Lord:

Take the talent from this one and give it to the one who has ten talents.
To all those who have, more will be given, in ample supply; but from those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away.
(Matthew 25:28, 29; 13:12; Mark 4:25; Luke 8:18; 19:24–26)

18

The reason everyone must be engaged in what is good and what is true together after death or in what is evil and what is false is that good and evil cannot be united. Neither can good and any falsity that is prompted by evil, or evil and any truth that is prompted by anything good. Such things are opposites, and opposites battle with each other until one destroys the other.

It is people who are engaged in evil and good at the same time that are referred to in these words of the Lord to the church in Laodicea in the Book of Revelation:

I know your works,²⁹ that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. However, since you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth (Revelation 3:15, 16),

and by these words of the Lord:

No one can serve two masters. You will either hate one and love the other or cling to one and ignore the other. (Matthew 6:24)

8. *If something is focused on what is both good and true, then it is something; but if it is focused on what is both evil and false, it is not anything at all.* Section II above shows that whatever is focused on what is both good and true is something, and it follows from this that anything that is both evil and false is nothing. “Being nothing” means having no power, no trace of spiritual life.

19

People who are focused on what is evil and false together (all of whom are in hell) do have a kind of power among themselves. An evil individual can do harm and in fact does harm in thousands of ways, though it is only from evil that an evil individual can harm evil people. Still, an evil person can do no harm whatever to good people. If that happens (which it sometimes does), it is through the evil one identifying with something evil in the good.³⁰ [2] This gives rise to temptations that are attacks by evil people among themselves, resulting in the struggles that enable good people to be freed from their evils.

Because evil people have no power, all hell is a virtual nothing in the Lord's sight, an absolute nothing when it comes to power. I have seen this quite convincingly time after time.

The remarkable thing is, though, that all the evil people believe they are powerful and all the good people believe they themselves are not. This is because evil people ascribe everything to their own power, their own deviousness and malice, and nothing to the Lord, while good people ascribe nothing to their own prudence and everything to the Lord, who is omnipotent.

Another reason anything both evil and false is nothing is that it has no trace of spiritual life. This is why a hellish life is called “death” rather than “life”; so since anything that exists belongs to life, nothing that exists can belong to death.

20

People who are involved in evil and in truth at the same time can be compared to eagles that soar high overhead but plunge down if they lose their wings. Something like this happens to people after death, when they become spirits, if they have understood, discussed, and taught truths but have never turned to God in their lives. Their comprehension lifts them on high; and sometimes they get into heaven and pretend to be angels of light.³¹ However, when they are deprived of their truths and dismissed, they plunge into hell. Eagles mean predatory people who have intellectual vision, and wings mean spiritual truths.

I mentioned that these are people who never turn to God in their lives. “Turning to God in our lives” simply means thinking that some particular evil action is a sin against God and therefore not doing it.

21

9. *The Lord’s divine providence works things out so that what is both evil and false promotes balance, comparison, and purification, which means that it promotes the union of what is good and true in others.* It follows from what has just been said that the Lord’s divine providence is constantly working to unite what is true with what is good and what is good with what is true within us, because this union is the church and heaven. This union exists in the Lord and in everything that emanates from him. It is because of this union that heaven is called “a marriage,” as is the church; so in the Word the kingdom of God is compared to a marriage.³² This union is the reason the Sabbath was the holiest part of worship in the Israelite church,³³ since it means that union. This is also why there is a marriage of what is good and what is true throughout the Word and in every detail of it (see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 80–90).³⁴

The marriage of what is good and what is true comes from the marriage of the Lord and the church, and this in turn comes from the marriage of love and wisdom in the Lord. Goodness is actually a matter of love, and truth is a matter of wisdom. We can see from this that the constant objective of divine providence is to unite what is good to what is true and what is true to what is good within us. This is how we are united to the Lord.

22

However, many people have broken this marriage and still do. They do this especially by separating faith from thoughtful living (faith being a matter of truth and truth a matter of faith, with thoughtful living being a matter of goodness and goodness being a matter of thoughtful living). By so doing they unite what is evil and false within themselves and have become opponents, and continue to be so.³⁵ The Lord nevertheless provides that they may still help unite what is good and true in others through balance, comparison, and purification.

The Lord provides for the union of what is good and true in others by the *balance* between heaven and hell. What is evil and what is false are continually breathing out together from hell, and what is good and what is true are continually breathing out together from heaven. Every one of us is kept in that balance as long as we are living in this world, and this is what gives us our freedom to think, intend, speak, and act, the freedom in which we can be reformed. (On this spiritual balance that gives us our freedom, see *Heaven and Hell* 589–596 and 597–603).

23

The Lord provides for the union of what is good and what is true by *comparison*. We recognize the quality of what is good only by its relationship to something that is less good and by its opposition to what is evil. This is the source of everything in us that is perceptive and sensitive, because this is what gives perception and sensitivity their quality. That is, anything pleasing is perceived and sensed by contrast with something that is less pleasing and by what is unpleasant, anything beautiful by something less beautiful and by something ugly. By the same token, any good that love does is perceived and sensed by contrast with what is less good and by something evil, and anything true that wisdom offers is perceived and sensed by contrast with what is less true and by something false.

24

There need to be differences in everything, whether great or small; and when these differences create a balanced opposition between the great and the small, then there is a comparison between the levels in each direction. As a result, our perception and sensation are either enhanced or dulled.

We need to realize, that is, that the opposition may either deaden or intensify our perceptions and sensations. It deadens them when the opposites are mingled and intensifies them when they are not mingled. This is why the Lord separates goodness from evil very precisely so that they will not be mingled in us, just as he keeps heaven and hell separate.

The Lord provides for the union of what is good and true in others by *purification*. This happens in two ways, by temptations and by fermenting. Spiritual temptations are simply battles against the evil and false things that breathe forth from hell and affect us. These battles purify us from things that are evil and false, so that goodness in us is united to truth and truth to goodness.

25

Spiritual fermenting happens in many ways both in the heavens and on earth, but people in our world do not know what these processes are or how they happen. There are things that are both evil and false that are injected into communities the way agents of fermentation are injected

into flour or grape juice. These serve to separate things that do not belong together and unite things that do, so that the substance becomes pure and clear.

These are the processes referred to by the Lord's words,

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened. (Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:21)

26

These useful functions are provided by the Lord through the union of what is evil and false that prevails among people in hell, since the Lord's rule (which is not only over heaven but also over hell) is a functional rule and the Lord's providence intends that there should be no one and nothing there that does not do some service or enable some service to happen.

The Lord's Divine Providence Has as Its Goal a Heaven from the Human Race

27

I have explained elsewhere that heaven did not originate in angels who were created angels at the beginning, and that hell did not originate in a devil who was created an angel of light and was cast down from heaven. Rather, both heaven and hell are from the human race. Heaven is made up of people who are involved in a love for what is good and a consequent discernment of what is true, and hell of people who are involved in a love for what is evil and a discernment of what is false. I have been given convincing evidence of this through long-term association with angels and spirits, and would refer you to *Heaven and Hell* 311–316, the booklet *Last Judgment* 14–27,³⁶ and the whole of *Supplements on the Last Judgment and the Spiritual World*.³⁷

[2] Since heaven comes from the human race, then, and since heaven is living with the Lord forever, it follows that this was the Lord's goal for creation. Further, since this was the goal of creation, it is the goal of the Lord's divine providence.

The Lord did not create the universe for his own sake but for the sake of people he would be with in heaven. By its very nature, spiritual love wants to share what it has with others, and to the extent that it can do so, it is totally present,³⁸ experiencing its peace and bliss. Spiritual love gets this quality from the Lord's divine love, which is like this in infinite measure.

It then follows that divine love (and therefore divine providence) has the goal of a heaven made up of people who have become angels and are becoming angels, people with whom it can share all the bliss and joy of love and wisdom, giving them these blessings from the Lord's own presence within them. He cannot help doing this, because his image and likeness is in us from creation. His image in us is wisdom and his likeness in us is love; and the Lord within us is love united to wisdom and wisdom united to love, or goodness united to truth and truth united to goodness, which is the same thing. (See the preceding section for a description of this union.)

[3] However, people do not know what heaven is in general or in groups of people and what heaven is in particular or in an individual. They do not know what heaven is in the spiritual world and what it is in the physical world, either; and yet it is important to know about these matters. Consequently, I want to shed some light on this, in the following sequence.

1. Heaven is union with the Lord.
2. Our nature from creation enables us to be more and more closely united to the Lord.
3. The more closely we are united to the Lord, the wiser we become.
4. The more closely we are united to the Lord, the happier we become.
5. The more closely we are united to the Lord, the more clearly we seem to have our own identity, and yet the more obvious it is to us that we belong to the Lord.

1. *Heaven is union with the Lord.* Heaven is not heaven because of angels but because of the Lord. The reason for this is that the love and wisdom that angels enjoy and that make heaven do not come from them but from the Lord—love and wisdom actually are the Lord within the angels. Since love and wisdom belong to the Lord and are the Lord in heaven, and since love and wisdom make up the life of

angels, we can see as well that their life belongs to the Lord and that in fact their life is the Lord. The angels themselves insist that they are living from the Lord. We can therefore conclude that heaven is union with the Lord.

Since union with the Lord varies, though, and heaven is therefore not the same in one angel as it is in another, it also follows that the nature of heaven depends on the nature of the union with the Lord. The next section [§§32–33] will explain that the union may be closer and closer, or more and more distant.

[2] Now I need to say something about how that union happens and what it is like. There is a union of the Lord with angels and a union of angels with the Lord; so it is a mutual relationship. The Lord flows into the love of angels' lives, and angels accept the Lord in their wisdom, in this way uniting themselves to the Lord in return. It needs to be clearly understood, though, that although it seems to angels that they are uniting themselves to the Lord through their wisdom, in fact the Lord is uniting them to himself through that wisdom, since their wisdom also comes from the Lord.

We could just as well say that the Lord unites himself to angels through what is good and that they in turn unite themselves to the Lord through what is true, since everything good is a matter of love and everything true is a matter of wisdom. [3] However, since this mutual union is a mystery that not many people can grasp unless it is explained, I want to lay it out in a comprehensible fashion to the extent that it is possible.

I explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 404–405 how love unites itself to wisdom, specifically through a desire for knowing that gives rise to a desire for what is true, a desire for discerning that gives rise to a desire to grasp what is true, and a desire to see what we know and discern that gives rise to thought. The Lord flows into these desires, which are branches of the love of every individual's life; and angels accept that inflow in their perception of what is true and in their thinking. They notice the inflow in their perception, not in their desires.

[4] Since it seems to angels that their perceptions and thoughts are their own even though they arise from desires that come from the Lord, the appearance is also that angels are uniting themselves to the Lord in return when in fact the Lord is uniting them to himself. That is, the desire itself is bringing forth the perceptions and thoughts.³⁹ Desire, a matter of love, is actually the soul of their perceptions and thoughts.⁴⁰ No one can perceive or think anything apart from desires, and all of us perceive and think in keeping with our desires. We can see from this that the

mutual union of angels with the Lord does not come from them even though it seems to.

There is the same kind of union of the Lord with the church and of the church with the Lord, a union called a spiritual and heavenly marriage.

In the spiritual world, all union takes place by means of attentiveness. When anyone there is thinking about someone else because of a desire to talk with her or him, that other person is immediately present. They see each other face to face. The same thing happens when someone is thinking about someone else because of a loving affection, but in this case the result is a union, while in the former case it is only presence.

This phenomenon is unique to the spiritual world. The reason is that everyone there is spiritual. It is different in the physical world, where all of us are material. In this physical world, the same thing is happening in the feelings and thoughts of our spirits, but since there is space in this world, while in the spiritual world there only seems to be space, the things that happen in the thoughts of our spirits come out in actions there.⁴¹

[2] I mention this to show how the Lord's union with angels and their apparent mutual union with the Lord take place. All the angels turn their faces toward the Lord. The Lord looks at them in the forehead, while the angels look at the Lord with their eyes. This is because the forehead corresponds to love and its desires, and the eyes correspond to wisdom and its perceptions. Still, angels are not turning their faces toward the Lord on their own; the Lord is turning them toward himself, and doing so by flowing into the love of their lives. He comes through this into their perceptions and thoughts; and that is how he turns them.

[3] This circle of love to thoughts and of thoughts-from-love to love occurs in all the functions of the human mind—we can call it the circle of life. There is information about it in *Divine Love and Wisdom*: for example, angels always face the Lord as the sun (§§129–134); everything in the deeper reaches of angels' minds and bodies alike is turned toward the Lord as the sun in the same way (§§135–139); every kind of spirit turns toward his or her ruling love in the same way (§§140–145); love marries wisdom to itself and arranges things so that wisdom marries it willingly (§§410–412); angels are in the Lord and the Lord is in them; and since angels are vessels, the Lord alone is heaven (§§113–118).

The Lord's heaven in our physical world is called the church, and an angel of this heaven is a church member who is united to the Lord. After leaving this world, people like this become angels of the spiritual heaven;

so we can see that the sort of thing I have been saying about the angelic heaven applies also to the human heaven called the church.

The mutual union with the Lord that constitutes heaven for us was revealed by the Lord in this passage from John:

Abide in me, and I in you. People who abide in me, and I in them, bear an abundance of fruit; for without me you cannot do anything. (John 15:4, 5, 7 [15:4, 5])

31

We can therefore tell that the Lord is heaven not only in a general way (for all who are there), but also specifically (for every individual who is there). An angel is actually a heaven in smallest form; and heaven in general is made up of as many heavens as there are angels. (On this point, see *Heaven and Hell* 51–58.)

Given this fact, no one should become attached to the mistaken notion that the Lord lives among the angels in heaven or dwells with them the way a monarch dwells in a realm—an idea that crosses many minds when they first think about the matter. Visually, the Lord is above them there like a sun; though as far as the life of their love and wisdom is concerned, he is within them.

32

2. *Our nature from creation enables us to be more and more closely united to the Lord.* Support for this may be found in the material about levels in part 3 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, particularly on the following points. There are three distinct or vertical levels in us from creation (§§230–235). These three levels exist in each of us from birth and can be opened. As they are opened, we are in the Lord and the Lord is in us (§§236–241).⁴² All processes of perfection increase and rise by and according to levels (§§199–204). We can see from this that the nature we have from creation enables us to be united to the Lord more and more closely, level by level.

[2] It is vital, however, that we know what these levels are. There are two kinds, distinct or vertical and gradual or horizontal, and it is vital to know how they differ.⁴³ All of us have the three distinct or vertical levels within us by creation and therefore from birth. We become involved in the first level, the one called “earthly,” when we are born, and we can gradually expand this level within us until we become rational. We become involved in the second level, the one called “spiritual,” if we live by the spiritual laws of the divine design, laws that are divine as to their truth; and we can also become involved in the third level, the one called “heavenly,” if we live by the heavenly laws of the divine design, laws that are divine as to their goodness.

[3] The Lord opens these levels within us depending on the way we live. This is really happening in this world, but not so that we can sense or feel it until after we leave this world. As the levels are then opened and perfected, we are more and more closely united to the Lord. This union can intensify to eternity as we grow closer; for angels it actually does keep intensifying to eternity. Still, no angel can enter into the first level of the Lord's love and wisdom or reach its boundary, because the Lord is infinite and angels are finite, and there is no ratio between what is infinite and what is finite.

Since a knowledge of these levels is necessary for understanding the human condition and the way it is raised and brought closer to the Lord, I dealt with this specifically in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 173–281, to which you may refer.

I need to explain briefly how we can be more closely united to the Lord and then how that union can seem closer and closer. As to *how we can be more closely united to the Lord*, this does not happen by simply knowing or by simply understanding or even by simply being wise; it happens by a life that is one with these states.

33

Our life is our love, and there are many kinds of love. Broadly, there is love for what is evil and love for what is good. Love for what is evil is love for adultery, vengeance, cheating, blasphemy, and taking others' possessions. A love for evil finds delight and gratification in thinking about such things and in doing them. There are as many derivative motivations or desires of this love as there are evil deeds in which it takes specific form; and there are as many perceptions and thoughts of this love as there are distortions that nurture and justify these evil deeds. These distortions are integral to the evils themselves just as our discernment is integral to our volition. They do not part from each other, because they belong to each other.

[2] Now since the Lord flows into everyone's life and flows through our life's desires into our perceptions and thoughts (and not the reverse), as already noted [§28], it follows that the closeness of our union with the Lord depends on the extent to which our love for evil and its desires—its compulsions—is dismissed. Further, since these compulsions have their home in the level of our being that deals with this world, and since anything we do that is rooted in that level feels as though it belongs to us, we need to dismiss the evils of this love with what seems to be our own strength. To the extent that we do this, the Lord draws near and unites us to himself.

Surely anyone can see simply on the basis of reason that our compulsions and the gratifications they offer shut the door firmly in the Lord's

face, and that they cannot be ousted by the Lord as long as we ourselves keep that door closed and throw our weight against it from the other side⁴⁴ to keep it from opening. The Lord's words in the Book of Revelation show that we ourselves need to open the door:

Here I am, standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to them and dine with them, and they with me. (Revelation 3:20)

[3] We can see from this that the closeness of our union with the Lord depends on the extent to which we abstain from evils as coming from the devil⁴⁵ and as blocking the Lord's entry. We can see that the union is closest for people who loathe these evils as though they were actually foul and fiery devils, since evil and the devil are one and the same, just as malicious falsity and Satan⁴⁶ are one and the same. As a result, just as the Lord's inflow is into a love for what is good and its desires and through these into our perceptions and thoughts (which derive all their truth from the fact that they stem from goodness we are engaged in), so the inflow of the devil or hell is into a love for what is evil and its desires—its compulsions—and through these into our perceptions and thoughts, which derive all their falsity from the fact that they stem from what is evil.

[4] As to *how that union can seem closer and closer*, the more completely the evils in our earthly self are dismissed by our abstaining from and rejecting them, the more closely we are united to the Lord. Further, since the love and wisdom that are the Lord himself are not in space, and since a desire of love and a thought of wisdom have nothing in common with space, the Lord seems to be closer in proportion to the union occasioned by love and wisdom. By the same token, he seems more distant as we spurn love and wisdom.

Space does not exist in the spiritual world. Instead, distance and presence there are appearances that depend on likeness or dissimilarity of desire. This is because, as just noted, desires (or properties of love) and thoughts (or properties of wisdom) are intrinsically spiritual. They are not in space, as explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 7–10, 69–72, and elsewhere.⁴⁷

[5] Our union with the Lord once our evils have been dismissed is what is referred to in the Lord's words, "The pure in heart will see God" (Matthew 5:8) and "I will make my dwelling with everyone who has my precepts and keeps them" (John 14:21, 23). "Having the precepts" is knowing, and "keeping the precepts" is loving, since it also says in the same passage that "whoever keeps my precepts is one who loves me."

3. *The more closely we are united to the Lord, the wiser we become.* Since there are three levels of life in us from creation and therefore from birth (see §32 above), there are quite specifically three levels of wisdom in us as well. It is these levels that are opened for us in proportion to our union; they are opened in proportion to our love, that is, since love is union itself.

34

However, we sense this level-by-level ascent of love only dimly, while we sense an ascent of wisdom clearly if we know and see what wisdom is. The reason we are aware of levels of wisdom is that love enters our perceptions and thoughts through its desires, and our perceptions and thoughts stand out in the inner sight of our minds, the sight that answers to our outer, physical sight. This is why we can be conscious of our wisdom, but not so conscious of the desire of love that is giving rise to it. It is much the same as it is with the things that we do behaviorally. We notice how our bodies are doing things, but not how our souls are behaving. So too, we are aware of how we contemplate, perceive, and think, but not of the way the soul of these activities, the desire for what is good and true, is giving rise to them.

[2] There are, though, three levels of wisdom: earthly, spiritual, and heavenly. We are on the earthly level of wisdom while we are living in this world. This level can be brought to its height of perfection within us and still not cross the border to the spiritual level, because this level is not just an incremental extension of the earthly level. These two levels are united by their correspondence to each other. We arrive in the spiritual level of wisdom after death. This level too can be brought to the height of its perfection but still not cross the border to the heavenly level of wisdom. This latter level, again, is not just an incremental extension of the spiritual level, but is united to it by their mutual correspondence.

We may therefore conclude that wisdom can be raised up threefold, and that on each level it can be brought to a height of perfection by simple increment.

[3] Once we understand the ascent and perfection of these levels, we can to some extent understand what people say about angelic wisdom, namely, that it is inexpressible. It is so far beyond description that a thousand images of angels' thought, arising from their wisdom, can present only a single image to our thought, arising from our wisdom. The other nine hundred and ninety-nine images of angels' thought cannot find entrance because they transcend the material world.⁴⁸ I have often been taught this by vivid experience.

However, as already noted [§33], the only way to arrive at this indescribable angelic wisdom is through union with the Lord and in proportion to that union, since only the Lord opens the spiritual level and the heavenly level. This step is limited to people who are wise because of him, and we are wise because of the Lord when we cast the devil, or evil, away from ourselves.

35

No one, though, should believe that we have wisdom if we know a lot, grasp what we know fairly clearly, and can talk about things intelligently. We are wise only if these abilities are united to love. Love is what produces wisdom, through its desires. If wisdom is not united to love it is like a meteor in the sky that vanishes, like a falling star.⁴⁹ Wisdom united to love is like the constant light of the sun and like a fixed star. We have a love for wisdom to the extent that we fight off the demonic horde—our cravings for whatever is evil and false.

36

The wisdom that comes to our consciousness is a sense of what is true prompted by a desire for it. This is the case particularly for spiritual truth: for there is civic truth, there is moral truth, and there is spiritual truth. When we are conscious of spiritual truth because we are drawn to it we are conscious of moral and civic truth as well, because a desire for spiritual truth is their soul.

I have talked with angels about wisdom on occasion, and they have told me that wisdom is union with the Lord because the Lord is wisdom itself. They have told me that they attain this union when they banish hell from themselves, and that the union is in direct proportion to the banishment.

They picture wisdom, they said, as a wonderfully elegant palace with twelve steps leading up to it.⁵⁰ No one gets to the first step except with the Lord's help and by union with him, and for all of us, the ascent depends on that union. The higher we climb, the more clearly we realize that no one is wise on her or his own, but only from the Lord. We also realize that relative to what we do not know, what we do know is like a droplet compared to a vast lake. The twelve steps to the palace of wisdom mean whatever is good united to what is true and whatever is true united to what is good.

37

4. *The more closely we are united to the Lord, the happier we become.* We can say much the same about levels of happiness as was said above (§§32 and 34) about levels of life and wisdom⁵¹ that depend on our union with the Lord. These times of happiness, bliss, and sheer delight intensify as the higher levels of our minds are opened within us, the levels we call spiritual and heavenly. Once our life on earth is over, these levels keep rising forever.

No one who is caught up in the pleasures of cravings for evil can know anything about the pleasures of desires for what is good, the delight that fills the angelic heaven. This is because these two kinds of pleasure are absolute opposites inwardly and therefore just under the surface, even though they differ very little on the surface itself.

38

Every love has its own pleasures. A love for what is evil gives us pleasure when we are caught up in its compulsions. This holds, for example, for loving adultery, vengeance, cheating, theft, or cruelty, and among the worst of us, for loving blasphemy against the holy values of the church and spouting venomous nonsense about God. The wellspring of these pleasures is a love for being in control prompted by a love for ourselves.

These pleasures come from compulsions that obsess the deeper levels of our minds and flow down from there into our bodies, where they stimulate filthy reactions that excite our very fibers. The result is a physical pleasure prompted by mental pleasure in proportion to our compulsions.

[2] After death, in the spiritual world, we can all discover the identity and nature of the filthy things that excite our physical fibers. In general, they are like corpses, excrement, manure, sickening odors, and urine. The hells are overflowing with filth like this. (On their correspondence, see material in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 422–424.) Once we enter hell, though, these filthy pleasures turn into dreadful things.

I mention all this to aid in understanding the nature and quality of heavenly happiness in what follows. We recognize things by their opposites.

Words cannot describe the varieties of heaven's bliss, rapture, pleasure, and delight—the joys of heaven—though these joys give us perceptible feelings in heaven. Anything we perceive only as a feeling is beyond description, because it does not fit neatly into mental concepts and therefore into words. Our discernment simply sees, and it sees things that have to do with wisdom or truth but not things that have to do with love or what is good. The result is that heaven's joys are inexpressible even though they are on the same rising scale as wisdom. They come in infinite variations, each one indescribable. I have both heard and felt this.

39

[2] However, these joys enter us only as we distance ourselves from compulsions to love what is evil and false, which distancing we do apparently with our own strength, but in fact from the Lord's strength. These joys are actually joys of loving desires for what is good and true, and they are directly opposed to the compulsions to love what is evil and false.

The joys proper to desires for what is good and true have their source in the Lord, so they come from the center of our being. From there they spread into our lower reaches, all the way to the lowest. So they fill angels and make them virtually nothing but delight. These joys, with all their infinite variations, are found in every desire for what is good and true, especially in the desire for wisdom.

40

There is no comparison between the pleasures of cravings for evil and the pleasures of desires for what is good, because within the pleasures of cravings for evil lies the devil⁵² and within the pleasures of desires for what is good dwells the Lord. If comparison is needed, we could compare the pleasures of cravings for evil to the pleasures of frogs copulating in a swamp or of snakes in a garbage dump.⁵³ The pleasures of desires for what is good, though, can be compared to the pleasures that lift our spirits in flower gardens. In fact, the same kinds of things that appeal to frogs and snakes also appeal to people in the hells who are caught up in their cravings for evil, and the kinds of things that appeal to our spirits in flower gardens also appeal to people in the heavens who are caught up in desires for what is good. As already noted [§§38–39], things that answer to filth appeal to evil people and things that answer to what is clean appeal to good people.

41

We may conclude from this that the more closely we are united to the Lord, the happier we become. This happiness is rarely evident in the world, though, because in this world we are in an earthly state, and things on the earthly level do not communicate directly with things on the spiritual level; they communicate only by correspondence. This kind of communication is felt only as a kind of quiet peace of spirit, especially after struggles against our evils.

However, once we leave this earthly state and come into a spiritual state, which happens when we depart from this world, a happiness gradually emerges that is beyond description.

42

5. *The more closely we are united to the Lord, the more clearly we seem to have our own identity, and yet the more obvious it is to us that we belong to the Lord.* It seems as though the more closely we are united to the Lord the less sense of identity we have. This is indeed how it seems to all evil people and to people who believe on religious grounds that they are not subject to the yoke of the law⁵⁴ and that none of us can do anything good on our own. These two kinds of people cannot help seeing that if they are not allowed to think and intend what is evil, but only what is good, they have lost their identity. Since people who are united to the Lord are neither willing nor able to think and intend what is evil, the outward

appearance leads others to believe that this amounts to a loss of identity; yet it is the exact opposite.

There is hellish freedom, and there is heavenly freedom. Our ability to think and intend what is evil, and to say and do it to the extent that civil and moral laws do not restrain us, comes from hellish freedom. Our ability to think and intend what is good, and to say and do it when circumstances permit, comes from heavenly freedom. Whatever we think, intend, say, and do freely we feel is truly ours because all the freedom we have comes from our love. This means that if we are caught up in loving what is evil, we cannot help feeling that hellish freedom is freedom itself; while if we are caught up in loving what is good, we feel that heavenly freedom is freedom itself. As a result, each freedom regards the other as slavery.

43

No one, though, can deny that one or the other must be real freedom. Two kinds of freedom that are opposite to each other cannot both be true freedoms. Further, we cannot deny that being led by what is good is freedom and being led by what is evil is slavery, since being led by what is good is being led by the Lord and being led by what is evil is being led by the devil.

Now since anything we do freely seems to be our own because it comes from our love (acting from our love is acting freely, as already noted), it follows that union with the Lord makes us feel that we have freedom and therefore identity; and the closer our union with the Lord, the greater our freedom and our identity. The reason our identity seems clearer is that divine love by its very nature wants to give what it has to others, which means to us on earth and to angels. All spiritual love is like this; divine love most of all. Further, the Lord never forces anyone, because anything we are forced to do does not seem to be ours and anything that does not seem to be ours cannot become part of our love and so be accepted as our own. This is why the Lord is always leading us in freedom, and reforming and regenerating us in freedom.

There will be more on this later,⁵⁵ and you may also refer to §4 above.

The reason we are more clearly aware that we belong to the Lord as our sense of identity becomes clearer is that the more closely we are united to the Lord the wiser we become (see §§34–36 above); and wisdom both teaches this and is conscious of it. Because angels of the third heaven are the wisest of angels, they even sense it and actually call it freedom itself. They refer to being led by themselves, though, as slavery.

44

The reason, they say, is that the Lord does not flow directly into the things that their wisdom enables them to sense and think but into the

desires of their love for what is good, and through these desires into the effects of their wisdom. They sense the flow into the desire that prompts their wisdom. Then everything they think because of their wisdom feels as though it is coming from themselves and is therefore their own. This is what makes the union mutual.

45

Since the goal of the Lord's divine providence is a heaven from the human race, it follows that the goal is the union of the human race with the Lord (see §§28–31). It follows also that the goal is that we should be more closely united to him (§§32–33) and thereby be granted a more inward heaven. It also follows that the goal is for us to become wiser (§§34–36) and happier (§§37–41) because of this union, because we are given heaven through our wisdom and in proportion to it, and this is what gives us happiness. Lastly, it follows that the goal is for us to have a clearer sense of our identity and yet to be more clearly aware that we belong to the Lord (§§42–44).

All of these are part of the Lord's divine providence, because all of them are heaven, which is the goal.

In Everything That It Does, the Lord's Divine Providence Is Focusing on What Is Infinite and Eternal

46

IT is widely recognized in Christian circles that God is infinite and eternal. In fact, it says in the doctrine of the Trinity named after Athanasius that God the Father is infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, as are God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, but that there are not three infinite, eternal, and omnipotent beings, but only one. It follows from this that since God is infinite and eternal, only what is infinite and eternal can be attributed to him.

However, we finite beings cannot grasp what anything infinite and eternal is—and yet at the same time we can. We cannot grasp it because the finite cannot contain the infinite; and we can grasp it because there

are abstract notions that enable us to see that certain things do exist even though we cannot see what their nature is.

There are such notions about the infinite—for example, that because God is infinite, or Divinity is infinite, God is reality itself or essence⁵⁶ itself and substance itself, love itself and wisdom itself, what is good itself and what is true itself, the Only—in fact, the essential Human. Then too, if we say that the infinite is the all, then infinite wisdom is omniscience and infinite power is omnipotence.

[2] These concepts, though, will get lost in the dim depths of our thought and perhaps even fall from incomprehension into denial unless we can rid them of elements that our thought gets from the material world, particularly those two essential features of the material world called space and time. These can only limit our concepts and make abstract concepts seem like nothing at all. However, if we can rid ourselves of them the way angels do, then the infinite can be grasped by means of the things I have just listed. This leads to a grasp of the fact that we ourselves are real because we have been created by the infinite God who is the All, that we are finite substances because we have been created by the infinite God who is substance itself, that we are wisdom because we have been created by the infinite God who is wisdom itself, and so on. For if the infinite God were not the All, substance itself, and wisdom itself, we would not be real, or would simply be nothing, or would be only ideas of existence, according to those dreamers called idealists.⁵⁷

[3] Material presented in the work *Divine Love and Wisdom* may serve to show that the divine essence is love and wisdom (§§28–39), that divine love and wisdom are substance itself, and form itself and that divine love and wisdom are substance and form in and of themselves, and are therefore wholly “itself” and unique (§§40–46), and that God created the universe and everything in it not from nothing but from himself (§§282–284). It follows from this that everything that has been created, especially ourselves and the love and wisdom within us, is real, and is not just an image of reality.⁵⁸

If God were not infinite, then, nothing finite would exist; if the Infinite were not the All, there would not be anything; and if God had not created everything from himself, there would be nothing real, nothing at all. In short, *we are because God is*.

Now, since we are dealing with divine providence, and are dealing at this point with the fact that it focuses on what is infinite and eternal in

everything it does, and since this can be conveyed clearly only if it is put in a particular sequence, that sequence will be as follows:

1. What is intrinsically infinite and intrinsically eternal is the same as Divinity.
2. What is intrinsically infinite and eternal can only focus on what is infinite from itself in what is finite.
3. In everything it does, divine providence focuses on what is infinite and eternal from itself, especially in the intent to save the human race.
4. There is an image of what is infinite and eternal in the angelic heaven made up of members of the human race who have been saved.
5. The very core of divine providence is its focus on what is infinite and eternal in the forming of the angelic heaven so that it can be a single person in the Lord's sight, a person who is his image.

48

1. *What is intrinsically infinite and intrinsically eternal is the same as Divinity.* This is supported by material presented in a number of places in *Divine Love and Wisdom*. The principle that what is intrinsically infinite and intrinsically eternal is Divinity comes from an angelic concept. By “what is infinite,” angels understand simply the divine reality; and by “what is eternal” the divine manifestation. We on earth, though, both *can* see and *cannot* see that what is intrinsically infinite and intrinsically eternal is Divinity. We can see it if we think of what is infinite nonspatially and of what is eternal nontemporally. We cannot see it if we think about what is infinite and eternal on the basis of space and time. This means that we can see it if we think on a higher level, that is, with a deeper kind of rationality; but we cannot see it if we think on a lower level, that is, more superficially.

[2] People who see it think that there cannot be an infinite amount of space or an infinite amount of time, so there can be no infinite amount of time as the eternity from which all things arise. This is because what is infinite has no first or last limit, no boundaries. They also think that there can be no derivative infinite being, because this presupposes a boundary and a beginning, something prior as source. This makes it meaningless to talk about a derivative infinite and eternal being, because that would be like talking about a derivative reality, which is a contradiction in terms. A derivative infinite being would be an infinite being derived from infinite being, and a derivative

reality would be a reality derived from reality, so that infinite being or reality would either be the same as the original infinite being or would actually be finite.

We can see from things like this that are evident to our deeper rationality that there is something intrinsically infinite and intrinsically eternal, and that these are Divinity, the source of everything.

I realize that many people will be saying to themselves, “How can anyone grasp something on a deeper level of rationality, something that has nothing to do with space and time? How can anyone grasp the notion that this not only exists but is the All, the very source of everything?” Think more deeply, though. Think whether love or any of its desires, whether wisdom or any of its perceptions, whether even your thought itself is in space and time, and you will discover that they are not. Given the fact that Divinity is love itself and wisdom itself, then, it follows that Divinity cannot be conceived of in space and time, so neither can the Infinite.

To understand this more clearly, consider whether your thought is in time and space. Take the course of your thinking over ten or twelve hours—is it not true that this span of time can seem like one or two hours and can also seem like one or two days? It depends on the emotional state that underlies the thinking. If you are feeling happy with no awareness of the passage of time, the thoughts of ten or twelve hours can seem to take one or two hours, and if you are feeling distress and are conscious of the passage of time, it is just the reverse.

We can see from this that time is simply an appearance that depends on the emotional state that gives rise to our thoughts. The same is true of spatial distances in thought, whether on a walk or on a journey.⁵⁹

Since angels and spirits are feelings derived from love and their consequent thoughts, they are not in space and time; they are simply in what seems to be space and time. The kind of apparent space and time they are in depends on the state of their feelings and consequent thoughts. As a result, when anyone thinks affectionately about someone else, with the focused intent of seeing or talking with that other individual, there is an instantaneous presence.

[2] This is why we all have spirits present with us who are feeling the way we are. There are evil spirits with us when we feel drawn toward something that is evil the way evil spirits are, and good spirits with us when we feel drawn toward something that is good the way good spirits are. They are just as present as though we were accepted members of their community. Space and time have nothing to do with

this presence, because a feeling and its consequent thought are not in space and time, and spirits and angels are feelings and their consequent thoughts.

[3] Firsthand experience over many years has taught me that this is so. I have also learned it from talking with any number of people after their death, both people from the various nations of Europe and people from various nations in Asia and Africa, and all of them were near at hand. If they had been in space and time, it would have taken a journey and the time that a journey requires.

[4] Actually, we all know this instinctively, or in our own minds. This has been brought home to me by the fact that no one has started thinking in terms of spatial distances when I have described conversations with deceased people in Asia, Africa, or Europe; with Calvin, Luther, or Melancthon,⁶⁰ for example; or with some monarch, official, or priest in a faraway land. It has not occurred to people to ask, “How could anyone talk with people who lived there, and how could they get here when there are so many lands and seas in between?” This also showed me that people are not thinking on the basis of space and time when they think about people who are in the spiritual world.

See *Heaven and Hell* 62–169 [162–169] and 191–199, though, on the fact that people in the spiritual world do have what seem to be space and time.

51

This leads us to the conclusion that we should think about what is infinite and eternal and therefore about the Lord nontemporally and nonspatially, and that we can do so. Further, it shows that this is how we think on the deeper level of our rationality, and that what is infinite and eternal is the same as the Lord. That is how angels and spirits think. Thought withdrawn from space and time enables us to understand divine omnipresence and omniscience and Divinity from eternity; while this is absolutely impossible for thought that has spatial and temporal concepts in it.

We can see from this that it is possible to think about God from eternity but definitely not about the material world from eternity. We can therefore think about the creation of the universe by God but definitely not at all about a creation by the material world, since space and time are properties of the material world, while Divinity is devoid of them. On Divinity being devoid of space and time, see *Divine Love and Wisdom* 7–10, 69–72, 73–76, and elsewhere [§§130, 156, 285].

52

2. *What is intrinsically infinite and eternal can only focus on what is infinite from itself in what is finite.* By “what is intrinsically infinite and eternal,” I mean Divinity itself, as explained in the previous section

[§§48–51]. By “what is finite,” I mean everything created by Divinity, especially people, spirits, and angels. By “focusing on what is infinite and eternal from itself,” I mean focusing on what is divine in them—on itself, that is—the way we look at ourselves in a mirror. The truth of this has been amply demonstrated in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, especially where I explained that there is a human image in the created universe and that this is an image of what is infinite and eternal (§§317–318) and therefore an image of God the Creator or the Lord from eternity.

We still need to realize that intrinsic divinity is in the Lord, while derivative divinity is divinity from the Lord in his creatures.

Examples are needed, though, if this is to be more clearly understood.

53

Divinity cannot focus on anything but Divinity, and it cannot focus on that anywhere except in what it has created. This is evidenced by the fact that none of us can focus on others except on the basis of what is inwardly our own. If we love others, we look at them from our own love within us. If we are wise, we look at others from our own wisdom within us.

It may seem as though others either love us or do not love us, that they are either wise or not, but we see this on the basis of the love and wisdom that is within ourselves. This means that we unite ourselves to them to the extent that they love us the way we love them, or to the extent that their wisdom is like ours. That is how we unite.

[2] It is the same with Divinity in itself. The inner Divinity cannot look at itself from some other, from any person, spirit, or angel, because they have nothing within themselves of the Divinity that is their source. To look at divinity from some other individual in whom there is no trace of divinity would be to look at divinity from no divinity, which is impossible. This is why the Lord is united to people, spirits, and angels in such a way that everything that has to do with divinity is not from them but from the Lord. It is common knowledge, that is, that everything good and everything true that anyone has is not from us but from the Lord. We cannot even name the Lord or say the names “Jesus” or “Christ” except from him.⁶¹

[3] It follows, then, that what is infinite and eternal (which is the same as Divinity) has an infinite regard for everything in finite beings and unites itself to them in proportion to their inner acceptance of wisdom and love. In short, the Lord cannot make his home and dwell with us or with angels in anything but what is his own. He cannot dwell in what belongs to us or to angels, because that is evil. Even if it were good it would still be finite, and that cannot contain what is infinite within itself or in anything it produces.

We can see from this that there is no way for any finite being to look at what is infinite, but that it is possible for the infinite One to look at what is infinite from himself in finite beings.

54

It seems as though what is infinite cannot be united to what is finite because there is no ratio between the infinite and the finite and because the finite cannot contain the infinite. There are two reasons, though, why there can be a union. The first is that the Infinite One created everything from himself (as explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 282–284); and the second is that the Infinite One cannot focus on anything in finite beings except what is infinite from him. This can seem to finite beings as though it were within them; and this provides a ratio between what is finite and what is infinite. The ratio does not come from anything finite but from the Infinite One within it. In this way, too, the finite can contain the infinite. What does this is not the finite being in and of itself, but the finite being in its apparent autonomy, derived from the One who is intrinsically infinite. (There will be more on this subject later [§§55, 64, 202, 219, 294].)

55

3. *In everything it does, divine providence focuses on what is infinite and eternal from itself, especially in the intent to save the human race.* What is intrinsically infinite and eternal is Divinity itself or the essential Lord. What is secondarily infinite and eternal, though, is divinity emanating, or the Lord in others created from himself—in us and in angels, that is. This divinity is the same as divine providence because the Lord provides by means of that derivative divinity that everything be kept in the design in which and into which it was created. Since it is emanating divinity that is accomplishing this, it follows that all of it is divine providence.

56

We may be assured that divine providence focuses on what is infinite and eternal in everything it does by the fact that everything that has been created by a First Being who is infinite and eternal goes to its limits, and then from those limits goes back to the First Being who is its source (see the section of *Divine Love and Wisdom* that deals with the creation of the universe).⁶² Further, since the First, the source, is present at the heart of every sequence, it follows that the emanating divinity or divine providence focuses on some image of what is infinite and eternal in everything it does. It does so in all cases, though in some instances it is clearly noticeable and in others it is not.

Divinity shows us this image clearly in the variety of everything and in the way everything bears fruit and multiplies.

[2] We can see *an image of what is infinite and eternal in the variety of everything* in the fact that nothing is exactly like anything else and

nothing can be to eternity. We can see this in the faces of all the people there have been since the beginning of creation, and from their characters as well, which are reflected in their faces. We can see it from their feelings, perceptions, and thoughts, too, since these are elements of their character. This is why there are no two identical angels or spirits in all of heaven and never will be to eternity. It is the same for everything we can see in both worlds, the physical and the spiritual. This shows that the variety is infinite and eternal.

[3] There is evidence of *an image of what is infinite and eternal in the way everything bears fruit and multiplies* in the [reproductive] ability of seeds in the plant kingdom and in the process of reproduction in the animal kingdom,⁶³ especially in the genus of fish. If they were to be fruitful and multiply to the full extent of their ability, they would fill all the space in the world, even in the universe, within a century. We can see from this that within this ability there lies an impulse to reproduce to infinity. Then too, since this fruitfulness and multiplication have not failed since the beginning of creation and will never fail, not to eternity, it follows that there is also within this ability an impulse to reproduce to eternity.

It is the same for us in regard to the desires of our love and the perceptions of our wisdom. For both, the variety is infinite and eternal; and the same holds true for the ways they bear fruit and multiply, which are spiritual. No individual enjoys any desire or perception so much like someone else's as to be identical, and no one can to eternity. Further, desires can bear fruit endlessly and perceptions can multiply endlessly: It is widely understood that we can never exhaust the store of knowledge.

This ability to bear fruit and multiply endlessly, or to infinity and eternity, applies to earthly matters for us, to spiritual matters for spiritual angels, and to heavenly matters for heavenly angels.⁶⁴ Nor does it apply only to desires, perceptions, and information in general, it applies specifically to every element of them, even the slightest. These elements have this nature because they arise from the One who is intrinsically infinite and eternal, coming about by means of what is secondarily infinite and eternal.

However, since what is finite cannot contain anything of Divinity, there is no such thing in any person or angel as a possession, not in the least. We and angels are finite. We are only vessels, essentially dead. Whatever is alive in us comes from the emanating divinity united to us by proximity so that it seems to be ours. This will become clear in what follows [§§174, 191–213].

58

The reason divine providence focuses on what is infinite and eternal particularly in its intent to save the human race is that the goal of divine providence is a heaven from the human race (see §§37–45 [27–45] above). Since this is the goal, it follows that the main focus of divine providence is reforming and regenerating us, that is, saving us, since heaven is made up of people who have been reformed and regenerated.

Since regenerating us is a matter of uniting what is good and what is true, or love and wisdom, within us the way they are united in divinity that emanates from the Lord, divine providence focuses primarily on this in its intent to save the human race. The image of the Infinite and Eternal One can be found in us only in the marriage of what is good and what is true. We know that emanating divinity accomplishes this for the human race because of individuals described in the Word, individuals who have prophesied after being filled with that emanating divinity called the Holy Spirit, as well as because of enlightened people who see divine truths in the light of heaven. We see this particularly in angels, who have a sensory awareness of the presence, inflow, and union. Angels are also aware, though, that the true nature of this union could be called a direct contact.⁶⁵

59

It has not yet been realized that divine providence focuses on our eternal state at every step of our journey. It cannot focus on anything else because Divinity is infinite and eternal, and what is infinite or eternal or divine is not in time. It therefore sees the whole future as present. Since this is the nature of Divinity, it follows that there is something eternal in everything it does, overall and in detail.

People who think in terms of time and space find this hard to grasp, though, not only because they love temporal matters but also because they think in terms of what is present to people in the world and not what is present to people in heaven. This latter is as remote from them as the ends of the earth. However, people who are engaged with divinity⁶⁶ base their thinking on the Lord and are thinking in eternal terms even while they think about what is present to them; so they say to themselves, “What is anything that is not eternal? Aren’t temporal things nothing at all by comparison, and don’t they become nothing when they end?” What is eternal is different. It simply *is* because there is no limit to its being.

Thinking like this is thinking in terms of eternity even while we are thinking about what is present; and when we both think and live this way, then emanating divinity with us, or divine providence, focuses on the state of our eternal life in heaven at every step of our journey, and is leading us to it.

We will see in what follows that Divinity focuses on what is eternal in everyone, whether evil or good.

4. *There is a clear image of what is infinite and eternal in the angelic heaven.* The angelic heaven is also one of the things we need to know about. Every religious person thinks about it and wants to go there. Heaven, though, is granted only to people who know the path to it and follow that path. We can know the path to heaven to some extent simply by considering what the people who make up heaven are like, realizing that no one can become an angel or get to heaven unless he or she arrives bringing along some angelic quality from the world. Inherent in that angelic quality is a knowing of the path from having walked it and a walking in the path from the knowing of it.

60

There really are paths in the spiritual world, paths that lead to each community of heaven and to each community of hell. We all see our own paths, spontaneously, it seems. We see them because the paths there are for the loves of each individual. Love opens the paths and leads us to our kindred spirits. No one sees any paths except those of her or his love.

We can see from this that angels are simply heavenly loves, since otherwise they would not have seen the paths that lead to heaven. However, this is better supported by a description of heaven.

Our whole spirit is desire and its consequent thought; and since all desire is a matter of love and all thought a matter of discernment, our whole spirit is its love and its consequent discernment. This is why our thinking flows from the desires of our love when we are thinking solely from our own spirit, as we do when we are in reflective moods at home.

61

We may conclude, then, that when we become spirits (which happens after death), we are the desire of our love, and not our thought except to the extent that it comes from that desire. We are drawn to what is evil (which amounts to a compulsion) if our love has been a love for what is evil, and we are drawn to what is good if our love has been a love for what is good. We are drawn to what is good to the extent that we have abstained from evils as sins; and we are drawn to what is evil to the extent that we have not abstained from evils.

Since all spirits and angels are desires, then, we can see that the whole angelic heaven is nothing but a love that embraces all desires for what is good and therefore a wisdom that embraces all perceptions of what is true. Further, since everything good and true comes from the Lord and the Lord is love itself and wisdom itself, it follows that the angelic heaven is an image of him; and since divine love and wisdom are human in

form, it also follows that this is the only possible form the angelic heaven can have. But I will have more to say about this in the next section.

62

The reason the angelic heaven is an image of what is infinite and eternal is that it is an image of the Lord, who is the Infinite and Eternal One. We can see an image of his infinite and eternal nature in the fact that there are millions⁶⁷ of angels who make up heaven, and that they make up as many communities as there are general desires of heavenly love, with each individual angel in each community being quite clearly his or her own desire. The form of heaven is made up of all these general and specific desires, a form that is like a single being in the Lord's sight just the way a person is a single being. This form is becoming more perfect to eternity as its numbers increase, because the more people there are who are participating in the form of divine love, which is the form of forms, the more perfect is the union.⁶⁸

We can see quite plainly from this that there is an image of what is infinite and eternal in the angelic heaven.

63

The view of heaven provided by this brief description enables us to see that what makes heaven in us is the desire that comes from a love for what is good. But who knows this nowadays? Who actually realizes what "a desire that comes from a love for what is good" is, or realizes that the desires that come from a love for what is good are beyond number, infinite? For as already noted [§61], every angel is quite clearly her or his desire, and heaven in form is the form of all the desires of divine love there.

No one can unite all these desires into this form except the One who is both love itself and wisdom itself and is at the same time infinite and eternal, since there is something infinite and eternal in every form—something infinite in its union and something eternal in its perpetuity. If that infinite and eternal element were taken away, there would be an instantaneous collapse.

Who else can unite desires into a form?⁶⁹ Really, who else can unite one part of it? No part of it can be united except on the basis of an all-embracing concept of all the parts, and the all-embracing whole depends on a concept of each particular component of it. There are millions of components of [heaven's] form, there are thousands entering every year, and there will be thousands entering forever. All little children go there, as do all the adults who are desires that come from a love for what is good.

This again shows that there is an image of what is infinite and eternal in the angelic heaven.

64

5. *The very core of divine providence is its focus on what is infinite and eternal in the forming of the angelic heaven so that it can be a single person*

in the Lord's sight, a person who is his image. I explained in *Heaven and Hell* 59–86 that heaven as a whole is like a single person in the Lord's sight, that the same holds true for each community of heaven, that this is why every angel is a perfectly formed person, and that this is because God the Creator, who is the Lord from eternity, is a person. I also explained that there is therefore a correspondence of everything in heaven with everything in the human being (*Heaven and Hell* 87–102). I myself have not seen that the whole heaven is like a single person, because no one can see the whole heaven but the Lord alone. However, I have at times seen that entire communities of heaven, large and small, have looked like a single individual. I have been told at such times that the largest community, heaven in its entirety, looks the same, but only in the Lord's sight, and that this is why every angel is a person in complete form.

Since the whole heaven is like a single person in the Lord's sight, heaven is divided into as many inclusive bodies as there are organs, viscera, and members in us; and each larger community is divided into as many less inclusive or specific communities as there are major parts of our viscera and organs. We can see from this what heaven is like. 65

Now, since the Lord is the essential Person and heaven is an image of him, we refer to being in heaven as “being in the Lord.” On the Lord as the essential person, see *Divine Love and Wisdom* 11–13 and 285–289.

This enables us to understand to some extent a mystery we can call angelic, namely, that every desire for what is both good and true is human as to its form. That is, whatever emanates from the Lord is a desire for what is good because it comes from his divine love and is a desire for what is true because it comes from his divine wisdom. In angels and in us, the desire for what is true that emanates from the Lord seems like a perception of what is true and like thought about it because we are attentive to perception and thought and not particularly attentive to the desire that they come from, even though [the perception and thought] emanate from the Lord as integral to the desire for what is true. 66

Next, since we are by creation heavens in smallest form and therefore images of the Lord, and since heaven is made up of as many desires as there are angels, each of which is a person as to its form, it follows that the constant effort in divine providence is for each of us to become a heaven in form and therefore an image of the Lord. Further, since this is accomplished by means of the desire for what is good and true, it is for us to become that desire. This, then, is the constant effort in divine providence. 67

The very heart of providence, though, is that we should be in some particular place in heaven or in some particular place in the divine heavenly person and therefore in the Lord. This is what happens for people whom the Lord can lead to heaven. Since the Lord foresees this, he also constantly provides for it, with the result that all of us who are allowing ourselves to be led to heaven are being prepared for our own places in heaven.

68 As already noted [§65], heaven is divided into as many communities as there are organs, viscera, and members in us, and no part of these can be anywhere except where it belongs. Since angels are parts like this in the divine heavenly person, then, and only people who have lived on earth become angels, it follows that people who allow themselves to be led to heaven are constantly being prepared by the Lord for their places. This happens by means of the kind of desire for what is good and true that corresponds,⁷⁰ and every angel-person is enrolled in this place after leaving our world. This is the very core of divine providence in respect to heaven.

69 In contrast, people who do not allow themselves to be led to heaven and enrolled there are prepared for their places in hell. Left to ourselves, we constantly gravitate toward the very depths of hell, while the Lord is constantly drawing us back. If we do not let ourselves be drawn back, we are prepared for particular places in hell, where we are enrolled immediately after our departure from this world. Each such place is opposite to a particular place in heaven because hell is directly opposed to heaven. So just as angel-people are assigned their places in heaven according to their desires for what is good and true, devil-people are assigned their places in hell according to their desires for what is evil and false. Two opposing entities set against each other in parallel arrangement are kept in connection.

This is the very heart of divine providence in respect to hell.

There Are Laws of Divine Providence That People Do Not Know

THE existence of divine providence is generally recognized, but people do not know its nature. The reason the nature of divine providence is a mystery is that its laws have been hidden up to now, stored up in the wisdom of angels; but now they are to be revealed so that the Lord may receive the credit he deserves and we may stop claiming credit for what is not ours. Many people in this world attribute everything to themselves and to their own prudence, and anything they cannot claim in this way they attribute to chance or coincidence. They do not realize that human prudence is nothing and that “chance” and “coincidence” are empty words.

70

[2] I have stated that the laws of divine providence are hidden and have been stored up in the wisdom of angels until now. This is because discernment in divine matters has been closed in the Christian world because of our religion. This has made our discernment so dull and stubborn that we cannot understand anything about divine providence except that it exists, because we do not want to—or we do not want to understand because we cannot. All we can do is argue about whether it is real or not and whether it is only general or whether it deals with details. That is as far as a mind can go once it has been closed in divine matters because of its religion.

[3] However, since it is acknowledged in the church that on our own we cannot do anything that is really good or think anything that is really true, and since these facts are integral to divine providence, believing in the one depends on believing in the other. To prevent one of these principles being affirmed and the other denied, which leads to the collapse of both, it is absolutely necessary, then, that the nature of divine providence be revealed.

This cannot be revealed unless the laws are unveiled by which the Lord provides and oversees our emotional and mental processes. These laws enable us to know the nature of providence, and people who know its nature cannot help but acknowledge it, because they actually see it. This is why it is now time for the laws of divine providence to be revealed that have been stored away in the wisdom of angels until the present.

It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We Should Act in Freedom and in Accord with Reason

71 IT is generally recognized that we have a freedom to think and intend whatever we wish but not a freedom to say whatever we think or to do whatever we wish. The freedom under discussion here, then, is freedom on the spiritual level and not freedom on the earthly level, except to the extent that the two coincide. Thinking and intending are spiritual, while speaking and acting are earthly.

There is a clear distinction between these kinds of freedom in us, since we can think things that we do not express and intend things that we do not act out; so we can see that the spiritual and the earthly in us are differentiated. As a result, we cannot cross the line from one to the other except by making a decision, a decision that can be compared to a door that has first to be unlocked and opened.

This door stands open, though, in people who think and intend rationally, in accord with the civil laws of the state and the moral laws of society. People like this say what they think and do what they wish. In contrast, the door is closed, so to speak, for people who think and intend things that are contrary to those laws. If we pay close attention to our intentions and the deeds they prompt, we will notice that there is this kind of decision between them, sometimes several times in a single conversation or a single undertaking.

I mention this at the outset so that the reader may know that “acting from freedom and in accord with reason” means thinking and intending freely, and then freely saying and doing what is in accord with reason.

72 However, since not many people know that this law can be a law of divine providence (primarily because in spite of the fact that divine providence is constantly leading us to think and intend what is good and true, we have a freedom to consider what is evil and false), I need to proceed clearly, step by step, so that this will be grasped. The sequence will be as follows:

1. We have a capacity for disciplined thought and a certain latitude, or rationality and freedom, and these two abilities are in us as gifts from the Lord.

2. Whatever we do from our freedom, whether we have thought it through rationally or not, seems to be ours as long as it is in accord with our reason.
3. Whatever we have done from our freedom in accord with our thinking becomes a permanent part of us.
4. It is by means of these two abilities that the Lord reforms and regenerates us; without them we could not be reformed and regenerated.
5. We can be reformed and regenerated by means of these two abilities to the extent that we are brought to a realization that anything good and true that we think and do comes from the Lord and not from us.
6. The Lord's union with us and our responsive union with the Lord comes about by means of these two abilities.
7. Through the whole course of his divine providence, the Lord protects these two abilities untouched within us, as though they were sacred.
8. This is why it is integral to divine providence that we act from freedom, and in accord with reason.

1. *We have a capacity for disciplined thought and a certain latitude, or rationality and freedom, and these two abilities are in us as gifts from the Lord.* In *Divine Love and Wisdom* 264–270 and 425 and also in §§43–44 above, I discussed the fact that we have an ability to discern, which is rationality, and an ability to think, intend, speak, and do what we understand, which is freedom. I also discussed the fact that these two abilities are the Lord's gifts within us. However, since any number of doubts may arise about both of these abilities when we think about them, at this juncture I want simply to convey something about the freedom we have to act in accord with reason.

[2] First, though, it needs to be clear that all freedom is a matter of love, even to the point that love and freedom are the same thing. Since love is our life, freedom is also essential to our life. Every pleasure we experience comes from our love; there is no other source of pleasure. Acting for the sake of the pleasure of our love is acting in freedom, because pleasure leads us along, the way a river bears its burdens quite naturally along its current.

Since we have many loves, some of which agree with each other and some of which disagree, it follows that we likewise have many kinds of freedom. In general, though, there are three kinds: earthly, rational, and spiritual.

[3] All of us have earthly freedom by heredity. It is what makes us love nothing but ourselves and the world, and it is all there is to our life at first. Further, since all evils stem from these two loves and evils therefore become objects of our love, it follows that thinking and intending evil is our earthly freedom. It also follows that when we support these intentions with reasons, we are acting in our freedom and in accord with our reason. Acting in this way is acting from the ability we call “freedom,” and supporting the actions is from the ability we call “rationality.”

[4] For example, it is from the love we are born into that we want to commit adultery, cheat, blaspheme, and get even; and when we rationalize these evils inwardly and thereby make them legal, then we are thinking and intending them because of the pleasure of the love we have for them and in accord with a kind of reason; and to the extent that civil laws do not prevent it, we speak out and act out. We can behave like this because of divine providence, since we do have that latitude or freedom. We enjoy the latitude naturally because we get it through heredity, and we actively enjoy this latitude whenever we rationalize it because of the pleasure inherent in our love for ourselves and for the world.

[5] Rational freedom comes from a love for our own reputation, either for the sake of respect or for the sake of profit. This love finds its pleasure in putting on the outward appearance of moral character; and because we love this kind of reputation, we do not cheat, commit adultery, take vengeance, or blaspheme. Since this is the substance of our reasoning, we are also doing what is honest, fair, chaste, and cordial in freedom and according to reason. In fact, we can even talk rationally in favor of these virtues.

However, if our rational activity is only earthly and not spiritual, this is only an external freedom and not an internal one. We still do not love these virtues inwardly, only outwardly, for the sake of our reputation, as just noted. This means that the good things we do are not really good. We might be saying that they are to be done for the sake of the public good, but we are not saying this because of any love for the public good, only because of our love for our own reputation or for profit. Consequently, this freedom of ours has nothing of love for the public good in it, and neither does our reasoning, since this simply agrees with our love. As a result, this “rational freedom” is inwardly an earthly freedom. It too is left to us by divine providence.

[6] Spiritual freedom comes from a love for eternal life. The only people who arrive at this love and its pleasure are people who think that evils are sins and therefore do not want to do them, and who at the same

time turn toward the Lord. The moment we do this, we are in spiritual freedom, because it is only from an inner or higher freedom that we can stop intending evils because they are sins and therefore not do them. This kind of freedom comes from an inner or higher love.

At first, it does not seem like freedom, but it is, nevertheless. Later it does seem that way, and then we act from real freedom and in accord with real rationality by thinking and intending and saying and doing what is good and true.

This freedom grows stronger as our earthly freedom wanes and becomes subservient; it unites itself with rational freedom and purifies it.

[7] We can all arrive at this kind of freedom if we are just willing to think that there is an eternal life and that the temporary pleasure and bliss of life in time is like a passing shadow compared to the eternal pleasure and bliss of life in eternity. We can think this way if we want to, because we do have rationality and liberty, and because the Lord, who is the source of these two abilities, constantly gives us the power to do so.

2. *Whatever we do from our freedom, whether we have thought it through rationally or not, seems to be ours as long as it is in accord with our reason.* The clearest way to show what the rationality and freedom are that are proper to humans is to compare us with animals.⁷¹ They have no rationality or ability to comprehend and no freedom or ability to intend freely. Instead of discernment they have knowledge, and instead of intention they have desire, both on the physical level.

Since they lack these two abilities, they also lack thinking. Instead of thinking, they have an inner sight that is merged with their outer sight because it answers to it.

[2] Every impulse or desire has its own partner or spouse. A desire of physical love has knowledge, a desire of spiritual love has intelligence, and a desire of heavenly love has wisdom. This is because a desire without its partner—its spouse, so to speak—is nothing. It is like a reality with no manifestation or a substance with no form, neither of which can have any attributes. This is why there is something in everything that has been created that we can trace back to the marriage of what is good and what is true, as I have often explained before [§§5–9, 11].

In animals, there is a marriage of desire and knowledge. The desire involved comes from what is good on the physical level, and the knowledge comes from what is true on the physical level.

[3] Now, their desires and their knowledge act in absolute unison, and their desires cannot rise above the level of their knowledge or their knowledge above the level of their desires: if they do rise, they both rise

together. Further, they have no spiritual mind into which—or into whose light and warmth—they can rise. Consequently, they do not have an ability to discern, or rationality, and do not have an ability to intend freely, or freedom. Instead they have simply physical desires and the knowledge that goes with them. Their physical desires are desires to find food and shelter, to procreate, and to avoid being hurt, with all the knowledge these impulses need.

Since this is the nature of their life, they cannot think, “I want this,” or “I do not want this,” or “I know this,” or “I do not know this,” let alone “I understand this” or “I love this.” They are simply carried along by their desires according to their knowledge without reasoning or freedom.

This “carrying” comes not from the physical world but from the spiritual world, since there is nothing in the physical world that is not connected to the spiritual world. That is the source of every cause that makes something happen. There will be more on this below (see §96).

75

It is different for us, since we have not only desires of earthly love but desires of spiritual love and desires of heavenly love as well. Our human mind has three levels, as I explained in part 3 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*.⁷² This means that we can rise from earthly knowledge to spiritual intelligence and from there to heavenly wisdom; and because of these latter two, the intelligence and the wisdom, we can turn to the Lord, be united to him, and therefore live forever. This raising of our desires would not be possible, though, if we did not have the ability to raise our discernment because we are rational and to do so intentionally because we are free.

[2] It is by means of these two abilities that we can think inwardly about what we are perceiving outwardly with our physical senses and can think on a higher level about what we are thinking on a lower level. Any one of us can say, “I was thinking about this,” or “I am thinking about this,” or “I intended this,” or “I intend this,” or “I understand that this is true,” or “I love this because of its quality,” and so on. We can see from this that we are able to think about our thinking from a higher perspective and apparently see it down below. This ability of ours comes from our rationality and our freedom. Rationality enables us to think on a higher level, and freedom enables us to think that way from desire, intentionally. If we did not have the freedom to think that way, that is, we would not have the intention and therefore would not have the thought.

[3] The result is that if we do not want to understand anything except what has to do with this world and its nature, if we do not want to

understand what is good and true on moral and spiritual levels, we cannot rise from knowledge into intelligence, let alone from intelligence into wisdom, because we have blocked off these abilities. We have then made ourselves human only in the limited sense that we could understand if we wanted to, because of our inborn rationality and freedom and because we are able to want to.

It is these two abilities that enable us to think and to express our thoughts by talking. In other respects, we are not people but animals, and actually worse than animals because of our misuse of these abilities.

Anyone whose rationality has not been beclouded can see or grasp the fact that if we did not seem to be in possession of ourselves, we would not experience any wish to know anything or any wish to understand anything, since all pleasure and satisfaction and therefore all volition comes from feelings that derive from love. Who could set out to know or understand something unless there were some feeling of satisfaction involved? Could we have any such feeling of satisfaction unless what moved us seemed to be really ours? If it were not ours at all, but came from someone else—that is, if one person were instilling some of his or her feelings into the mind of someone who really had no inclinations to know or to understand—would that second person accept the feelings? *Could* that second person accept them? Could we call that second person anything but a dumb animal or a passive lump?

76

Clearly, then, it stands to reason that even though everything is flowing in, everything we perceive and therefore think and know, everything we intend and do in response to our perceptions, still it is by divine providence that it all seems to be ours. Otherwise, as just noted, we would not accept anything and could not be given any intelligence or wisdom.

It is acknowledged that everything good and true belongs not to us but to the Lord, even though it does seem to us to be ours. Since everything good and true does seem to be ours, so does everything that has to do with the church and heaven, with love and wisdom, and with charity and faith, even though no element of them really belongs to us. None of us could accept them from the Lord if we did not seem to perceive them as our own.

This supports the truth of the matter, namely, that whatever we do freely, whether or not it is guided by reason, seems to be ours as long as it is in accord with our reason.

Is there anyone who cannot see from that inherent ability called rationality that one particular thing is good and useful to society while another thing is bad and harmful? Justice, for example, and honesty and

77

marital fidelity are useful to society, while injustice, dishonesty, and sex with other people's spouses are harmful to society. This means that evil acts are intrinsically damaging, while good acts are intrinsically beneficial. Is there anyone, then, who cannot incorporate this into rational thought, given the will to do so?

We do have rationality, and we do have freedom. Our rationality and freedom are uncovered, brought to light, and used judiciously, and they enable us to perceive and to act, to the extent that we abstain from our inner evils with these goals in mind. To the extent that we do, we turn toward those good acts the way one friend turns to another.

[2] This enables us—again using that ability of ours called rationality—to make decisions about the good qualities that are useful to society in the spiritual world and the evil qualities that are harmful there. All we have to do is to see sins as the evil ones and good, thoughtful acts as the good ones. Again, we can incorporate this into our rational thought if we want to, because we do have rationality and freedom. Our rationality and freedom are uncovered, brought to light, and used judiciously, and they enable us to perceive and to act, to the extent that we abstain from these evils as sins. To the extent that we do, we turn toward good, thoughtful deeds the way one neighbor turns lovingly toward another.

[3] Now, since the Lord wants whatever we do freely and rationally to seem to be ours, for the sake of our acceptance and union, it follows that we can intend things rationally because they involve our eternal happiness and that with a strength we have asked for from the Lord, we can do them.

78

3. *Whatever we have done from our freedom in accord with our thinking becomes a permanent part of us.* This is because our sense of who we are⁷³ and our freedom are integral to each other. Our sense of who we are is part of our life, and whatever we do from our life we do freely. Then again, our sense of who we are includes everything that comes from our love, because our love is our life; and whatever we do because of our life's love, we do freely.

We act freely and in keeping with our thought because we do think about whatever arises from our life or our love. We validate it in our thought; and once it is validated, we do it freely and in keeping with our thought. [2] This is because everything we do, we do from our volition by means of our discernment, and freedom is a matter of volition and thought a matter of discernment.

We can also act freely and irrationally, and rationally but not freely. These actions do not become a permanent part of us, though. They come only from our mouths and our bodies, not from our spirits and our

hearts. The things that come from our spirits and our hearts become part of us when they are owned by our mouths and our bodies. I could provide any number of examples, but this is not the place for it.

[3] “Becoming part of us” means entering our life and becoming a matter of life and therefore becoming part of our sense of who we are.⁷⁴ However, I will be explaining later⁷⁵ that there is really no “who we are,” even though there does seem to be. At this point I will say only that everything good that we do freely, in keeping with reason, is incorporated into us as though it were ours, because it seems to us that it is ours when we think and intend and speak and act. Still, the goodness is not ours but the Lord’s within us (see §76 above). There will be a separate section on how this incorporation takes place.⁷⁶

We say that whatever we do freely and in keeping with our thought is permanent because nothing we make part of ourselves can be eliminated. It has become part of both our love and our reasoning, part of our volition and our discernment, that is, and therefore part of our life. Actually, it can be displaced, but it still cannot be ousted. When it is displaced, it is moved from the center to the periphery, and there it dwells. This is what “being permanent” means.

[2] For example, suppose that in youth and early maturity we have taken into ourselves a pattern of doing something wrong because of the pleasure it gives to our love—cheating, perhaps, or blasphemy, or revenge, or promiscuity. Since we have done so freely, in keeping with our thought, we have made this part of ourselves. Later, though, if we repent, turn away from this behavior, and regard it as sin that is to be rejected, and therefore refrain from it freely and rationally, then we make part of ourselves the good behavior that is opposite to the evil. This good behavior then takes its place in the center and moves the evil toward the periphery, farther and farther out depending on our distaste for and rejection of it. The evil still cannot be ousted to the point of being uprooted, even though it may seem to be so. What is happening is that the Lord is restraining us from the evil behavior and keeping us in the good. This is what happens with all the evil we inherit and with all the evil we act out.

[3] I have seen things that bore witness to this in some people in heaven, people who thought they were free of evils because the Lord was keeping them involved in what is good. To prevent them from thinking that they actually owned the good qualities they were enjoying, they were let down from heaven and back into their evils until finally they recognized that on their own, they were immersed in evils, but were being held in what is good by the Lord. Once they recognized this, they were brought back into heaven.

[4] It is important to know also that these good qualities are made part of us only as long as they are the Lord's within us. To the extent that we recognize this, the Lord allows us to experience the goodness as our own, so that it seems to us as though we ourselves love our neighbor or are truly considerate, as though we ourselves have faith, and do what is good and understand what is true, as though we ourselves are therefore wise. Such examples help us see the nature and the strength of the appearance the Lord wants us to enjoy for the sake of our salvation; for without this appearance, none of us could be saved.

On this subject, see also §§42–45 above.

80

Nothing that we simply think about becomes part of us, even though we think we intend to do it, unless we intend it to the point that we would actually do it if the opportunity arose. This is because when we do things for this reason, from intent with the aid of discernment or from a desire of intent with the aid of thought from discernment, then we really do them. As long as it is a matter of thought alone it cannot be made part of us, because our discernment does not unite itself to our volition, or the thinking of our discernment to the desire of our intent. Our intent and its desire, though, do unite themselves to our discernment and its thinking, as has been amply explained in part 5 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*.⁷⁷

This is the intent of the Lord's words, "It is not what goes into peoples' mouths that makes them unclean; rather, what comes out through the mouth from the heart makes them unclean" (Matthew 15:11, 17, 18, 19). Spiritually understood, "the mouth" means our thought, because thought is expressed through the mouth, and "the heart," spiritually, means the desire that comes from love. If this is the source of what we think and say, then it makes us unclean. In Luke 6:45 as well, "the heart" means the desire that comes from love or volition and "the mouth" means the thought of our discernment.⁷⁸

81

If we believe that particular evils are permissible, then they do become part of us even though we do not do them, since the permission we grant them in our thought comes from our intent, and there is an agreement. As a result, when we believe that some particular evil is permissible, we have relaxed the inner restraint against it and are kept from doing it only by outward restraints, which are fears.⁷⁹

Since our spirit is cherishing this evil, once the outward restraints are removed we feel free to do it. In the meanwhile, we are constantly doing it in our spirits. On this subject, though, see *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem* 108–113.⁸⁰

4. *It is by means of these two abilities that the Lord reforms and regenerates us; without them we could not be reformed and regenerated.* The Lord teaches us that “No one can see the kingdom of God except by being born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7). However, not many people know what “being born again” or “being regenerated” actually is.⁸¹ This is because people do not know what love and thoughtful living are; so they do not know what faith is, either, because anyone who does not know what love and thoughtful living are cannot know what faith is. Thoughtful living and faith are integral to each other the way what is good and what is true are, the way desires of our volition and thoughts of our discernment are. On this union see *Divine Love and Wisdom* 427–431; *Teachings for the New Jerusalem [on Faith]* 13–24;⁸² and §§3–20 above.

82

The reason no one can enter heaven without being born again is that we are involved in all kinds of evil through what we inherit from our parents; we also inherit an ability to become spiritual by the removal of those evils. Unless we do become spiritual, we cannot enter heaven; and changing from being earthly to being spiritual is being reborn or regenerated.

83

If we are to understand how we are regenerated, though, we need to keep three things in mind, namely, the nature of our first state, a state of damnation; the nature of our second state, a state of reformation; and the nature of our third state, a state of regeneration.

[2] Our first state, the state of damnation, is the one we get from our parents by heredity. Each of us is born with a predilection to love ourselves and the world, and subject to all kinds of evil that have these forms of love as their wellspring. It is the pleasures of these loves that guide us; and they render us unaware of our involvement in evils. This is because every pleasure that stems from love simply feels good to us. Unless we are regenerated, then, all we know is that loving ourselves and the world more than anything else is goodness itself, and dominating others and possessing all their wealth is the greatest good there is.⁸³

This, too, is where all evil comes from, since we do not focus on anyone but ourselves out of love. If we do focus on someone else out of love, it is the way one demon focuses on another or one thief on another when they are cooperating.

[3] If we justify these loves within ourselves and the evils that spring from them because of the pleasure they give us, then we remain bound by the material world and become imprisoned in our physical senses. In our own thinking, the thinking of our spirits, we are insane. As long as we are in this world, though, we can talk and act rationally and wisely,

because we are human and therefore have rationality and freedom. However, we are doing all this out of our love for ourselves and the world.

After death, when we become spirits, we are capable of no pleasure except that which we felt in our spirits in this world. This is the pleasure of hellish love, which turns into the profound and agonizing pain that the Word refers to as the torment and fire of hell. We can see from this that our first state is one of damnation, and that we are in this state if we do not let ourselves be regenerated.

[4] Our second state, the state of reformation, starts when we begin to think about heaven in terms of its joy and therefore to think about God as the one who gives us heavenly joy. At first our thinking is prompted by the pleasure we find in self-love, and heavenly joy is that kind of pleasure for us. As long as the pleasure from that love and the pleasure we find in the evils that arise from it are in control, though, we can only think that we get to heaven by pouring out prayers, listening to sermons, taking communion, giving to the poor and helping the needy, contributing to churches, supporting hospices, and the like. In this state, all we know is that salvation comes by thinking about what our religion teaches us, whether that is what we call faith or whether it is what we call faith and charity.

The reason we are totally convinced that thinking about these things saves us is that we are not thinking about the evils that give us pleasure, and as long as these pleasures are with us, so are the evils themselves. Their pleasures come from our impulses toward them, impulses that constantly crave them and make them happen whenever some fear does not prevent it.

[5] As long as these evils stay in the compulsions of our love and their pleasures, the only faith or charity or devotion or worship we have is on the surface. They seem to the world to be real, but they are not. We might compare them to waters from a polluted spring, waters that are undrinkable.

As long as our nature leads us to think about heaven and God as matters of religion and not to think at all about evils as sins, we are still in the first state. We reach the second state, the state of reformation, when we begin to think that there is such a thing as a sin, and especially when we identify some particular thing as a sin, and when we look into it in ourselves, even briefly, and do not want to do it.

[6] Our third state, the state of regeneration, picks up on this prior state and carries the process further. It begins when we stop doing wrong things because they are sins, advances as we abstain from them, and

becomes complete as we fight against them. Then, as we overcome in the Lord's strength, we are regenerated.

When we are regenerated, the whole pattern of our life is inverted. We become spiritual instead of earthly, since what is earthly is contrary to the divine design when it is separated from what is spiritual, and what is spiritual is in keeping with the divine design. The result is that when we have been regenerated, we act out of thoughtfulness and make the elements of that thoughtfulness part of our faith.

Still, we are spiritual only to the extent that we are attentive to what is true, since everyone is regenerated by means of truths and through living by them. It is truths that enable us to know what life is, and life that enables us to practice truths. This is how goodness and truth are united in the spiritual marriage where we find heaven.

The reason we are reformed and regenerated by means of the two abilities known as rationality and freedom, the reason that in fact we cannot be reformed and regenerated without them, is that it is through our rationality that we can discern and know what is evil and what is good and therefore what is false and what is true. Then through our freedom we can intend what we discern and know. As long as the pleasure of a love for evil is in control, though, we are not free to intend things that are good and true and make them a matter of our rationality, so we cannot make them part of ourselves. This is because the things that we do freely and in accord with reason, as already explained [§§78–81], become virtually part of us, and unless they do become part of us, we cannot be reformed and regenerated. We do not act because of the pleasure that comes from a love for what is good and true until the pleasure of a love for what is evil and false has been displaced, since the pleasures of two opposite loves cannot coexist.

Acting from the pleasure that comes from love is acting freely, and since our reason seconds our love, it is also acting rationally.

Since both evil and good people have rationality and freedom, both evil and good people can discern what is true and do what is good. However, evil people cannot do this freely and rationally, while good people can, because evil people are caught up in the pleasures of a love for evil while good people are caught up in a love for what is good.

The result is that any truth that evil people discern and any good that they do does not become part of them, though it does for good people; and if it does not become virtually part of them, there is no reformation and regeneration. For evil people, the evil intentions and their distortions are in the center and the good intentions and their truths are

85⁸⁴

86

on the periphery, while for good people the good intentions and their truths are in the center and the evil intentions and their distortions are on the periphery. In each case, the qualities that are central spread all the way out to the periphery the way warmth spreads from a central fire or chill spreads from a central source of coldness. So for evil people, the peripheral good is corrupted by the central evils, and for good people the peripheral evil is mitigated by the central goodness. This is why evil deeds do not damn people who have been regenerated and good deeds do not save people who have not.

87 5. *We can be reformed and regenerated by means of these two abilities to the extent that we are brought to a realization that anything good and true that we think and do comes from the Lord and not from us.* I have already explained [§83] what reformation and regeneration are, and have also explained [§§82–86] that we are reformed and regenerated by means of these two abilities, rationality and freedom. Since the change is accomplished by means of the abilities, I need to say a little more about them.

It is our rationality that enables us to discern and our freedom that enables us to intend, in each case apparently on our own. However, the only people who can intend what is good and do good in a rational manner are people who have been regenerated. Evil people can only intend evil freely, and do it in keeping with their thought, by rationalizations that seem to be reasonable. Evil can be justified just the way good can, but only by the use of deceptive appearances. Once these appearances are taken as certainties, they become falsities; and anything that is taken as a certainty seems to be reasonable.

88 Anyone capable of thinking with deeper discernment can see that our ability to intend and our ability to act do not come from ourselves but from the one who is Ability itself, that is, who has the very essence of ability. Simply consider where ability comes from. Does it not come from the One who possesses it at its fullest strength, that is, who has it in its own essence and therefore from its own essence? This means that ability is essentially divine.

Every ability needs resources that must be provided, so there must be some directive from within or above. The eye cannot see on its own, the ear cannot hear on its own, the mouth cannot speak on its own, the hand cannot act on its own—there must be some resource and therefore some directive from the mind. The mind, too, cannot think and intend anything in particular on its own unless something inner or higher directs it

to do so. It is the same with our abilities to discern and to intend. These can come only from One who is intrinsically able to intend and able to discern.

[2] We can see from this that the two abilities called rationality and freedom come from the Lord and not from us. Since they do come from the Lord, it follows that we cannot intend anything on our own or discern anything on our own: it only seems that way. Anyone can become assured of this who knows and believes that the intending of everything good and the discernment of everything true comes from the Lord and not from us. The Word teaches in John 3:27 and 15:5 that we cannot receive anything on our own or do anything on our own.

Now, since all our intending stems from love and all our discerning stems from wisdom, it follows that our ability to intend stems from divine love and our ability to discern stems from divine wisdom. This means that both come from the Lord, who is divine love itself and divine wisdom itself. Naturally, then, this is the only source of our acting freely and rationally. We all act [freely and] rationally because our freedom, like our love, is inseparable from our intentions.⁸⁵

However, we have more inward and more outward intentions, and we can act on the more outward ones and not at the same time on the more inward ones. This is what hypocrites and flatterers do. Their outer intentions are free because they come from a desire to appear other than they really are⁸⁶ or because of a love for something evil, a love that is an extension of the love of their deeper intentions. But as already noted [§86], evil people cannot freely and rationally do anything but evil; they cannot freely and rationally do anything good. They can do good, but not from their inner freedom, the freedom that is really theirs. The result is that there is nothing good about their outer freedom.

I am saying that we can be reformed and regenerated only to the extent that, through these two abilities, we can be brought to a recognition that everything good and everything true that we think and do comes from the Lord and not from us. The reason we cannot recognize this except through these two abilities is that these two abilities themselves come from the Lord. They are the Lord's within us, as you can see from what has already been presented [§§73, 88].

It then follows that we cannot have this recognition on our own, but only from the Lord, though we still seem to be having it independently. This is the Lord's gift to every one of us. Let us then believe that we are independent but know and acknowledge that we are not. Otherwise any

89

90

true thoughts that we think and any good things that we do are not really true and good. We are present in them and the Lord is not present in them. If we are present in anything good, if we are doing it for the sake of our salvation, then it is good done for credit; while if the Lord is present in the good that we do, it is not for credit.

91

The fact is that recognition of the Lord and recognition that everything good and true comes from him are what make our reformation and regeneration possible; but not many people can see this intelligently. That is, people can wonder, “What is the use of this recognition, when the Lord is omnipotent and wants to save everyone? Surely, then, he can and he wants to, provided only that he is moved to pity.”

This kind of thinking does not come from the Lord, though, so it is not based on any deeper intellectual sight, that is, on any enlightenment. I need therefore to say briefly what that acknowledgment accomplishes.

[2] In the spiritual world, where space is only apparent, wisdom causes presence and love causes union, and the reverse. There is an acknowledgment of the Lord from wisdom and there is an acknowledgment of the Lord from love. Acknowledgment of the Lord from wisdom, which in its own right is only a kind of knowing, comes from a belief system. Acknowledgment of the Lord from love comes from living by what that belief system teaches. This latter brings about union, the other brings about presence. This is why people who reject beliefs about the Lord move away from him; and if they also reject the life, they cut themselves off from him. If they reject only the life but not the beliefs, they are present but still cut off. They are like acquaintances who talk with each other but have no love for each other, or like two people when one talks cordially with the other but is still an enemy, full of hatred.

[3] The truth of this is recognized in the widely accepted notion that people who teach the truth and live well are saved but not people who teach the truth and live evil lives, as well as in the notion that people who do not acknowledge God cannot be saved. We can see from this what kind of religion is involved in thinking about God from what we call faith but not doing anything out of caring. This is why the Lord said,

Why do you call me “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say? Whoever comes to me and hears my words and does them I will compare to someone who built a house and laid its foundation on a rock; but whoever hears my words and does not do them is like someone who builds a house on the ground without any foundation. (Luke 6:46–49)

6. *The Lord's union with us and our responsive union with the Lord come about by means of these two abilities.* Union with the Lord and regeneration are the same thing, because we are regenerated to the extent that we are united to the Lord. So everything I have already said about regeneration can be said about union, and what I am about to say about union can be said about regeneration.

The Lord teaches in John that there is a mutual union of the Lord with us and of us with the Lord:

Abide in me, and I in you. If people abide in me and I in them, they bear abundant fruit. (John 15:4, 5)

In that day you will realize that you are in me and I am in you. (John 14:20)

[2] On the basis of reason alone, anyone can see that there is no union of spirits unless it is mutual and that mutuality is what unites. If one person loves another and is not loved in return, then as the one draws near the other backs off; while if there is love in response, as the one draws near so does the other, and this brings about union. Love wants to be loved. This is its inner instinct. To the extent that it is loved in return, it is filled with pleasure.

We can see from this that if the Lord loves us and we do not love the Lord in return, the Lord draws near us and we back off. So the Lord is constantly trying to come to us and enter us, and we are turning away and moving off. That is how it is with people in hell, though for people in heaven there is a mutual union.

[3] Since the Lord does want to be united to us for the sake of our salvation, he has provided a means of mutuality. For us, that means is the appearance that the good we intend and do freely and the truth that we think and speak rationally from these intentions originate in us. It is the appearance that the goodness in our intentions and the truth in our minds seem to be our own. In fact the appearance that they come from us as though they belonged to us is so complete that they do seem to be ours. There is no way to tell that they are not. Check to see whether anyone has any sense at all to the contrary.

On our apparent independence, see §§74–77 above, and on our incorporation of it as our own, see §§78–81. The only difference is that we are to recognize that we are not doing what is good and thinking what is true on our own, but from the Lord, so that the good that we do and the truth that we think are not ours. Thinking like this out of a loving intent, simply because it is true, brings about union,

because this is how we turn toward the Lord and the Lord turns toward us.

93

In the spiritual world you can hear and see what the difference is like between people who believe that everything good comes from the Lord and people who believe that goodness comes from themselves. People who believe that goodness comes from the Lord turn their faces toward him and find a pleasure and a bliss in what is good. In contrast, people who believe that goodness comes from themselves focus on themselves, thinking inwardly that they have earned it. Since they are focused on themselves, all they can feel is a pleasure in their own goodness, and this is not a pleasure in goodness but a pleasure in evil—because what really belongs to us is evil. When pleasure in evil is felt as good, that is hell.

After death, people who have done good in the belief that it came from them cannot accept the fact that everything good comes from the Lord. They mingle with hellish demons and eventually unite with them. However, people who accept this truth are reformed, though the only people who do accept it are the ones who have turned to God during their lives. Turning to God during our lives is nothing but abstaining from evils as sins.

94

The Lord's union with us and our mutual union with the Lord are accomplished through our loving our neighbor as ourselves and loving the Lord above all.

Loving our neighbor as ourselves is simply not dealing dishonestly or unfairly with people, not harboring hatred or burning with revenge against them, not speaking ill of them or slandering them, not committing adultery with their spouses, and not doing anything of that nature to them. Can anyone fail to see that people who *do* do things like this are not loving their neighbor as themselves? However, people who do not do such things because they are both bad for their neighbor and sins against God treat their neighbor honestly, fairly, cordially, and faithfully. Since the Lord acts in the same way, a mutual union results.

When there is a mutual union, then whatever we do for our neighbor we do from the Lord, and whatever we do from the Lord is good. Then our neighbor is not the visible individual⁸⁷ but the goodness within that individual.

Loving the Lord above all is simply not doing violence to the Word because the Lord is in the Word, not doing violence to the holy practices of the church because the Lord is in the holy practices of the church, and not doing violence to any soul whatever, because everyone's soul is in the

hand of the Lord. When we abstain from these evils as appalling sins, we are loving the Lord above all; but only people who love their neighbor as themselves can do so, because the two kinds of love are essentially one.

Since there is a union of the Lord with us and of us with the Lord, there are two tablets of the law—one for the Lord and the second for us.⁸⁸ To the extent that we keep the laws of our tablet, apparently on our own, the Lord enables us to keep the laws of his tablet. However, if we do not keep the laws of our tablet, all of which have to do with loving our neighbor, we cannot keep the laws of the Lord's tablet, all of which have to do with loving the Lord. How can a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, or a perjurer love the Lord? Surely reason tells us that being like this and loving the Lord is a contradiction. Is this not what the devil is like? Can people like this harbor anything but hatred for God?

When we do turn back from murder, adultery, theft, and perjury as hellish, though, then we can [harbor other feelings than hatred for God]. That is, we then turn our faces away from the devil and toward the Lord; and when we turn our faces toward the Lord, he gives us love and wisdom. These come into us through our faces, not through the backs of our necks. Because this is the only way union with the Lord is brought about, the two tablets were called a covenant. There are two parties to a covenant.

7. *The Lord protects these two abilities untouched within us and as things that are sacred through the whole course of his divine providence.* There are several reasons for this. One is that without these two abilities there, we would have no discernment or volition and would therefore not be human. Another is that without these two abilities we could not be united to the Lord and therefore could not be reformed and regenerated. Then too, without these two abilities we would not have immortality or eternal life. We can see this to some extent from the view already given [§§71–95] of what freedom and rationality are (these are the two abilities). We cannot see this clearly, though, unless the propositions are presented to view as inferences, so I need to shed some light on them.

[2] *Without these two abilities there we would have no discernment or volition and would therefore not be human.* The only basis of our volition is our ability to intend as though we were doing so ourselves. Intending freely, with this apparent autonomy, comes from the ability the Lord is constantly giving us, the ability called freedom. For another thing, the only basis of our discernment is our ability to discern whether something

is reasonable or not, again as though we were doing so ourselves. Discerning whether something is reasonable or not comes from the second ability that the Lord is constantly giving us, the ability called rationality.

These two abilities unite within us the way volition and discernment do, because there is no intent without discernment. Discerning is the mate or match of intending, necessary to its existence; so along with the ability called freedom we are given the ability called rationality.

[3] Then too, if you take away intending from discerning, you will not discern anything at all. You can understand to the extent that you try to, provided you have or have access to the resources called perceptions,⁸⁹ since these are like an artisan's tools. When I say that you can discern to the extent that you try, it means to the extent that you love to discern, since volition and love are the same thing.

This may seem like a paradox, but that is only how it seems to people who do not love to discern and therefore do not try to; and people who do not try to discern claim that they cannot. I will, however, be explaining later [§98] which people really cannot discern and which ones find it hard.

[4] We need no further support for the statement that if we did not have volition based on the ability called freedom and discernment based on the ability called rationality, we would not be human. Animals do not have these abilities. It may seem as though animals, too, can intend and can discern, but they cannot. There is an earthly desire, basically an impulse, with matching knowledge, that guides and impels them to do what they do. There is a social and moral component to this knowledge, but it does not transcend their knowledge, because animals have no spiritual level that would enable them to perceive what is moral and therefore think about it. They can be taught to do particular things, but this is strictly on the physical level. What they learn is added to their knowledge and to their impulses and is called forth either by sight or by hearing. However, it never becomes something that they think about, let alone something that they reason about. There is more on this subject above (see §74).

[5] *Without these two abilities we could not be united to the Lord and therefore could not be reformed and regenerated.* This has already been explained [§§82–86]. The Lord dwells within us in these two abilities whether we are evil or good, and uses them to unite everyone to himself. This is why evil people are as capable of discernment as good people, why potentially they intend what is good and discern what is true. If they

do not have these characteristics in act, that is because of their misuse of the abilities.

The reason the Lord dwells in these abilities in each of us is found in the inflow of the Lord's intent, an intent that wants to be accepted by us, to make its dwelling within us, and to give us the happiness of eternal life. This is the Lord's intent because it comes from his divine love. It is this intent of the Lord that makes whatever we think and say and intend and do seem to be our own.

[6] There is ample evidence in the spiritual world that the inflow of the Lord's intent makes this happen. Sometimes the Lord fills an angel with his divine nature so completely that the angel's whole consciousness is of being the Lord. That is how the angels were filled whom Abraham, Hagar, and Gideon⁹⁰ saw, angels who therefore called themselves Jehovah, as we read in the Word. In the same way, one spirit can be filled by another to the point of not realizing that she or he is not that other. I have seen this happen often. It is also common knowledge in heaven that the Lord always works through intention and that what happens is what he intends.

We can see from this that it is through these two abilities that the Lord unites himself to us and works things out so that we are united to him in return. I have already explained how we are united mutually through these abilities and how we are therefore reformed and regenerated, and will have much more to say about this below.⁹¹

[7] *Without these two abilities we would not have immortality or eternal life.* This follows from what has already been presented, namely, that these abilities are the means to our union with the Lord and to our reformation and regeneration. It is through them that we have immortality and through reformation and regeneration that we have eternal life. Since we are all united to the Lord through these two abilities whether we are evil or good, as just noted, we all have immortality. However, we have eternal life, heaven's life, only if that union is mutual, from the core of our being to its outer limits.⁹² This enables us to see why the Lord protects these two abilities untouched within us and as things that are sacred through the whole course of his divine providence.

8. *This is why it is integral to divine providence that we act from freedom and in accord with reason.* Acting freely and rationally and acting on the basis of our freedom and our rationality are the same thing, as is acting on the basis of our intent and discernment. There is a difference, though, between acting freely and rationally or on the basis of our freedom and our rationality on the one hand, and acting in ways that are truly free and rational or on the basis of genuine freedom and

genuine rationality. This is because people who do evil out of a love for doing evil and who justify it are, in a way, acting freely and rationally. However, their freedom is not freedom in essence or real freedom. It is actually a hellish freedom that in essence is slavery. Their reason is not reason in essence, either. It is an imitation of reason, or distorted reason, or a facade made up of rationalizations.

Still, both ways of acting are under divine providence, for if we on the earthly level were deprived of the freedom to intend evil and to make it seem reasonable by rationalizations, that would be the end of our freedom and rationality and of our volition and discernment. We could not be led away from our evils and reformed, so we could not be united with the Lord and live forever. That is why the Lord protects our freedom the way we protect the pupil of our eye. The Lord, though, is constantly using our freedom to lead us away from our evils, and to the extent that he can do so through our freedom, he uses that freedom to plant good things within us. In this way, step by step he gives us heavenly freedom in place of hellish freedom.

98

I have stated [§73] that everyone has the ability to intend called freedom and the ability to discern called rationality, but it needs to be clearly understood that these abilities are virtually instinctive in us. They are what make us human.

As I have already explained [§97], it is one thing to act freely and rationally and another thing to act in true freedom and with true rationality. Only people who have allowed themselves to be regenerated by the Lord can act in true freedom and with true rationality. Others act freely and in keeping with a kind of thinking that they shape into an image of rationality. Still, everyone can attain to true rationality, and through that rationality to true freedom, except people who are born feeble-minded or terribly dense. There are many reasons why people do not do so, reasons I will be disclosing later.⁹³ For now, let me simply mention the kinds of people who cannot be given true latitude or true freedom, and true reason or true rationality, and the kinds of people who have great difficulty.

[2] Real freedom and real rationality are impossible for people who are born feeble-minded or who have become so, as long as they remain feeble-minded. Real freedom and real rationality are impossible for people who are born dense and dull or who have become so through idleness or some sickness that distorts or shuts down the deeper levels of the mind, or else through a love for bestial living.

[3] Real freedom and real rationality are impossible for people in the Christian world who resolutely deny the Lord's divine nature and the

holiness of the Word and who maintain this denial decisively all the way to the end of their lives. This is what “the sin against the Holy Spirit” means, the sin that is not forgiven in this age or in the age to come (Matthew 12:31, 32). [4] Real freedom and real rationality are also impossible for people who attribute everything to the material world and nothing to Divinity and who make this a part of their faith by arguments based on visual evidence, because they are atheists.

[5] Real freedom and real rationality are difficult for people who have to a large extent convinced themselves of false religious principles, because people who convince themselves of false principles are denying true ones. If they have not convinced themselves, though, they can [have true freedom and rationality] no matter what their religion is. On this point, see the material collected in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 91–97.

[6] Little children and youths cannot attain to true freedom and rationality until they reach the age of maturity, because the deeper levels of our minds are opened only gradually. In the meanwhile they are like seeds in unripe fruit that cannot sprout when they are planted.

I have mentioned [§98] that real freedom and real rationality are impossible for people who deny the Lord’s divine nature and the holiness of the Word and for people who opt decisively for the material world and against Divinity, and also that they are difficult for people who have to a large extent convinced themselves of false religious principles. Still, none of these people actually loses these abilities. I have heard atheists who had become demons and satans⁹⁴ understand mysteries of wisdom just as well as angels do, but only when they heard someone else saying them. As soon as they turned back to their own thoughts, they stopped understanding. This was because they did not want to understand.

Still, they were shown that they would want to understand if they had not been led astray by their love for evil and the pleasure that it brought them. They understood this, too, when they heard it. They even agreed that they could want to, but said that they did not want to be able to, because then they would not be able to want what they really wanted, namely, the evil that followed from the pleasure of their compulsions.

I have often heard remarkable things like this in the spiritual world, and am completely convinced that everyone does have freedom and rationality. I am convinced that everyone can attain to real freedom and real rationality simply by abstaining from evils as sins. However, any adult who does not attain to real freedom and real rationality in this world will never do so after death, since then the state of life⁹⁵ we had while we were in the world lasts forever.

It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We
Should Put Aside Evils in Our Outer Nature,
Regarding Them as Sins and Doing So in
Apparent Autonomy, and That This Is the
Only Way the Lord Can Put Aside the Evils in
Our Inner Nature and in Our Outer Nature Alike

100

ON the basis of reason alone everyone can see that the Lord, who is goodness itself and truth itself, cannot enter us unless what is evil and false in us has been banished. What is evil is the opposite of what is good and what is false is the opposite of what is true, and there is no way that opposites can mingle. No, when one approaches the other, there is a battle that lasts until one gives way to the other. Then the one that gives way moves off and the other takes its place. There is this kind of opposition between heaven and hell, or between the Lord and the devil.

Is it reasonable for anyone to think that the Lord can enter where the devil is in control, or that heaven can be in the same place as hell? With the rationality given to everyone who is sane, can we not see that the devil must be expelled for the Lord to enter, that hell must be banished for heaven to come in?

[2] This opposition is meant by what Abraham said from heaven to the rich man in hell:

There is a huge, fixed chasm between you and us, so that people who want to cross to you from our side cannot, nor can you cross over to us.
(Luke 16:26)

Real evil is hell and real goodness is heaven, or in other words, real evil is the devil and real goodness is the Lord. Anyone controlled by what is evil is a miniature hell, and anyone controlled by what is good is a miniature heaven. How, then, can heaven enter hell when there is such a huge, fixed chasm between them that you cannot get from one to the other? It follows from this that hell must at all costs be banished so that the Lord can enter in with heaven.

101

However, many people—especially people who have convinced themselves of a faith that is devoid of caring—do not know that they are

in hell when they are engaged in evil pursuits. They have no idea what evils really are, because they give no thought to them. They say that they are not under the yoke of the law,⁹⁶ which means that the law does not condemn them. They also say that since they cannot contribute anything to their own salvation they cannot rid themselves of anything evil, let alone do anything good on their own.

They are people who give no thought to the evil within themselves and who are constantly engaged in it because of this neglect. I explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* 61–68 that they are the ones the Lord referred to as “goats” in Matthew 41–46 [25:32–33, 41–46], telling them to “Go away from me, cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

[2] If we give no thought to the evils within us, that is, if we do not examine ourselves and then refrain from doing them, we wind up inevitably not knowing what evil is and then loving it because of the pleasure it offers us. This is because anyone who does not know about evil loves it, and anyone who neglects thinking about evil is constantly involved in it. People like this are like blind people, people who cannot see, since thought sees what is good and what is evil the way the eye sees what is beautiful and what is ugly. We are caught up in evil if we consider and intend it and if we think it is hidden from God and would be forgiven if it came to light. This is actually thinking that we are free of evil.

If we do then refrain from evil deeds, we do so not because they are sins against God but because we are afraid of the laws and afraid for our reputation. We are still doing them in spirit, though, because it is our spirit that thinks and intends. As a result, whatever we think in our spirit in this world we do after we leave this world when we become spirits.

[3] In the spiritual world where we all arrive after death, no one asks what our faith has been or what our beliefs have been, only what our life has been, whether we are one kind of person or another. They know that the quality of our faith and the quality of our beliefs depend on the quality of our life, because life constructs a belief system for itself and constructs a faith for itself.

All this leads to the conclusion that it is a law of divine providence that we should rid ourselves of our evils. If we do not, then the Lord cannot be united to us and bring us to himself in heaven. However, it is not generally known that we need to rid ourselves of evils in our outer nature, and do this in apparent autonomy, or that the Lord cannot rid us of the evils in our inner nature unless we do this, apparently on our own.

Several principles, then, need to be presented in the light for rational consideration in the following sequence.

1. Everyone has an inner and an outer level of thinking.
2. The essential quality of our outer thinking is determined by the quality of our inner thinking.
3. Our inner nature cannot be cleansed from compulsions to evil as long as the evils in our outer nature are not banished, because these outer evils stand in the way.
4. The Lord cannot rid us of the evils in our outer nature without our help.
5. Therefore we need to banish the evils from our outer nature in apparent autonomy.
6. Then the Lord cleanses us from the compulsions to evil in our inner nature and from the evil practices themselves in our outer nature.
7. It is the unceasing effort of the Lord's divine providence to unite us to himself and himself to us in order to give us the joys of eternal life; and this can happen only to the extent that our evils and their compulsions are banished.

103

1. *Everyone has an inner and an outer level of thinking.* Our outer and inner levels of thinking mean much the same as our outer and inner selves, which is the same as our outer and inner volition and discernment, because volition and discernment are what make us human. Further, since volition and discernment come to our consciousness in thoughts, we can speak of outer and inner levels of thinking.

Since it is not our bodies but our spirits that intend and discern and therefore think, it follows that this outer level and inner level are outer and inner levels of our spirit. Our physical behavior, whether in speech or in action, is nothing but an effect of the inner and outer levels of our spirits, since the body is simply obedience.

104

To see that everyone who is old enough has an outer and an inner thinking, an outer [and an inner] volition and discernment, or outer and inner levels of spirit that amount to outer and inner levels of self, we need only look closely at the thoughts and intentions of other people on the basis of what they say and do. We may also look at our own thoughts and intentions when we are in company and when we are by ourselves.

People can talk cordially with others on the basis of their outer thinking and yet be hostile to them in their inner thinking. They can talk

about love for their neighbor and love for God on the basis of their outer thinking, and do so with feeling, when in their inner thinking they are trivializing their neighbor and have no fear of God. People can talk thoughtfully and with feeling about the justice of our civil laws, the virtues of moral living, and the theological issues of spiritual life, and yet when they are by themselves, moved by their inner thinking and its feeling, they can argue against our civil laws, against the virtues of moral living, and against the theological issues of spiritual life. We do this when we are driven by our compulsions to evil but want it to seem to the world that we are not.

[2] When they are listening to what others say, many people are thinking, “Are their private thoughts the same as the thoughts they are expressing? Should I believe them or not? What are their intentions?” Everyone knows that flatterers and hypocrites have two levels of thought. They can control themselves and prevent their inner thinking from being seen, hiding it deeper and deeper within and virtually locking the doors to keep it hidden. We can also see quite clearly that we have inner and outer levels of thinking from the fact that we can see our own outer thought from the vantage point of our inner thought. We can reflect on it as well, and decide whether it is evil or not.

We may attribute this characteristic of the human mind to the two abilities we are given by the Lord, namely, freedom and rationality. If we did not have outer and inner levels of thought, these abilities would not enable us to sense and see anything evil in ourselves and be reformed. In fact, we would not even be able to talk; we would only be able to make noises like animals.

The inner level of our thinking comes from our life’s love⁹⁷ and from the feelings and consequent perceptions that this love prompts. The outer level of our thinking comes from items we have in our memory that are useful to our life’s love as supports and as means to its ends. From early childhood to young adulthood we are absorbed in the outer level of our thinking because of our impulses to learn, which at this point constitute our inner level. Some elements of desire and resulting tendencies [to action] seep through from the life’s love we have inherited from our parents as well.

Later, though, the way we live shapes our life’s love, whose feelings and consequent perceptions make up the inner level of our thinking. Then our life’s love gives rise to a love of means;⁹⁸ and the pleasures and the information those means elicit from our memory make up the outer level of our thinking.

106

2. *The quality of our outer thinking is determined by the quality of our inner thinking.* I have already explained⁹⁹ that our quality from head to toe is determined by the quality of our life's love. I need to begin at this point, then, by saying something about our life's love, since until that is done I cannot say anything about the desires that, together with our perceptions, make up our inner human nature, or about the pleasures of our desires that, together with our thoughts, make up our outer human nature.

There are many loves, but there are two that are like lords or rulers: heavenly love and hellish love. Heavenly love is love for the Lord and for our neighbor, and hellish love is love for ourselves and for the world. The two kinds of love are as opposite to each other as heaven and hell, because when we are caught up in love for ourselves and for the world we intend good to no one but ourselves, while when we are caught up in love for the Lord and our neighbor we intend good to everyone. These two loves are our life's love, but they come in many different forms. Heavenly love is the life's love of people whom the Lord is leading, and hellish love is the life's love of people whom the devil is leading.

[2] No one can have a life's love, though, without the derivatives we refer to as desires. The derivatives of hellish love are attractions to what is evil and false—strictly speaking, compulsions; while the derivatives of heavenly love are attractions to what is good and true—strictly speaking, predilections. There are as many feelings of hellish love (strictly speaking, compulsions) as there are varieties of evil; and there are as many feelings of heavenly love (strictly speaking, predilections) as there are varieties of goodness.

Love dwells in its desires like a lord in a manor or a ruler in a realm. Their lordship and rule is over the elements of our minds, that is, of our volition and discernment, and through these over our bodies. Through its desires and consequent perceptions, and through its pleasures and consequent thoughts, our life's love rules over the whole person. It rules over the inner level of our minds through our desires and their perceptions and over the outer level of our minds through the pleasures of those desires and the thoughts that result from them.

107

We can see what this governmental structure is like to some extent from comparisons.

As for heavenly love with its desires for what is good and true and the perceptions they prompt—the pleasures of those desires and the thoughts that the pleasures prompt—these can be compared to a tree with all its branches, leaves, and fruit. The life's love is the tree; the branches and leaves are the desires for what is good and true and their

perceptions; and the fruit is the pleasures of those desires and their thoughts.

As for hellish love, though, with its desires for what is evil and false, its compulsions, and the pleasures of those compulsions and the thoughts that they prompt, they can be compared to a spider in the middle of its web. The love itself is the spider; the cravings for what is evil and false and their deeper deceptions are the web of threads right where the spider sits; and the pleasures of those compulsions with their vicious schemes are the outer threads where flying insects are caught, wrapped up, and eaten.

These comparisons enable us to see how everything in our volition and discernment, everything in our mind, is united to our life's love, but they do not enable us to see this rationally. We can see the union rationally as follows. There are always three things that make up a unity, namely, purpose, means, and result.¹⁰⁰ The life's love is the purpose; the desires and their perceptions are the means; and the pleasures of those desires and their thoughts are the results. This is because just as a purpose attains its result through means, love attains its pleasures through desires and reaches into thoughts through perceptions.

108

The actual effects occur in the mind's pleasures and their thoughts when the pleasures come from our volition and the thoughts come from the resulting discernment; that is, when there is complete agreement between them. The results are then part of our spirit; and even if they do not come out in physical action, they are virtually in action when this agreement is reached. They are in our bodies as well and are dwelling there with our life's love, eager to act; and they act whenever nothing prevents it. This is what cravings for evil and actual evils are like for people who in their spirit regard them as permissible.

[2] Just as a purpose unites with its means and through its means with a result, then, our life's love unites with the inner processes of our thought and through them with its outer processes. We can therefore see that the quality of the outer processes of our thinking is essentially the same as the quality of the inner ones, since a purpose instills itself completely into its means and through its means into its result. Nothing essential happens in the result except what is in the means and what lies behind the means in the purpose; and since the purpose is therefore the very essence that fills the means and the result, we refer to the means and the result as the intermediate purpose and the final purpose.

It does sometimes seem as though the outer processes of our thinking were not really of the same nature as the inner ones. This happens, though, because the life's love, with the inner things that surround it,

109

appoints a subsidiary agent called “the love of means” and commissions it to make very sure that nothing of its compulsions comes to light. Consequently, this agent speaks and acts in accord with the civic principles of the country, the moral principles of reason, and the spiritual principles of the church, all because of the deviousness of its ruler, the life’s love. It does this so deviously and cleverly that no one even sees that such people are not really like what they are saying and doing. Eventually, they cover up so completely that they themselves can hardly tell. All hypocrites are like this, as are priests who at heart trivialize the neighbor and have no fear of God, although they are preaching about love for our neighbor and love for God. Judges are like this who make decisions on the basis of bribes and friendships while pretending to be passionate advocates of justice and making reasonable statements about judicial matters. Business people are like this who are dishonest and deceptive at heart while they are acting honestly for the sake of their profits. Adulterers are like this when they use the rationality we all have to talk about the chastity of marriage. The list could go on.

[2] If these same people take off the robes of purple and linen with which they have clothed their love of means, the agent of their life’s love, and dress it in its everyday clothes, then they think the exact opposite and express these thoughts in words when they are with their intimates, with people whose life’s loves are of the same nature.

Some might believe that when these people are talking so fairly, honestly, and devoutly because of their love of means, the quality of their inner thought processes was not present in their outer thinking; but it is. There is a hypocrisy in them, a self-centeredness and love for the world, whose wiles aim at getting a reputation for decency, with profits in mind; and this is present in the smallest details of their facade. This quality of their inner thinking is present in the processes of their outer thought whenever they are thinking and acting like this.

110

In people who are being led by heavenly love, the inner and outer processes of their thinking, their inner and outer selves, are acting in unison when they talk. There is no awareness of any distinction between them. Their life’s love, together with its desires for what is good and their perceptions of what is true, is like the soul within the things they are thinking and the things they say and do as a result. If they are priests, then they preach out of their love for their neighbor and their love for the Lord. If they are judges, then they make decisions on the basis of true justice. If they are merchants, then they act out of real honesty. If they are married, then they love their spouses with real chastity; and the list could go on.

Their life's love also has a love of means as its agent, an agent whom it teaches and guides to act thoughtfully, clothing it with robes of a passion for both theological truth and good deeds of daily life.

3. *Our inner nature cannot be cleansed from compulsions to evil as long as the evils in our outer nature are not banished, because these outer evils stand in the way.* This follows from what I have already said [§§106–110] about the essential nature of our outer thought processes being determined by the nature of our inner thought processes and about their being consistent with each other, the way things are when one is not only within the other but also derives from it, so that one cannot be removed unless the other is as well. That is the way it is with any outward thing that comes from an inner cause, any consequence from some precedent, and any result from some means.

[2] Now, since compulsions combine with their deviousness to make up the inner thought processes of evil people, and since the pleasures of those compulsions combine with their intrigues to make up their outer thought processes, and since these two processes are so united that they function in unison, it follows that our inner nature cannot be cleansed from its compulsions as long as the evil deeds in our outer character are not banished. We need to realize that what lies within our compulsions is our volition, and what lies within our deviousness is the discernment of our inner self; while what lies within the pleasures of our compulsions is our outer volition, and what lies within the intrigues of our deviousness is our outer discernment.

We can all see that our compulsions and their pleasures form a single whole, and that our deviousness and its intrigues form a single whole, and that these four occur in a single sequence and come together in a kind of sheaf. Then we can also see that the only way to get rid of an inner nature that is made up of compulsions is by getting rid of an outer nature that is made up of evil deeds. It is our compulsions that bring forth the evil deeds through their pleasures; but once the evil deeds are considered permissible (which happens when our volition and discernment agree), then the pleasures and the evil deeds make a single whole. We know that consent is the same as action—this is what the Lord says in Matthew 5:28: “If anyone has looked at someone else’s wife so as to lust for her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” It is the same with our other evils.

All this shows that if we are to be cleansed from our compulsions to do evil, it is absolutely necessary that the evils be banished from our outer self. Until that happens, there is no vent for our compulsions, and if there is no vent, then they remain pent up inside, breathing out their pleasures and urging us to consent and then to act. Our inner

compulsions enter our bodies through our outer thought processes; so the moment there is consent in our outer thought processes, the compulsions are present in our bodies. That is the locus of the pleasure that we feel. (On the quality of the mind determining that of the body and therefore the whole person, see *Divine Love and Wisdom* 362–370.)

I may illustrate this by comparisons and by examples. [2] As for comparisons, we can compare our compulsions and their pleasures to a fire that burns more intensely the more it is fed and that spreads wider the more room it is given, until it destroys the houses in a city or the trees in a forest. In fact, our compulsions for what is evil are compared to fire in the Word, and the evils they cause are compared to destruction by fire. Then too, in the spiritual world our cravings for evil and their pleasures look like fires. That is exactly what hellfire is.

We can also compare them to the deluges and floods that happen when dikes or levees are breached, or to cases of gangrene or abscesses that cause physical death if they spread or are not healed.

[3] As for examples, it is obvious that if evils are not banished from our outer self, the compulsions and their pleasures will increase dramatically. The more thieves steal, the more obsessed they are with stealing until eventually they cannot help themselves. It is the same with the cheating of cheaters, with hatred and vengefulness, with hedonism and gluttony, with promiscuity, blasphemy, and the like. Everyone knows that a love of power for self-aggrandizement grows to the extent that restraints are relaxed,¹⁰¹ and the same holds for a love of possessions for worldly reasons. It seems as though there were no limit to them, no end.

We can see from all this that to the extent that evils are not banished from our outer self, their compulsions flourish, and that as restraints on evil behavior are relaxed, the compulsions intensify.

113

We cannot sense the compulsions that underlie our own evils. We are aware of their pleasures, but we give them little conscious thought because the pleasures seduce our thinking and distract our reflections. As a result, unless we discover from some other source that they are evil, we call them good and commit them freely, in accord with the reasoning of our thoughts. When we do this, we incorporate them into ourselves.

To the extent that we rationalize them as permissible, we enlarge the court of our ruling love, our life's love. Its "court" is made up of our compulsions, since they are like its servants and courtiers through which it governs the more outward activities that are its realm. The nature of the ruler determines the nature of the servants and courtiers, and the nature of the whole realm as well. If the ruler is a devil, the ruler's servants and

courtiers will be forms of madness and the general populace will be all kinds of distortion. The servants (who are called “wise” even though they are insane) use imaginary constructs and arguments based on illusions to make the distortions seem true and to be accepted as true.

Is there any way to change the state of people like this except by banishing the evils from their outer self? This is how the compulsions that are inherent in our evils are banished. Otherwise, no exit is offered to the compulsions and they remain pent up like a city under siege or a sealed abscess.

4. *The Lord cannot rid us of the evils in our outer nature without our help.* In all Christian churches the accepted teaching is that before we come to take Holy Communion we should examine ourselves, see and admit our sins, and repent by refraining from them and rejecting them because they come from the devil. Otherwise our sins are not forgiven, and we are damned.

114

Even though the English accept a theology of faith alone, in the prayer before Holy Communion they explicitly enjoin self-examination, acknowledgment, confession of sins, repentance, and taking up a new life. They threaten people who do not do so by saying that the devil will enter into them as he entered into Judas and fill them with all iniquity, destroying both body and soul. The Germans, Swedes, and Danes, who also accept a theology of faith alone, teach much the same in their prayer before Holy Communion, adding the threat that otherwise we will render ourselves liable to the punishments of hell and eternal damnation because of this mixture of the sacred and the profane. The priest reads these words with a loud voice to the people who come to Holy Communion, and the people hear them with a full recognition of their truth.

[2] However, when these same people hear a sermon about faith alone on the very same day, when they hear that the law does not condemn them because the Lord has fulfilled it for them, that on their own they cannot do anything good without claiming credit for it, and that therefore their deeds contribute nothing whatever to their salvation and only their faith does, then they go home totally oblivious to their earlier confession. In fact, they dismiss it to the extent that they are thinking about this sermon on faith alone.

So which is true, the first or the second? Two mutually contradictory statements cannot both be true. For example, one option is that there is no forgiveness of sins and therefore no salvation, only eternal damnation, unless we examine and identify and recognize and confess and reject our

sins—unless we repent. The other option is that things like this contribute nothing to our salvation, because by suffering on the cross the Lord has made full satisfaction for people who have faith; and if we only have faith—a trust that this is true—and are sure that the Lord’s merit has been credited to our accounts, then we are sinless and appear before God with faces washed gleaming-clean. We can see, then, that all Christian churches share the basic conviction that we need to examine ourselves, see and admit our sins, and then refrain from them; and that otherwise we face not salvation but damnation.

We can see that this is also divine truth itself in passages in the Word where we are commanded to repent, passages like these:

John¹⁰² said, “Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Right now, the axe is lying at the root of the tree. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Luke 3:8–9)

Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you will all be destroyed.” (Luke 13:3, 5)

Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God: “Repent, and believe the good news.” (Mark 1:14–15)

Jesus sent out his disciples who preached repentance as they went forth. (Mark 6:12)

Jesus told the apostles that they were to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations. (Luke 24:47)

John preached the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3)

Think about this, then, with some clarity of mind and if you are religious you will see that repentance from sins is the pathway to heaven. You will see that faith apart from repentance is not really faith and that people who are without faith because they are without repentance are on the road to hell.

There are people who accept a faith separate from charity and who justify themselves by what Paul says to the Romans: “We are justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Romans 3:28). They worship this statement like people who worship the sun; and they become like people who stare so constantly at the sun that their eyesight becomes dull and incapable of seeing things in normal light. They do not see what “works of the Law” means here—not the Ten Commandments, but the rituals described by Moses in his books, everywhere referred to as “the Law.”¹⁰³

To keep us from thinking that it means the Ten Commandments, Paul goes on to explain, “Then do we abolish the Law by faith? Far from it, we strengthen the Law” (Romans 3:31).

If we convince ourselves of faith alone on the basis of this statement, then by staring at this passage like the sun we blind ourselves to places where Paul lists the laws of faith and says that they are in fact deeds of charity.¹⁰⁴ After all, what is faith apart from its laws? We blind ourselves to the places where he lists evil deeds, saying that people who do them cannot enter heaven.¹⁰⁵

We can see from this what blindness comes from a misunderstanding of this one passage.

The reason the evils in our outer self cannot be expelled without our cooperation is this. One of the principles of the Lord’s divine providence is that whatever we hear, see, think, intend, say, and do seems to belong to us completely. I have already explained (§§71–95 and following above) that if it did not seem like this, we would not be able to accept divine truth, decide to do good, or internalize love and wisdom. We would have no charity and faith and therefore no union with the Lord, no reformation and regeneration, and no salvation.

116

It is obvious that if it did not seem like this there would be no possibility of repentance from our sins and in fact no faith whatever, and that if it did not seem like this we would not be human but would be devoid of any rational life, like animals. Submit the matter to reason, if you will. Does it not seem exactly as though we ourselves think about what is good and true in spiritual, civic, and moral matters? Then accept the theological principle that everything good and true comes from the Lord and nothing from us. Can we not recognize the conclusion that we should do what is good and think what is true as though we were autonomous, but that we should still admit that these actions are being done by the Lord? Particularly, can you not see that we are to expel evils in apparent autonomy but still admit that the source of our doing this is the Lord?

There are a great many people who do not know that they are involved in evil because they do not do evil things outwardly. They are afraid of civil laws and of losing their reputations, so by habitual practice they have trained themselves to avoid evil deeds as harmful both to their reputations and to their purses. However, if they do not avoid evil deeds on religious grounds, because they are sins and are in conflict with God, then the cravings for evils and their pleasures are still there within them like foul water that is dammed up and stagnant. They might examine

117

their thoughts and intentions and discover these compulsions if they only knew what sins were.

[2] A great many people who have settled on faith divorced from charity are like this. Since they believe that the law does not condemn them, they pay no attention to sins. They even doubt whether there are such things as sins. If there are, they are not sins in God's sight, because they have been pardoned.

Natural moralists¹⁰⁶ are like this as well, people who believe that everything depends on our civic and moral life and its vigilance and nothing on divine providence. People are like this too who take great care to cultivate a reputation and a name for decency and honesty for the sake of position or profit. After death, though, people like this who have had no use for religion become spirits that embody their compulsions. They look absolutely human to themselves, but from a distance they look like images of Priapus to others.¹⁰⁷ They see everything in darkness and nothing in light, like owls.

118

This provides solid support for the fifth proposition, namely, that *therefore we need to banish the evils from our outer nature in apparent autonomy*, a proposition also explained in three chapters in *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem*. First, there is no way we can abstain from evils as sins so as to turn against them inwardly unless we engage in struggles against them (§§92–100). Second, we are to abstain from evils as sins and struggle against them in apparent autonomy (§§101–107). Third, if we abstain from evils for any other reason than that they are sins, we are not really abstaining from them. We are only preventing them from being visible in the world (§§108–113).¹⁰⁸

119

6. *Then the Lord cleanses us from the compulsions in our inner nature and from the evil practices themselves in our outer nature.* The reason the Lord cleanses us from our compulsions to evil when we expel evils in apparent autonomy is that the Lord cannot cleanse us until we have done our part. The evils are in our outer self and the compulsions to evil in our inner self, as closely connected as roots and trunk. Unless the evils are expelled, then, there is no opening. The evils block the way and close the door, a door that the Lord cannot open unless we cooperate, as I have already explained [§§114–118]. So when we, apparently on our own, open the door, the Lord uproots our compulsions at the same time.

Another reason is that the Lord is at work in the center of our being, and works from that center into everything that depends on it all the way to our boundaries, and we are living at these boundaries while this is happening. As long as we ourselves are keeping these boundaries closed,

then, no cleansing can take place. There can be only the kind of work within us by the Lord that the Lord does in hell—we are forms of hell when we are in the grip of our compulsions and the evils they cause. This work is simply arranging it so that one thing does not destroy another, and so that what is good and true is not harmed.

The Lord's words in the Book of Revelation show that the Lord is constantly pressing us, urging us, to open the door: "Look, I am standing at the door and knocking. To all who hear my voice and open the door I will enter, and I will dine with them, and they with me" (Revelation 3:20).

We know absolutely nothing about the inner state of our minds; yet there are infinite things there, none of which comes to our awareness.¹⁰⁹ The inner working of our thought or our inner self is our actual spirit, and there are infinite elements there, innumerable elements, just as there are in our physical bodies. In fact, there are even more, since our spirit is human as to its form, and there are elements in it to answer to everything in our bodies.

120

Now, since our senses tell us nothing about the way our minds or souls are at work, both together and separately, in all the elements of our bodies,¹¹⁰ we do not know how the Lord is at work in all the elements of our minds or souls, that is, in all the elements of our spirits. This activity is constant. We have no part in it; but still the Lord cannot cleanse us from any compulsion to evil in our spirits or inner selves as long as we keep the outer self closed. Each of the evils that we use to keep our outer selves closed seems to be a single item, but there are infinite elements within it. When we dismiss it as a single item, then the Lord dismisses the infinite elements that it contains.

This is what it means to say that the Lord then cleanses us from the compulsions to evil in our inner nature and from the evil practices themselves in our outer nature.

Many people believe that simply believing what the church teaches cleanses us from our evils; some believe that this is achieved by doing good, some that what is needed is knowing, discussing, and teaching about churchly matters; some opt for reading the Word and devotional literature, some for going to church and listening to sermons and especially taking Communion, some for renouncing the world and being resolutely devout, some for confessing themselves guilty of all sins—the list goes on and on. However, none of these activities cleanses us unless we examine ourselves, see our sins, admit them, accept responsibility for them, and repent by not committing them any more, doing all this

121

apparently on our own but at heart acknowledging that it comes from the Lord.

[2] Until this happens, none of the things I just listed helps. They are being done either for credit or hypocritically. To angels in heaven, people of this sort look either like beautiful harlots with the rank smell of disease, or like misshapen women made up to look attractive. Or again, they may look like actors playing their roles, like mimes on stage, or like apes dressed up in human clothes.

Once the evils have been banished, though, then the behaviors I have listed become filled with love, and these individuals look beautifully human to angels in heaven, like their own friends and companions.

122

We need to be fully aware, however, that when we are about to repent we need to turn to the Lord alone. If we turn only to God the Father we cannot be cleansed, nor if we turn to the Father for the sake of the Son or to the Son as merely human. There is only one God, and the Lord is that God because his divine and his human natures are one person, as I have explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord*.¹¹¹ To enable us to turn to the Lord alone when we are about to repent, the Lord instituted the Holy Supper, assuring forgiveness of sins to those who repent. The sacrament offers that assurance because during that Supper or Communion, each participant is kept focused on the Lord alone.

123

7. *It is the unceasing effort of the Lord's divine providence to unite us to himself and himself to us in order to give us the joys of eternal life; and this can happen only to the extent that our evils and their compulsions are banished.* I explained in §§27–45 that it is the constant effort of the Lord's divine providence to unite us to himself and himself to us, and that this union is what we call reformation and regeneration. I explained also that this is the source of our salvation. Can anyone fail to see that union with the Lord is eternal life and salvation? Everyone can see this who believes that we were originally created in the image and likeness of God (see Genesis 1:26, 27) and who knows what the image and likeness of God are.

[2] If we are truly rational and use our rationality when we think and use our freedom when we try to think, can any of us believe that there are three gods equal in essence and that the divine Being¹¹² or divine Essence can be divided? As for a threefold nature in one God, that is something we can conceive and understand, just as we understand the soul and the body of an angel or a person and the life that they bring forth. Further, since this threefold nature in a single Being exists only in the Lord, it follows that any union must be a union with him.

Use your rationality and think freely, and you will see this truth in its own light. First, though, admit that the Lord, heaven, and eternal life are real.

[3] Now, since God is one and since by creation we have been made in his image and likeness, and since we have come into a love for all our evils through our hellish love, its compulsions, and their pleasures, thereby destroying the image and likeness of God within us, it follows that it is the constant effort of the Lord's divine providence to unite us with himself and himself with us and thereby to make us his images. It also follows that the Lord is doing this so that he may give us the bliss of eternal life, since this is the nature of divine love.

[4] The reason he cannot make this gift, cannot make us images of himself, unless we banish sins from our outer self in apparent autonomy is that the Lord is not just divine love but divine wisdom as well; and divine love does nothing unless it stems from divine wisdom and is in accord with it. It is in accord with divine wisdom that we cannot be united to the Lord and thus reformed, regenerated, and saved unless we are allowed to act freely and rationally. This is what makes us human. Anything that is in accord with the Lord's divine wisdom is also in accord with his divine providence.

At this point, I may add two secrets of angelic wisdom that will enable us to see what divine providence is like. The first is that the Lord never acts in any detail of our being by itself unless he acts in all the details at once. The second is that the Lord acts from the center and the boundaries at the same time.

The reason *the Lord never acts in any detail of our being by itself unless he acts in all the details at once* is that everything in us is so knit together and therefore so united in a single form that it does not act as a plurality but as a single whole. We know that we are knit together and therefore formed in this way as far as our bodies are concerned. The human mind is also in the same kind of form and has the same kind of all-inclusive connectedness, because the human mind is a spiritual person and in fact acts as a single person. This is why our spirit, the mind that is in our body, has a complete human form, so that after death we are people just as much as we are in this world. The only difference is that we have cast off the skin that made up our body in this world.

[2] Since it is the nature of the human form that all its parts make an inclusive entity that acts as a single whole, it follows that one element cannot be shifted from its place and changed with respect to state except

with the consent of the others; for if one element were moved out of place and changed in state, there would be a gap in the form that was intended to act as a single whole. We can see from this that the Lord never acts on any detail without acting on all of them at the same time.

This is how the Lord works in the whole angelic heaven, because the whole angelic heaven is like a single person in his sight.¹¹³ This is also how the Lord acts on every individual angel, because every angel is a miniature heaven. This is also how he acts on each of us, most directly on our minds, and through them on everything in our bodies. This is because our mind is our spirit—an angel to the extent that it is united to the Lord—and our body is obedience.

[3] However, we need to be acutely aware that the Lord acts precisely, most precisely in fact, on every detail of our being while working through everything in our form. He does not, though, change the state of any part or any element in specific unless all the elements of the form concur. There will be more on this later,¹¹⁴ when I explain that the Lord's divine providence is all-inclusive because it deals with details and that it deals with details because it is all-inclusive.

[4] The reason *the Lord acts from the center and the boundaries at the same time* is that this is the only way the whole and all its elements can be kept connected. The things in between depend in sequence on the central ones, all the way to the boundaries, and they are all gathered together at the boundaries; for as explained in part 3 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*,¹¹⁵ there is a gathering at the boundaries of everything that comes from the First. This is why the Lord from eternity or Jehovah came into the world and put on the clothing of a human nature there in outermost form in order to be present in first and last things at the same time, and therefore from the first things to govern the whole world through the last things.¹¹⁶ This enabled him to save those people whom he could save under the laws of his divine providence, which are also the laws of his divine wisdom. This involves the fact acknowledged in the Christian world that no one could have been saved unless the Lord had come into the world (see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* 35). This is why the Lord is called the First and the Last.¹¹⁷

These angelic secrets have been presented first to make possible an understanding of the way the Lord's divine providence works to unite us to him and him to us. This does not happen in any detail by itself unless it is happening in everything else at the same time; and it happens from our center and from our boundaries at the same time. Our center is our life's love, and our boundaries are the contents of our outward thinking.

In between are the contents of our deeper thinking; and I have already explained [§§104–109] what these are like in evil people. Again, then, we can see that the Lord cannot work from our center and our boundaries at the same time unless he works with us (we are actually with the Lord in our most external activities).

This means that in those matters where we make choices because they are within the limits of our freedom, when we do something outwardly, the Lord is working from our center and in successive stages all the way to our boundaries.

We have no knowledge whatever of what is at our center or what is in those successive stages from the center to our boundaries, so we have no knowledge whatever of how the Lord is at work or what he is doing there. However, since all of these events constitute one coherent process all the way to the boundaries, all we need to know is that we should abstain from evils as sins and turn to the Lord. This is the only way the Lord can set aside our life's love, which is hellish from our birth, and transplant a love for heavenly life in its place.

Once the Lord has transplanted a love for heavenly life in place of a love for hellish life, then he transplants desires for what is good and true in place of cravings for what is evil and false, the pleasures of impulses to do good in place of the pleasures of impulses toward what is evil and false, and the good actions of heavenly love in place of the evil actions of hellish love—eventually genuine care in place of cleverness, and wise thought processes in place of malicious ones. In this way we are begotten anew and become new people.

Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem 67–73, 74–79, 80–86, and 87–91 tells which good qualities take the place of evil ones. In §§32–41, it explains that we come to love truths of wisdom to the extent that we abstain from evils as sins and dislike them; and in §§42–52 that we have faith and become spiritual to the same extent.

By citing the prayers that are said before Holy Communion in all Christian churches, I have already shown [§114] that the basic theology throughout Christendom enjoins us to explore ourselves, see our sins, admit them, confess them to God, and stop committing them; and that this is repentance, the forgiveness of sins, and consequently salvation.

The faith named after Athanasius leads us to the same conclusion. This too is accepted throughout the Christian world; and it says at the end, “The Lord will come to judge the living and the dead; and when he comes, those who have done what is good will enter eternal life and those who have done what is evil will enter eternal fire.”

128

Is there anyone who does not know from the Word that our fate after death depends on what we have done? Open the Word and read it and you will see this clearly: but set aside any thoughts based on faith and on our justification by faith alone. Here are a few passages to witness to the fact that the Lord teaches this throughout his Word.

Every tree that does not *bear good fruit* is cut down and thrown into the fire; so you will know them by their *fruits*. (Matthew 7:19, 20)

Many people will say to me on that day, “Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and done many good deeds in your name?” But I will profess to them, “I do not recognize you. Depart from me, you who do *injustice*.” (Matthew 7:22, 23)

I will compare anyone who hears my words and *does them* to a wise man who built his house on a rock; but I will compare anyone who hears my words and *does not do them* to a senseless man who built his house on the ground without a foundation. (Matthew 7:24, 26; Luke 6:46–49)

[2] The Human-born One will come in the glory of his Father, and then *he will reward all according to their deeds*. (Matthew 16:27)

The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and *will be given to a nation that brings forth its fruits*. (Matthew 21:53 [21:43])

Jesus said, “My mother and my brothers are the people who hear the word of God and *do it*.” (Luke 8:21)

Then you will come and stand there and knock on the door and say, “Open the door for us, Lord”; but he will answer, “I do not know where you come from. Go away from me, *all you who do injustice*.” (Luke 13:25–27)

Those who have done what is good will go forth to a resurrection of life, but those who *have done what is evil* to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:29)

[3] We know that God does not listen to *sinners*, but that he listens to anyone who worships God and *does his will*. (John 9:31)

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (John 13:17)

Those who know my precepts and *do them* are the ones who love me; and I will love them and come to them and make my dwelling with them. (John 14:15, 21–24)

You are my friends *if you do* whatever I tell you to. I have chosen you so that *you would bear* fruit and so that your *fruit* would last. (John 15:14, 16)

[4] The Lord said to John, “Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus, ‘*I know your works.*’¹¹⁸ My complaint against you is that you have left your first *charity*. *Repent and do the earlier works*. If you do not, I will remove your lampstand from its place.” (Revelation 2:1, 2, 4, 5)

Write to the angel of the church in Smyrna, “I know *your works*.” (Revelation 2:8 [2:8, 9])

Write to the angel of the church in Pergamos, “*I know your works*,” “*Repent*.” (Revelation 2:13, 16 [2:12, 13, 16])

Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira, “*I know your works and your charity*, and *your later works* are more than the first ones.” (Revelation 2:26 [2:18, 19])

Write to the angel of the church in Sardis, “*I know your works*, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. *I have not found your works perfect in God’s sight*. *Repent*.” (Revelation 3:1, 2, 3)

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, “*I know your works*.” (Revelation 3:7, 8)

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, “*I know your works*. *Repent*.” (Revelation 3:14, 15, 19)

I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now onward; *their works follow them*.’” (Revelation 5:13 [14:13])

A book was opened that was the book of life, and the dead were judged, *all of them according to their works*. (Revelation 20:12, 13)

Look, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, *that I might give to all according to their works*. (Revelation 22:12)

These come from the New Testament. [5] There are still more in the Old, and I may cite just this one.

Stand in the gate of Jehovah and proclaim this word there. Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, “Make your ways and your deeds good. Do not put your trust in deceitful words, saying ‘The temple of

Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah! Will you be stealing and murdering and committing adultery and perjuring yourselves and then come and stand in my presence in this house that bears my name and say, 'We are exempt when we do these disgusting things'? Will you make this house a robbers' cave? I myself have seen it," says Jehovah. (Jeremiah 7:1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 [7:2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11])

It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We Should Not Be Compelled by Outside Forces to Think and Intend and So to Believe and Love in Matters of Our Religion, but That We Should Guide Ourselves and Sometimes Compel Ourselves

129

THIS law of divine providence follows from the two preceding ones, namely, that we should act in freedom and in accord with reason (§§71–99), and that we should do this for ourselves, even though it is being done by the Lord—that is, in apparent autonomy (§§100–128). Since it is not from freedom and according to reason and not in autonomy to be compelled but comes from the absence of freedom and from someone else, this law of divine providence follows directly from the two earlier ones. Everyone recognizes that none of us can be compelled to think what we do not want to think or to intend what we think we do not want to intend. So we cannot be compelled to believe what we do not believe, and certainly not anything that we do not want to believe; or to love what we do not love, and certainly not anything that we do not want to love. Our spirit or mind has complete freedom to think, intend, believe, and love. This freedom comes to us by an inflow from the spiritual world, which does not compel us. Our spirit or mind is actually in that world. The freedom does not flow in from the physical world, which accepts the inflow only when the two worlds are in unison.

[2] We can be compelled to say that we think and intend something or that we believe and love something, but unless this is or becomes a matter of our own desire and our consequent reasoning, it is not something that we really think, intend, believe, and love. We can also be compelled to speak in favor of religion and to act according to religion, but we cannot be compelled to think in its favor as a matter of our own faith and to intend it as a matter of our own love. In countries where justice and judgment are cherished, everyone is obliged not to speak against religion or to violate it in action, but still no one can be compelled to think and intend in its favor. This is because each of us has a freedom to think in sympathy with hell and to intend in its favor, or to think in sympathy with heaven and to intend in its favor. Still, our reason tells us what the quality is of the one and of the other and what lot awaits the one and what lot awaits the other. Our ability to intend on the basis of reason is our capacity to choose and to decide.

[3] This may serve to show that what is outside cannot compel what is inside. However, it does happen sometimes,¹¹⁹ and I need to show that it is harmful in the following sequence.

1. No one is reformed by miracles and signs, because they compel.
2. No one is reformed by visions or by conversations with the dead, because they compel.
3. No one is reformed by threats or by punishment, because they compel.
4. No one is reformed in states where freedom and rationality are absent.
5. Self-compulsion is not inconsistent with rationality and freedom.
6. Our outer self has to be reformed by means of our inner self, and not the reverse.

1. *No one is reformed by miracles and signs, because they compel.* I have already explained [§§103, 119] that we have inner and outer processes of thought and that the Lord flows through our inner thought processes into the outer, this being the way he teaches and guides us. I have also explained [§§71–99] that it is the intent of the Lord's divine providence that we act in freedom and in accord with reason. Both of these abilities in us would be destroyed if miracles happened and we were forced into belief by them.

We can see the truth of this rationally as follows. We cannot deny that miracles induce faith and that they persuade us convincingly that what the miracle-worker says and teaches is true. To begin with, this conviction takes over the outer processes of our thought so completely that it virtually constrains and bewitches them. However, this deprives us of the two abilities called freedom and rationality and therefore of our ability to act in freedom and in accord with reason. Then the Lord cannot flow in through our inner thought processes into the outer ones; all he can do is leave us to convince ourselves by rational means of the truth of anything that has become a matter of faith for us because of the miracle.

[2] The basic state of our thought is that we look from our inner thinking and see things in our outer thinking in a kind of mirror, because as already noted [§104] we can look at our own thinking, which can be done only by a deeper level of thinking. When we look at something in this mirrorlike way, we can turn it this way and that and shape it so that it seems attractive to us. If what we are looking at is something true, we could compare it to a good-looking, vibrant young woman or young man. However, if we cannot turn it this way and that and shape it but only believe it at second hand, influenced by a miracle, then even if it is true it is like a young woman or young man carved of stone or wood, with no life in it. We might also compare it to something that is constantly before our eyes, something that is all we look at, hiding whatever is on either side of it and behind it. Or we could compare it to a sound that is constantly in our ears, robbing us of any perception of the harmony of multiple sounds. This kind of blindness and deafness is imposed on our minds by miracles.

The same holds true for any conviction that is not looked at rationally before it becomes a conviction.

131

This shows us that a faith caused by miracles is not real faith but only second-hand belief.¹²⁰ It has no rational content, let alone spiritual content. It is actually an outer shell with nothing inside it. The same holds true of everything we do on the basis of this kind of second-hand faith, whether it is acknowledging God, worshiping him at home or in church, or benefiting others. When the only thing that prompts the acknowledgment, the worship, and the devotion is some miracle, then we are acting from the earthly level of our human nature and not from the spiritual level, because the miracle instills faith from the outside and not from the inside—from the world, then, and not from heaven. The Lord enters us only from the inside, that is, by means of the Word and by lessons and sermons based on the Word.¹²¹ Since miracles close this inner route, miracles do not happen nowadays.¹²²

We can see this characteristic of miracles very clearly in the miracles that were witnessed by the Jews and Israelites. Even though they saw so many miracles in the land of Egypt and then at the Reed Sea,¹²³ and even more in the wilderness, and especially at Mount Sinai when the Law was given—all the same, after that month when Moses stayed on the mountain, they made themselves a golden calf and acknowledged it instead of Jehovah, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 32:4, 5, 6). We can see this also from the miracles that were done later in the land of Canaan, when the Israelites still fell away from their required worship so often. The same holds for the miracles that the Lord did in their presence when he was in the world: even so, they crucified him.

132

[2] The reason these miracles were done is that the Jews and Israelites were totally focused on earthly concerns. They were brought into the land of Canaan simply to portray the church and its deeper values by means of their outward worship; and evil people¹²⁴ can portray this just as well as good ones because these outward activities are rituals, all pointing to spiritual and heavenly realities for them. So even though Aaron had made the golden calf and commanded the people to worship it (Exodus 32:2, 3, 4, 5, 35), he could still portray the Lord and his work of salvation. Further, since they could not be led to portray these things through inner worship, they were led by miracles, actually constrained and compelled.

[3] The reason they could not be led through internal worship is that they consistently failed to acknowledge the Lord, even though the whole Word that was present with them is about him and no one else.¹²⁵ People who do not acknowledge the Lord are not open to any inner worship. After the Lord had made himself known, though, and had been accepted and recognized in the church as the eternal God, miracles stopped happening.

However, the effect of miracles on good people is different from their effect on evil people. Good people have no desire for miracles, but they believe the miracles in the Word. If they do hear anything about a miracle, they think of it only as a minor argument that strengthens their faith, because they base their thinking on the Word and therefore on the Lord and not on the miracle.

133

It is different for evil people. They can actually be constrained and compelled to faith and even to worship and devotion by miracles. This lasts only a short while, though, because their evils are pent up inside, and the compulsions and gratifications of those evils are constantly working away inside their outward worship and devotion. In the effort

to let them break free of this confinement, these people think about the miracle and wind up calling it a sham, a trick, or a natural event, which enables them to return to their evil ways. People who go back to their evil ways after being worshipful profane what is good and true in worship, and the fate after death of people who profane what is holy is the worst of all. These are the people referred to in the Lord's discourse in Matthew 12:43, 44, 45, the people whose last state is worse than the first.¹²⁶

Besides, if miracles did happen for people who do not believe in the miracles in the Word, they would be happening constantly where everyone like this could see them. This shows why miracles do not happen nowadays.

134a¹²⁷

2. *No one is reformed by visions or by conversations with the dead, because they compel.* There are two kinds of visions, divine and demonic. Divine visions are given by means of portrayals in heaven, while demonic visions are effected through magical events in hell. There are imaginary visions as well, visions that are the illusions of a mind that has lost its bearings.

Divine visions (which as just noted are given by means of portrayals in heaven) are the kind that happened to the prophets. When they were having these visions they were not in the body but in the spirit, because visions cannot happen to us while we are physically awake. So when the prophets saw visions, it says that they were in the spirit, as the following passages show.

Ezekiel said, "The spirit lifted me up and took me back to Chaldea to the captivity in *a vision of God*, in *the spirit of God*; so the vision that I saw came over me" (Ezekiel 11:1, 24). Then too, spirits held him up between earth and heaven and brought him to Jerusalem in *visions of God* (Ezekiel 8:3 and following). The same thing happened in a vision of God or in the spirit when he saw the four animals that were cherubim (Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10) and when he saw the new temple, the new earth, and the angel measuring them (Ezekiel chapters 40–48). It says in chapter 40:2, 26 that he was in visions of God at the time, and in chapter 43:5 that he was in the spirit.

[2] Zechariah was in the same kind of state when he saw the man on horseback among the myrtle trees (Zechariah 1:8 and following), when he saw the four horns and the man with a measuring line in his hand (Zechariah 1:18, 20, 21; 2:1 and following),¹²⁸ when he saw the lampstand and the two olive trees (Zechariah 4:1 and following), when he saw the flying scroll and the ephah (Zechariah 5:1, 6), and when he saw the four

chariots coming out from the four mountains, and the horses (Zechariah 6:1 and following).

Daniel was in the same kind of state when he saw the four beasts rising from the sea (Daniel 6:1 [7:1] and following), and when he saw the battles of the ram and the goat (Daniel 8:1 and following). It says in 7:1, 2, 7, and 13; in 8:2; and in 10:1, 7, and 8 that he saw these things in the vision of his spirit, and it says in 9:21 that he saw the angel Gabriel in a vision.

[3] John was in the vision of the spirit when he saw the things he describes in the Book of Revelation—for example, when he saw the seven lampstands with the Human-born One in their midst (Revelation 1:12–16), when he saw the throne in heaven with someone sitting on it, surrounded by the four animals that were cherubim (Revelation 4), when he saw the book of life taken by the Lamb (Revelation 5), when he saw the horses come out of the book (Revelation 6), when he saw the seven angels with their trumpets (Revelation 8), when he saw the pit of the abyss opened with the locusts coming out of it (Revelation 9), when he saw the dragon and its battle with Michael (Revelation 12), when he saw the two beasts rise up, one from the sea and one from the land (Revelation 13), when he saw the woman sitting on the scarlet beast (Revelation 17) and the destruction of Babylon (Revelation 18), when he saw the white horse with someone riding it (Revelation 18 [19]), when he saw the new heaven and the new earth and the holy Jerusalem coming down from heaven (Revelation 21), and when he saw the river of water of life (Revelation 22). It says that he saw these things in the vision of his spirit in 1:11 [1:10]; 4:2; 5:1; 6:1; and 21:12 [21:10].

These were the kinds of visions that were visible from heaven to the sight of their spirits and not to their physical sight.

Things like this do not happen nowadays, because if they did they would not be understood, since they happen by means of images whose details are pointing to inner features of the church and secrets of heaven. It was foretold in Daniel 9:24 that they would stop when the Lord came into the world.

However, *demonic visions* have sometimes occurred. They are brought about by spirits who inspire deceptive passions and visions¹²⁹ and who call themselves the Holy Spirit because of a mental confusion that engulfs them. Now, however, these spirits have been gathered in by the Lord and consigned to a hell separate from the other hells.¹³⁰

We can see from all this that no one can be reformed by any visions except the ones that are in the Word. There are *imaginary visions* as

well, but these are nothing but the illusions of a mind that has lost its bearings.

134b

The story that the Lord told about the rich man in hell and Lazarus in Abraham's lap shows that no one is reformed by conversations with the dead. The rich man said, "Father Abraham, I beg you to send Lazarus to my father's house where I have five brothers, to bear witness to them so that they do not come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets: let them heed them." But he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone came to them from the dead, they would repent." He answered him, "If they do not heed Moses and the prophets, they would not be convinced if someone rose from the dead" (Luke 16:27–31).

Conversations with the dead may lead to the same results as miracles that I have just described. That is, we may be convinced and be constrained to worship for a short while. However, since this deprives us of rational functioning at the same time that it hems in our evils, as already noted [§§130–131, 133], this spell or inner restraint is released and the pent-up evils erupt in blasphemy and profanation. Still, this happens only when spirits have imposed some religious dogma. No good spirit—let alone any angel of heaven—would ever do this.

135

We are allowed to talk with spirits (though rarely with angels of heaven), and many people have been allowed to for centuries. When it happens, though, they talk with us in our own everyday language and use only a few words. Further, the ones who have the Lord's permission to talk with us never say anything that would take away our freedom to think rationally; and they do not teach, either. Only the Lord teaches us, indirectly, through the Word, when we are enlightened (there will be more on this later [§§171–174]). I have been granted knowledge of this by personal experience. I have been talking with spirits and angels now for many years,¹³¹ and no spirit has dared, and no angel has wanted, to tell me anything, let alone teach me, about things in the Word or any aspect of theology based on the Word.¹³² Only the Lord has taught me, the Lord who was revealed to me and who since then has been and is constantly before my eyes as the sun in which he dwells, just as he is for angels. He has enlightened me.

136

3. *No one is reformed by threats or by punishment, because they compel.* It is generally recognized that what is outside us cannot control what is inside us, but that what is inside can control what is outside. It is also recognized that what is inside us resists compulsion from the outside so definitely that it turns the other way; and it is recognized that outward

pleasures attract what is inside toward assent and toward love. We might also realize that there is inner compulsion and inner freedom.

Even though these facts are generally recognized, we still need examples, because there are a great many things that we sense to be true as soon as we hear them, simply because they are true; so we affirm them. If they are not supported by rational considerations, though, they can be undermined by arguments based on deceptive appearances and eventually denied. So I need to go back to the principles I have just described as “recognized” and give them rational support.

[2] First, *what is outside us cannot control what is inside us, but what is inside can control what is outside*. Can anyone be forced to believe and to love? We can no more be forced to believe than we can be forced to think what we do not think. We can no more be compelled to love than we can be compelled to intend what we do not intend. Faith, too, is a matter of thought, and love is a matter of volition. However, what is inside can be compelled from the outside not to speak maliciously against the laws of the realm, the customs of everyday living, and the holy values of the church. What is inside can be compelled in this regard by threats and by punishments. It is so compelled, and it needs to be. However, this internal part of us is not truly human. It is an inner nature that we have in common with animals who can also be controlled. Our human inner nature dwells on a higher level than this animal inner nature. This is what I mean by the inner human nature that cannot be compelled.

[3] Second, *what is inside us resists compulsion from the outside so definitely that it turns the other way*. This is because our inner nature wants to be in freedom and loves its freedom. As I have already explained [§73], freedom is a matter of our love or our life; so when something free feels that it is being controlled, it withdraws into itself, so to speak, and turns in the opposite direction. It looks at the compulsion as an enemy. The love that is the substance of our life is irritated, which makes us think that we are not in control of ourselves and that we are therefore not living our own life.

The reason our inner nature is like this is found in the law of the Lord’s divine providence that says we should act in freedom and in accord with reason.

[4] We can see from this that it is harmful to compel people to worship God by threats and punishments.

Still, there are people who are willing to be compelled to religious observance and people who are not. Most of the ones who are willing to be

compelled to religious observance are Roman Catholics, but this applies to the ones whose worship has no inner substance but is all on the surface. Most of the ones who are not willing to be compelled are Anglicans; and the result is that there is an inner substance to their worship so that what they do outwardly comes from an inner source. In a spiritual light, the religious aspects of their inner natures look like bright clouds, while in heaven's light the religious aspects of the inner natures of the others look like dark clouds. I have been allowed to see both of them in the spiritual world; and anyone who wants to do so will see the same on arrival in that world after death.

Further, compulsory worship pens in our evils, so that they lie hidden like fire in bits of wood buried in ashes that keep smoldering and spreading until they break out in flame. Worship that is not compulsory but completely voluntary does not pen in our evils, so they are like flames that flare up quickly and then go out. We can see from this that our inner nature resists compulsion so definitely that it turns in the opposite direction.

The reason what is inside us can control what is outside is that what is inside is like a master and what is outside is like a servant.

[5] Third, *outward pleasures attract what is inside toward assent and toward love*. There are two kinds of pleasure, mental and volitional. Mental pleasures are also the pleasures of wisdom, and volitional pleasures are the pleasures of love, because wisdom is a matter of discernment and love is a matter of volition. Next, since the pleasures of our bodies and their senses (which are outward pleasures) work in unison with our inner pleasures—pleasures of mind and feeling—it follows that just as our inner nature resists compulsion from the outside so definitely that it turns in the opposite direction, so our inner nature turns spontaneously toward pleasure in our outer being until it is actually facing it. This brings about agreement on the part of our discernment, and brings about love on the part of our volition.

[6] In the spiritual world, all little children are led by the Lord into angelic wisdom, and through angelic wisdom into heavenly love, by means of things that are delightful and charming: at first by beautiful objects indoors and charming things in their gardens, then by portrayals of spiritual things that touch the inner levels of their minds with delight, and ultimately by truths of wisdom and virtues of love. So the children are led throughout by pleasures in their proper sequence: first by the pleasures of a love for discernment and its wisdom, and finally by the pleasures of a willing love that becomes their life's love. Then whatever

they have internalized through the earlier pleasures is kept in order under this love. [7] It happens like this because everything that has to do with our discernment and volition is given form by outward means before it is given form by inward means. In fact, everything that makes up our discernment and volition is first given form by things that come in through our physical senses, especially sight and hearing. Then, once our first discernment and first volition have taken shape, our inner thinking regards them as the outside of its own thought processes and either unites with them or distances itself from them. It unites with them if they are pleasing and distances itself from them if they are not.

[8] We need to realize quite clearly, though, that the inside of our discernment does not unite with the inside of our volition. No, the inside of our volition unites with the inside of our discernment and arranges things so that the union is mutual. But all of this is accomplished by the inside of our volition, and none of it by the inside of our discernment.¹³³ This is why we cannot be reformed by faith alone.¹³⁴ It takes our volition's love, which constructs a faith for itself.

[9] Fourth, *there is inner compulsion and inner freedom*. Inner compulsion is found in people who are busy with outward worship alone and not with inner worship. Their inner process is to think and intend whatever is demanded of their outward nature. These are people who are caught up in worship of living or dead individuals and are therefore involved in the worship of idols and in belief in miracles. The only inner nature they have is one that is superficial at the same time.

For people involved in inner worship, though, there are two kinds of inner compulsion, one based on fear and the other based on love. The inner compulsion that is based on fear is characteristic of people who engage in worship out of fear of the torment of hell and its flames. However, this inner compulsion is not the inner thought process mentioned above [§§103–105, 110, 111, 120, 130] but an outer thought process, one that we call “inner” at this point simply because it has to do with thinking. The inner thought process discussed earlier cannot be controlled by any kind of fear. It can be compelled, though, by love and by a fear of losing love. This is precisely what is meant by a real “fear of God.” Being controlled by love and by a fear of losing it is self-compulsion. It will become clear later [§§145–149] that self-compulsion is not contrary to our freedom and rationality.

This shows the nature of compulsory worship and of voluntary worship. Compulsory worship is physical, lifeless, dark, and depressing. It is physical because it engages the body but not the mind; it is lifeless

because our life is not in it; it is dark because our discernment is not in it; and it is depressing because the joy of heaven is not in it. On the other hand, when voluntary worship is sincere it is spiritual, living, bright, and joyful. It is spiritual because there is a spirit from the Lord in it; it is living because there is life from the Lord in it; it is bright because there is wisdom from the Lord in it; and it is joyful because there is heaven from the Lord in it.

138

4. *No one is reformed in states where freedom and rationality are absent.*

I have already explained [§§78–81] that nothing becomes part of us except what we do in freedom and in accord with reason. This is because freedom is a matter of our volition and reason is a matter of our discernment. When we do something in freedom and in accord with reason, then we do it of our own volition by means of our own discernment, and whatever is done by these two united becomes part of us.

Since the Lord wants us to be reformed and reborn in order to have eternal life, or the life of heaven, and since we cannot be reformed and regenerated unless goodness is taken into our volition as part of it and truth is taken into our discernment as part of it, and since nothing can become part of us except what is done of our own free volition and in accord with our own rational discernment, it follows that no one is reformed in states that lack freedom and rationality.

There are many states that lack freedom and rationality, but in general they can be assigned to the following categories: states of fear, emergency, mental illness, serious physical illness, ignorance, and intellectual blindness. I need to say something specific about each of these states.

139

The reason no one is reformed in a state of fear is that fear takes away our freedom and rationality, or our “freeness” and our “reasonableness.” Love opens the inner reaches of the mind, but fear closes them; and when they are closed, we do very little actual thinking, being conscious then only of what is impinging on our feelings or our senses. All the fears that beset our minds are like this.

[2] I have already explained [§104] that we have inner and outer processes of thought. Fear can never occupy our inner thought processes. These are always in freedom because they are in our life’s love. Fear can occupy our outer thought processes, though, and when it does, it closes off the inner thought processes. Once they are closed, we are no longer able to act freely and rationally, so we cannot be reformed.

[3] The fear that occupies our outer thought processes and closes in the deeper ones is primarily a fear of losing rank and losing wealth. The fear of outward civil and ecclesiastical penalties does not close them in,

because these laws prescribe penalties only for people who speak and act contrary to the civil principles of the state and the spiritual principles of the church, not for people who think contrary to those principles. [4] A fear of punishments in hell actually does occupy our outer thought processes, but only for a moment or a few hours or days. Before long, our thinking is released back into its own freedom because of our inner thinking, the thinking proper to our spirit and our life's love, the thinking we call the thought of the heart.

[5] However, a fear of the loss of position and profit does occupy our outer thought processes, and when it does it closes off our inner thinking from above, from any inflow from heaven. This makes it impossible for us to be reformed. The reason is that from birth, our life's love is a love for ourselves and for the world. Love for ourselves and love of rank are a unity, and love for the world and love of wealth are a unity. So when we have rank or wealth, we justify for ourselves whatever means promote our rank and our wealth, because of our fear of losing them. These means may be both civil and ecclesiastical, from either domain. We do the same if we do not yet have rank and wealth but covet them, though in this case it is from a fear of losing reputation on their account. [6] I have just mentioned that the fear occupies our outer thought processes and closes off the inner ones from above, from any inflow from heaven. We say that the inner thinking is closed when it is wholly identified with the outer thinking, because then it is not functioning on its own, but is governed by the outer.

Since love for ourselves and love for the world are hellish loves and are the wellsprings of everything evil, we can see the intrinsic quality of the inner thinking of people for whom those are their life's loves, people in whom those loves are in control. It is full of compulsions to all kinds of evil.

People are unaware of this if they are fanatically convinced of their own religion because they are afraid of losing their own eminence and splendor, especially if their religion involves their being revered as demigods—and as rulers¹³⁵ in hell at the same time. They can be on fire for the salvation of souls even though the fire is a hellish one. Since this fear especially robs us of our essential freedom and our essential rationality, which are heavenly in origin, we can see that it blocks us from any possibility of reformation.

The reason no one is reformed by thinking of God and pleading for help in a state of emergency is that this is a state of compulsion, so as soon as we return to a state of freedom we return to our former state

when we rarely if ever thought about God. It is different for people who feared God in their former, free state.

“Fearing God” means fearing to offend him, and sinning is offending him. This really comes from love rather than from fear. If we love others, are we not afraid of hurting them? The more we love them, the greater the fear. Without this fear our love is insipid, only skin deep. It occupies our thoughts only, and not our intentions.

“States of emergency” mean states when hope is threatened by danger, as happens in battles, duels, shipwrecks, falls, and fires; the sudden, threatened loss of wealth or of employment and its prestige; and the like. Thinking about God in these circumstances comes from ourselves, not from God. Our minds are then virtually imprisoned in our bodies and therefore are not in freedom, which means they lack rationality as well; and without these there is no possibility of reformation.

141

The reason no one is reformed in a state of mental illness is that mental illness deprives us of rationality and therefore of the freedom to act rationally. The mind is sick and not healthy, and while a healthy mind is rational, a sick one is not. The illnesses are things like depression, imagined or illusory guilt,¹³⁶ various kinds of hallucinations, mental anguish brought on by misfortunes, and mental anxiety and pain brought on by physical disorders. These are sometimes thought of as temptations, but they are not. Real temptations focus on spiritual issues, and during them the mind is in possession of its skills. The states I am talking about focus on earthly issues, and during them the mind goes mad.

142

The reason no one is reformed in a state of serious physical illness is that at such times our reason is not in a state of freedom. The state of the mind depends on that of the body. When the body is afflicted, the mind is as well, if only by being out of touch with the world. A mind that is out of touch with the world may think about God, but not with God, because its reasoning is not free. Our rational freedom comes from our being midway between heaven and the world. This enables us to think in terms of heaven or in terms of the world, so we can think in heavenly terms about the world or in worldly terms about heaven. When we are seriously ill and are thinking about death and the state of our souls after death, then we are not in touch with the world. We are withdrawn in spirit, and when we are completely withdrawn we cannot be reformed. It can strengthen us, though, if we had been reformed before we fell sick.

[2] The same holds true for people who renounce the world and all its dealings and devote themselves totally to thoughts of God and heaven and salvation; but there is more on this elsewhere.¹³⁷

The result is that if people like this have not been reformed before their illness, then afterwards, if they do die, they are the same kind of people they were before the illness. This means that it is pointless to think that we can repent or accept any faith while we are seriously ill, because there is no trace of action involved in our repentance, no trace of caring in our faith. Thus both our repentance and our faith are all talk and no heart.

The reason no one is reformed in a state of ignorance is that our reformation takes place by means of truths and by means of our living by them, so if people do not know what is true, they cannot be reformed. However, if they long for truths because they are drawn to them, then they are reformed in the spiritual world after death.¹³⁸

143

No one is reformed in a state of intellectual blindness, either. These individuals, too, are not aware of truths and do not know about life, because it is our discernment that must instruct us in these matters and our volition that must act them out. When our volition is doing what our discernment tells it to, then we have a life in accord with truths; but when our discernment is blind, our volition is blocked as well. All it can do freely in accord with its own reasoning is the evil that it has justified in its discernment, which is false.

144

If religion teaches a blind faith, it blinds our discernment just the way ignorance does. It is then teaching a false theology; for just as truths open our discernment, falsities close it. They close it from above but open it downward; and discernment that is open only downward cannot see truths. All it can do is justify whatever it wants to, especially anything false.

Our discernment is also blinded by compulsions to evil. As long as our intentions are caught up in these compulsions, they prompt our discernment to justify them; and to the extent that we justify our compulsions to evil, our volition cannot enjoy good desires, see truths on that basis, and so be reformed.

[2] For example, if people are compulsive adulterers, their intentions, being caught up in the pleasures of that love, prompt their discernment to justify it. They say, "What is adultery? Is there anything wrong about it? Isn't it just like what happens between a husband and a wife? Can't children just as well be born from adultery? Can't a woman accept more than one man without being harmed? What does sex have to do with spirituality, anyway?" This is how a discernment that has become prostituted by its volition thinks. It becomes so stupid because of its debauchery with volition that it cannot see that marriage love is the essence

of spiritual heavenly love, the image of the love between the Lord and the church from which it flows; that it is inherently holy, the essence of chastity and purity and innocence; that it makes us forms expressive of love itself, because married partners can love each other from the center of their being and so make themselves loves; that adultery destroys this form together with the image of the Lord; and that it is horrendous for an adulterer to mingle his life with the life of the husband in his wife, since there is human life in semen. [3] Because this is a profanation, hell is called “adultery” and heaven is called “marriage.”¹³⁹ A love for adultery is in direct touch with the deepest hell, and a true love for marriage with the highest heaven. The reproductive organs of both sexes correspond to communities of the highest heaven.

I mention all this to show how blind our discernment is when our volition is caught up in compulsions to evil, and to show that no one can be reformed in this state of intellectual blindness.

145

5. *Self-compulsion is not inconsistent with rationality and freedom.* I have already explained [§§103–104] that we have inner and outer thought processes and that these are as distinct from each other as prologue and consequence, or as height and depth. I have explained that because they are so distinct, they can act separately as well as together. They act separately when we talk and act on the basis of our outer thought in ways that differ from our deeper thought and intent; and they act together when we say and do what we think and intend inwardly. This latter state is characteristic of honest people, while the former is characteristic of dishonest people.

[2] Since the inner and outer processes of our minds are distinct, then, the inner can even fight against the outer and forcibly make it consent. The struggle starts when we think of evils as sins and therefore try to refrain from them; since to the extent that we do refrain a door is opened for us. Once this door has been opened, the Lord expels the compulsions to evil that have kept our inner thought processes penned in. In their place, he plants desires for what is good, again in the inner levels of our thought. However, since the pleasures of our compulsions to evil that have been besieging our outer thought processes cannot be expelled at the same time, a fight starts between our inner and outer thinking. The inner thinking wants to expel those pleasures because they are pleasures in evil deeds and are incompatible with the desires for goodness that the inner thinking now enjoys. It wants to replace the pleasures of evil with pleasures in goodness because they are in harmony with it. The

“pleasures in what is good” are what we refer to as the benefits that arise from our caring.

The struggle begins with this disagreement; and if it becomes more severe, it is called a temptation.

[3] Since we are human because of our inner thought, which is actually the human spirit, it follows that we are compelling ourselves when we force our outer thought processes to consent, or to accept the pleasures of our inner desires, the benefits that arise from our caring.

We can see that this is not inconsistent but in accord with our rationality and freedom, since it is our rationality that starts this struggle and our freedom that pursues it. Our essential freedom, together with our rationality, dwells in our inner self, and comes into our outer self from there. [4] So when the inner conquers (which happens when the inner self has brought the outer self into agreement and compliance) then we are given true freedom and true rationality by the Lord. Then, that is, the Lord brings us out of that hellish freedom that is really slavery and into the heavenly freedom that is truly, inherently free.

The Lord teaches us in John that we are slaves when we are in our sins and that the Lord liberates us when we accept truth from him through the Word (John 8:31–36).

An example may help. Suppose we have felt pleasure in cheating and in undetected theft, but we see and inwardly admit that these are sins and therefore want to refrain from them. When we refrain, a battle between the inner self and the outer self begins. The inner self is full of desire for honesty, while the outer self still enjoys cheating. Because this pleasure is diametrically opposed to the pleasure of honesty, it does not go away unless it is forced to; and the only way it can be forced is through fighting against it. Once the battle is won, the outer self comes into that love-filled delight in honesty that is true caring. Gradually thereafter our pleasure in cheating becomes distasteful to us.

It is much the same with other sins—with adultery and promiscuity, with vengefulness and hatred, with blasphemy and deceit. The hardest battle of all, though, is with our love of being in control because of our sense of self-importance. If we overcome this, we have no trouble overcoming our other evil loves, because this is the head of them all.

Let me briefly mention how the Lord expels the compulsions to evil that besiege our inner self right from our birth, and how he provides desires for what is good in their place when we use our apparent autonomy to put away evils as sins.

I have already explained [§§75, 139] that we have an earthly mind, a spiritual mind, and a heavenly mind, and that we are wholly locked into our earthly mind as long as we are caught up in our compulsions to evil and their pleasures. During all this our spiritual mind is closed. However, as soon as we look into ourselves and realize that our evils are sins against God because they are against divine laws, and therefore try to refrain from them, the Lord opens our spiritual mind and comes into our earthly mind by way of its desires for what is true and good. He comes also into our rational processes and from there rearranges the things in our lower, earthly mind that have been in disorder. This is what feels to us like a battle, or like a temptation if we have indulged in these evil pleasures a great deal. There is actually a psychological pain when the pattern of our thoughts is being inverted.

This is a battle against things that are actually within us, things that we feel are part of us; and we cannot fight against ourselves except from a deeper self, and only because of a freedom there. It then follows that the inner self is fighting against the outer self at such times, is doing so in freedom, and is forcing the outer self to obey. This is self-compulsion; and we can see that it is not inconsistent with our freedom and rationality, but quite in accord with them.

148

Beyond this, we all want to be free. We want to get rid of nonfreedom or servitude. As children subject to teachers, we want to be on our own and therefore free. The same holds true for every servant subject to a master and every maid subject to a mistress. Every young woman wants to leave her parents' house and marry so that she can function freely in her own household. Every young man who is intending to have a job, go into business, or hold some office wants to be set free throughout his apprenticeship so that he can make his own decisions. All the people who decide to go into service in order to gain their freedom are compelling themselves; and when they compel themselves they are acting freely and rationally. This comes from an inner freedom though, and from its point of view the outer freedom looks like servitude.

This needs to be included to reinforce the point that self-compulsion is not inconsistent with rationality and freedom.

149

One reason people do not make a similar effort to move from spiritual slavery to spiritual freedom is that they do not know what spiritual slavery and spiritual freedom are. They do not have the truths that would teach them, and in the absence of truths, they think that spiritual slavery is freedom and spiritual freedom is slavery.

A second reason is that the Christian religion has closed the door on intelligence, and the theology of faith alone has sealed it shut. Each of these erects an iron wall around itself, the wall being the dogma that theological matters are beyond our grasp and that we should therefore not use our rationality in our approach to them, that they are for the blind, not for the sighted. This hides from view the truths that teach what spiritual freedom is.

A third reason is that not many people look into themselves and see their sins; and if they do not see them and refrain from them, they are in the freedom of their sins, a hellish freedom that is essentially slavery. Looking at heavenly freedom (which is freedom in its essence) from this perspective is like seeing daylight in darkness, like looking under a black cloud at what comes from the sun overhead. This is why they do not know what heavenly freedom is, or know that the difference between it and hellish freedom is like the difference between life and death.

6. *Our outer self has to be reformed by means of our inner self, and not the reverse.* “The inner and outer self” means the same thing as “our inner and outer thought processes,” already discussed in a number of places [§§103–III, 120, 130, 139, 145]. The reason the outer has to be reformed by means of the inner is that the inner flows into the outer, and not the reverse. The scholarly world recognizes that there is a flow of spirit into matter, and not the reverse; and the church recognizes that the inner self needs to be cleansed and renewed first, and then the outer. This is recognized because the Lord and reason both say so. The Lord says it this way:

150

Woe to you hypocrites, because you cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter while the insides are full of plunder and excess. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and the platter, and then the outside will be clean as well. (Matthew 23:25, 26)

[2] In *Divine Love and Wisdom* I have presented ample evidence that reason teaches this.¹⁴⁰ In fact, whatever the Lord teaches, he enables us to perceive rationally. This happens in two ways. One is by our seeing its truth within ourselves as soon as we hear it; the second is understanding it through rational analysis. Seeing it in ourselves happens in our inner self, and seeing it rationally happens in our outer self. Can anyone fail to see within, on first hearing, that the inner self needs to be cleansed first and the outer self cleansed by means of it? However, if we have not accepted some general image of this from the inflow from heaven, we can go wildly astray when we rely on our outer thought processes. They show

us simply that outward actions, deeds of charity and piety, bring us salvation apart from deeper values. In the same vein, they tell us that sight and hearing flow into our thought, that smell and taste flow into our perception—that is, that the outside flows into the inside—when the opposite is true. It is an illusion that sight and hearing are flowing into our thought, because it is our intelligence that is seeing through our eyes and hearing through our ears, not the reverse. The same holds true for the other senses.

151

At this point, though, I need to explain how the inner self is reformed and how this leads to the reformation of the outer self.

The inner self is not reformed simply by gaining knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, not, that is, simply by thinking. We are reformed inwardly by intending to do what our knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom tell us. When our knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom tell us that there is a heaven and a hell, that everything evil comes from hell, and that everything good comes from heaven, then if we do not intend evil, on the grounds that it is from hell, and instead intend good, on the grounds that it is from heaven, we are on the first step of reformation. We are on the threshold of hell, facing heaven. When we take the next step and intend to stop doing wrong, we are on the second step of reformation. We are outside of hell, but not yet in heaven. We see heaven as above us, and it has to be within us if we are to be completely reformed. Still, we are not reformed until both the outer and the inner self are reformed. The outer self is reformed by means of the inner self when the outer self refrains from the evils that the inner self intends not to do because they are from hell. We are more completely reformed when for that reason we abstain from them and fight against them. In this way, what is within is intending and what is outside is acting; for unless we do what we intend, there is a lack of real intention inside that eventually becomes unwillingness.

[2] These few observations show how our outer self is reformed by means of our inner self. This is what the Lord's words to Peter mean as well:

Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Peter said to him, "Lord, don't wash just my feet; wash my hands and head as well." Jesus said to him, "Those who have been washed need only to have their feet washed, and they are wholly clean." (John 13:8, 9, 10)

Washing means spiritual washing, which is cleansing from evils. Washing head and hands means cleansing the inner self, and washing

feet means cleansing the outer self. When the inner self has been cleansed, the outer self needs to be cleansed, which is what is meant by saying that those who are washed need only to have their feet washed. It means that all cleansing from evils is done by the Lord when it says that “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.”

There is ample evidence in *Secrets of Heaven*¹⁴¹ that for the Jews washing meant cleansing from evils, that this is what washing means in the Word, and that washing feet means cleansing the earthly or outer self.¹⁴²

Since we do have an inside and an outside, since both of them need to be reformed if we ourselves are to be reformed, and since we cannot be reformed unless we look into ourselves, see and admit what is wrong with us, and then refrain from doing it, it follows that it is not just the outside that needs to be looked into but the inside as well. If only the outside is looked into, then all we see is what we have actually done—we have not killed anyone or committed adultery or stolen anything or perjured ourselves, and so on. That is, we look into our physical evils but not into our spiritual ones. However, we do need to look into the evils of our spirit in order to be reformed, since we live as spirits after death and all the evils in our spirits are still there. The only way to look into our spirits is to pay attention to what we are thinking and especially to what we are striving for, since what we are striving for is what we have in mind because of our intentions. That is where our evils have their origin and their roots, in their compulsions and pleasures; and unless we see and acknowledge them we are still caught up in them even though we may not act on them outwardly. We can see from the following words of the Lord that thinking on the basis of our intentions is both intending and doing:

If anyone has looked at someone else’s wife so as to lust for her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)

This kind of examination is proper to the inner self and in essence leads to the examination of the outer self.

I have often been struck by the fact that even though the whole Christian world recognizes that evils are to be avoided as sins and that otherwise they are not forgiven, even though Christians recognize that if sins are not forgiven there is no salvation, still there is scarcely one in a thousand who actually knows this for a fact. I have made inquiries in the spiritual world and found that this is true. Everyone in the Christian world is aware of it because of the prayers that are read to people who come to the Holy Supper, because these things are very clearly stated

then; yet when you ask whether people know this for a fact, they say that they do not now and did not in the past. This is because they have not thought about it, most of them thinking only about faith and about salvation because of their faith alone.

I have also been struck by the fact that faith alone closes the eyes so completely that when people who are convinced of it read the Word, they do not see anything that it says about love, caring, and doing. It is as though they painted a coating of faith over the whole Word like someone who paints a manuscript over with crimson so that nothing shows through from underneath; and if anything does show through, it is swallowed up by faith and becomes identified with it.

It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We Should Be Led and Taught by the Lord, from Heaven, by Means of the Word, and Teaching and Preaching from the Word, and That This Should Happen While to All Appearances We Are Acting Independently

154

TO all appearances, we are leading and teaching ourselves, while the truth is that we are being led and taught by the Lord alone. If we convince ourselves only of the appearance and not of the truth along with it, we cannot get rid of our evils as sins. On the other hand, if we convince ourselves of both the appearance and the truth, we can get rid of them, because getting rid of evils as sins is accomplished apparently by our own efforts, but actually by the Lord. In the latter case we can be reformed; in the former case we cannot.

[2] People who convince themselves of the appearance alone and not of the truth along with it are all idolaters on a deeper level. They actually worship themselves and the world. If they have no religion, they worship the material world and are therefore atheists.¹⁴³ If they have any religion, then they worship individuals and images alike. These are the people in

our own times who are intended in the first of the Ten Commandments, the ones who worship other gods. However, people who convince themselves of both the appearance and the truth worship the Lord because the Lord is raising them above that sense of self-importance that is caught up in the illusion; the Lord leads them into the light that surrounds truth and that is truth. This gives them a profound sense that they are being led and taught not by themselves but by the Lord.

[3] The rational processes of these two kinds of individual look alike to most people, but they are not. The rational processes of individuals who entertain both the appearance and the truth are spiritual, while the rational processes of people who entertain the appearance but not the truth are bound by the material world. These latter processes could be compared to a garden as we see it in the light of winter, while the former could be compared to a garden as we see it in the light of springtime.

There is more to be said about this next, in the following sequence.

1. We are led and taught by the Lord alone.
2. We are led and taught by the Lord alone through and from the angelic heaven.
3. We are led by the Lord through an inflow and taught by being enlightened.
4. We are taught by the Lord through the Word, and teaching and preaching from the Word, and therefore directly by the Lord alone.
5. Outwardly, we are led and taught by the Lord to all appearances as though we were leading and teaching ourselves.

1. *We are led and taught by the Lord alone.* This flows naturally and inevitably from everything that was presented in the material about *Divine Love and Wisdom*—what was said there about the Lord's divine love and wisdom in part 1, about the sun of the spiritual world and the sun of the physical world in part 2, about levels in part 3, about the creation of the universe in part 4, and about our own creation in part 5.

To say that we are led and taught by the Lord alone is to say that the Lord is the only source of our life, since it is the intentions of our life that are led and the intelligence of our life that is taught. This is not the way it seems, though. It seems to us as though we live on our own, when the truth is that the Lord is the source of our life and we are not. As long as we are living in this world, we cannot be given a palpable sense that our life is coming from the Lord alone. We are not deprived of our sense of

living on our own, because that is what makes us human. This is why I need to prove the matter with rational arguments that can then be tested against experience and finally tested against the Word.

157

The following rational propositions will prove that our life comes from the Lord alone and not from us. (a) There is only one essence, only one substance, and only one form from which have come all the essences, substances, and forms that have been created.¹⁴⁴ (b) The only essence, substance, and form is divine love and divine wisdom, and everything in us that has to do with love and wisdom comes from that source. (c) This is also the goodness itself and the truth itself that underlie everything. (d) These are the life that is the source of the life of everything and of every aspect of life. (e) This single, essential reality is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. (f) This single, essential reality is the Lord from eternity, or Jehovah.

[2] (a) *There is only one essence, only one substance, and only one form from which have come all the essences, substances, and forms that have been created.* I explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 44–46 and in its part 2 that the sun of the angelic heaven, which comes from the Lord and in which the Lord is present, is the single substance and form that is the source of everything that has been created, and that there neither is nor can be anything that does not come from that source. I explained in part 3 of that work that everything comes from that source by development according to different levels. [3] Can anyone fail to see and admit on rational grounds that there is only one essence that is the source of all essence, one reality that is the source of all reality? What could become manifest except from some reality, and what is the reality behind all reality except reality itself? And whatever is reality itself is also the only reality, reality in its own right. Since this is the case—and everyone sees and admits it on rational grounds and could see and recognize it if it were not the case—what other conclusion is there than that this reality that is Deity itself, that is Jehovah, is all there is to everything that exists and happens?

[4] This is the same as saying that there is only one substance that underlies everything; and since substance is nothing apart from form, it follows that there is only one form that underlies everything. I have explained in the book just mentioned that the sun of the angelic heaven is that one substance and form, and have explained how that essence, substance, and form come out variously in things created.¹⁴⁵

[5] (b) *The only essence, substance, and form is divine love and divine wisdom, and everything in us that has to do with love and wisdom comes*

from that source. I have given ample evidence of this in *Divine Love and Wisdom* as well. Everything about us that seems to be alive involves our volition and our discernment, and everyone sees and admits on rational grounds that these two abilities constitute our life. This is simply saying, “This is what I intend,” “This is what I discern,” “This is what I love,” or “This is what I think”; and since we intend what we love and think about what we discern, all our volition has to do with love and all our discernment has to do with wisdom. Further, since these two abilities cannot occur in any of us from ourselves, only from the one who is love itself and wisdom itself, it follows that this comes from the Lord from eternity or Jehovah. Otherwise, we would be love itself and wisdom itself, we would be God from eternity, and human reason itself recoils from this thought in horror.

Can anything exist except from some prior source, and can this prior source exist except from some source still prior, and so on finally back to a First that simply exists in its own right?

[6] (c) *By the same token, this is also the goodness itself and the truth itself that underlie everything.* Everyone possessed of reason accepts and admits the fact that God is goodness itself and truth itself and that everything good and true comes from him. In fact, nothing that is good and true can come from any other source than from the one who is goodness itself and truth itself. Every rational individual admits this on first hearing it. If we go on to say that when we are being led by the Lord everything that has to do with our volition and discernment, with our love and wisdom, with our feelings and thoughts, rests in what is good and true, it follows that everything we then intend and think, every exercise of our love and wisdom, everything that moves us or occupies our thoughts, comes from the Lord. This is why everyone in the church knows that everything good and true within us that originates in us is not really good or true, only what comes from the Lord.

Since this is the case, everything that we intend and think under this leading comes from the Lord. We will see later [§§285–294] that even evil people cannot intend and think from any other source.

[7] (d) *These are the life that is the source of the life of everything and of every aspect of life.* I have given ample evidence of this in *Divine Love and Wisdom*.¹⁴⁶ On first hearing, human reason accepts and admits the fact that our whole life is a matter of our intending and its discerning, because if we were deprived of our ability to intend and discern, we would not be alive. This is the same as saying that our whole life is a matter of our love and its thinking, because if we were deprived of our ability to love and

to think we would not be alive. Since the Lord is the only source of everything in us that has to do with intent and discernment, or with love and thought, as just noted, it follows that all our life comes from him.

[8] (e) *This single, essential reality is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent.* All Christians know this on the basis of their theology and all non-Christians on the basis of their religions. This is also why all of us think that God is present wherever we happen to be, why we pray to God as present with us; and since we all do think this way while we are praying, it follows that the only way we can think is that God is everywhere, that God is therefore omnipresent. The same holds true for God's omniscience and omnipotence. This is why everyone who prays to God is asking at heart for guidance—because God is able to guide; and this means that we all recognize divine omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. We recognize it because then we are turning our faces toward the Lord, and this truth flows into us from him.

[9] (f) *This single, essential reality is the Lord from eternity, or Jehovah.* In *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord*, I explained that God is one in essence and in person and that this God is the Lord. I also explained¹⁴⁷ that the essential Deity called Jehovah the Father is the Lord from eternity, that the Son conceived by Deity from eternity and born into the world is the Divine-Human One, and that the Holy Spirit is the Deity emanating.

This reality is called “single” and “essential” because it has already been stated that the Lord from eternity or Jehovah is life itself because he is love itself and wisdom itself, or goodness itself and truth itself, the source of everything. I have shown in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 282–284 and 349–357 that the Lord created everything from his own self and not from nothing.

These propositions may serve as rational evidence of the truth that we are led and taught by the Lord alone.

The same truth is demonstrated to angels not only by rational propositions but also by direct perception, especially for angels of the third heaven. They feel the inflow of divine love and wisdom from the Lord, and since they feel it and in their wisdom realize that these constitute their life, they say that their life comes from the Lord and not from themselves. They not only say this, they love to have it that way and want it to be that way. All the same, it seems to them completely as though they lived on their own. In fact, this appearance is stronger for them than it is for other angels, for as noted in §§42–45 above, *the more closely we are united to the Lord, the more clearly we seem to have our own identity, and yet the more obvious it is to us that we belong to the Lord.*

For some years now, I have been granted the same kind of sense and the same appearance; and as a result I am wholly convinced that I do not intend and think anything on my own, though it seems as though I do; and I am blessed with the desire and the love of having it so. I could support this with any number of other instances from the spiritual world, but for now these two will do.

The following passages from the Word show that only the Lord possesses life.

159

I am the resurrection and the life. All who believe in me will live even though they die. (John 11:25)

I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)

God was the Word: in him was life, and the life was our light. (John 1:1, 4)

The Word here is the Lord.

As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. (John 5:26)

The following passages show that we are led and taught by the Lord alone.

Without me you cannot do anything. (John 15:5)

No one can undertake anything unless it is granted from heaven. (John 3:27)

You cannot make a single hair white or black. (Matthew 5:36)

In the Word, a hair means the slightest thing of all.

I will explain in its own section [§§285–294] that the life of evil people comes from the same source. For now, I need only to illustrate the point by comparison. Both warmth and light flow from the sun of our world, and they flow into trees that yield harmful fruit just the way they do into trees that yield good fruit. The two kinds of tree sprout and grow in the same way. The forms into which the warmth flows make the difference, not the warmth itself.

160

It is the same with the light. This is diversified into colors depending on the forms into which it flows. There are beautiful and cheerful colors, and ugly and depressing ones, yet the light is the same in either case.

The same holds true for the inflow from the spiritual world's sun of the spiritual warmth that is essentially love and the spiritual light that is essentially wisdom. The forms into which they flow make the difference,

not the warmth that is love or the light that is wisdom in their own right. The forms into which they flow are our minds.

We can see from this, then, that we are led and taught by the Lord.

161

I have already explained [§§16, 96] what animal life is, a life of merely physical impulses accompanied by knowledge that matches them; and I have noted that this life comes to animals indirectly and is analogous to the life of people in the spiritual world.

162

2. *We are led and taught by the Lord alone through and from the angelic heaven.* The statement is that we are led by the Lord through and from the angelic heaven. However, it is an appearance only that we are led through the angelic heaven, the truth being that we are led from it. The reason for the appearance that it is through the angelic heaven is that the Lord is seen as a sun above that heaven. The truth that it is from heaven is because the Lord is in heaven the way our soul is in us. The Lord is omnipresent and not in space, as already noted,¹⁴⁸ so distance is an appearance that depends on union with him, and union depends on acceptance of love and wisdom from him. Further, since no one can be united to the Lord as he is in himself, he appears like the sun to angels at a distance. Still, he is in the whole angelic heaven the way our soul is in us, in every community of heaven in the same way, and likewise in every individual angel there. Our soul is not just the soul of our whole being but the soul of every part of us.

[2] However, since it does seem as though the Lord were governing the whole heaven, and through it, the world, from the sun that comes from him and surrounds him (on this sun, see part 2 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*), and since there is nothing wrong with talking in terms of appearances (that is actually the only way we can talk), there is nothing wrong for anyone who does not have actual wisdom in thinking that the Lord is governing all this from his sun and that he is governing our world through the angelic heaven. Angels of the lower heavens think in terms of this appearance, while angels of the higher heavens talk in the same terms but think in terms of the truth, namely, that the Lord governs the universe from the angelic heaven that comes from his very self.

[3] The sun of our own world may serve to illustrate how simple and wise individuals talk similarly but do not think similarly. Both talk as though the sun rose and set; but even though wise people talk that way, they are aware in their thought that it stands immobile. This is the truth; the other is the appearance.

We might illustrate the same point with the way things seem in the spiritual world. There seem to be space and distance there just as there

are in our physical world, but these are actually appearances that reflect differences in feelings and therefore in thoughts. This is like the Lord seeming to be in his sun.

I need to describe briefly, though, how the Lord guides and teaches each of us from the angelic heaven. In the work on *Divine Love and Wisdom*, earlier in this work on *Divine Providence*, and in the work on *Heaven and Hell* (published in London in 1758), I let it be known on the basis of things I have heard and seen that in the Lord's view the whole angelic heaven looks like a single person and that the same holds true for each heavenly community. This is why each individual spirit and angel is a perfectly formed person.¹⁴⁹ In these works I have also explained that heaven is not heaven because of anything that belongs to angels but because of their acceptance of divine love and wisdom from the Lord.¹⁵⁰

163

This shows that the Lord governs the whole angelic heaven as though it were a single individual and that this heaven is the very image and likeness of the Lord because it is essentially a person. It shows also that the Lord himself governs that heaven the way a soul governs its body.

Since the whole human race is governed by the Lord, then, it shows that it is not governed by the Lord through heaven but from heaven, from himself, because as already noted,¹⁵¹ he is heaven.

However, since this is a secret of angelic wisdom, people cannot understand it unless their spiritual minds have been opened. Such people are angels by virtue of their union with the Lord and will be able to understand what follows on the basis of what has already been said. (a) Both we and angels are in the Lord, and the Lord is in both us and angels, to the extent that we are united with him—that is, to the extent that we accept love and wisdom from him. [2] (b) Each of us is assigned a place in the Lord—that is, in heaven—according to the quality of that union or acceptance of him. [3] (c) Each of us has a specific state in that place, a state different from that of anyone else, and from the commonwealth we are granted a livelihood appropriate to our place, our responsibilities, and our needs, just the way it happens in the human body. [4] (d) Each of us is led into our place by the Lord, in keeping with our lives. [5] (e) Each of us is introduced at infancy into that divine-human being whose soul and life is the Lord; and we are led and taught out of divine love itself according to divine wisdom itself, within the Lord and not outside him. However, since we are not deprived of our freedom, the only way we can be led and taught is within the limits of our apparently autonomous acceptance. [6] (f) People who do accept [divine love and wisdom] are brought to their places by countless winding and roundabout ways, almost like the way the

164

chyle is brought through the mesentery and the lacteals into its reservoir, and from there through the thoracic duct into the blood and therefore to its proper place.¹⁵² [7] (g) People who do not accept [divine love and wisdom] are separated from those who are inside the divine person the way feces and urine are excreted from us.

These are secrets of angelic wisdom that people can understand to some extent; but there are many other secrets that they cannot understand.

165

3. *We are led by the Lord through an inflow and taught by being enlightened.* The reason we are led by the Lord through an inflow is that both the being led and the flowing in are connected to our love and volition. The reason we are taught by the Lord by being enlightened is that being taught and being enlightened are properly connected with our wisdom and discernment. It is common knowledge that we lead ourselves on the basis of our love, and are led by others within the limits of that love, rather than being led by our discernment. We are led by and according to our discernment only as the love of our volition makes it happen; and when this is the case, we might describe our discernment as being led, though in fact it is not really our discernment that is being led but the volition that underlies it.

We use the word “inflow” because the standard practice is to say that the soul flows into the body and that the inflow is spiritual and not physical. Our soul or life is our love or volition, as already noted.¹⁵³ We use the word also because the inflow is much like the flow of blood into the heart and from the heart into the lungs. I have explained in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 371–432 that there is a correspondence of the heart with our volition and of the lungs with our discernment, and that the union of volition and discernment is like the flow of blood from the heart into the lungs.

166

The reason we are taught by being enlightened is that enlightenment is an attribute of both our learning and our discernment, since our discernment, the sight of our inner self, is enlightened by spiritual light exactly the way our eyes, the sight of our outer self, are enlightened by physical light. There is the same kind of teaching in each case, but our inner sight, the sight of our discernment, is taught by spiritual objects, while our outer sight, that of our eyes, is taught by physical objects.

There is spiritual light and there is physical light. Outwardly, they seem to be alike, but inwardly they are different. Physical light comes from the sun of the physical world and is essentially dead, while spiritual

light comes from the sun of the spiritual world and is essentially alive. This latter light enlightens our discernment, but physical light does not. Our earthly and rational illumination comes from spiritual and not from physical light. We speak of it as earthly and rational because it is “spiritual-earthly.”¹⁵⁴

[2] There are three levels of light in the spiritual world: heavenly light, spiritual light, and spiritual-earthly light. Heavenly light, the light of people in the third heaven, is rich and flamelike; spiritual light, the light of people in the middle heaven, is brilliantly clear; and spiritual-earthly light is like daylight in our world. It is the light of people in the lowest heaven and in the world of spirits¹⁵⁵ that is halfway between heaven and hell. In that world, though, it is like our summer light for good people and like winter light for evil ones.

[3] Still, we need to be aware that the light of the spiritual world has nothing in common with that of our physical world. They are as different as life and death. We can therefore see that the physical light we see with our eyes does not enlighten our discernment; only spiritual light does. People are unaware of this because they have not known anything about spiritual light before. I explained in *Heaven and Hell* 126–140 that in its origin spiritual light is divine wisdom or divine truth.

Since heaven’s light has been discussed [§166], something needs to be said about hell’s light as well. There are three levels of light in hell, too. The light in the deepest hell is like that of glowing coals; the light in the middle hell is like that of a fireplace; and the light of the uppermost hell is like that of candles, and for some people like moonlight at night. These lights are not physical but spiritual, since all physical light is dead and snuffs out discernment. People in hell do have that ability to discern that is called rationality, as already noted.¹⁵⁶ True rationality comes from spiritual light; not a trace of it comes from physical light. The spiritual light that gives people in hell their rationality is turned into hellish light the way daylight turns to the gloom of night.

All the people in the spiritual world, though, whether in the heavens or in the hells, see just as clearly in their own light as we do in our own daylight. This is because for all of us, our eyes are adapted to receive the light we live in. So the eyesight of heaven’s angels is adapted to receive the light that surrounds it and the eyesight of hell’s spirits is adapted to receive its own light. This eyesight is like the sight of owls and bats, who see things at night or in the twilight just as clearly as other winged creatures see them in daytime. Their eyes are adapted to receive their own light.

However, the difference between the lights is obvious to people who look from one light into another. For example, when angels of heaven look into hell, they see nothing but pure darkness there, and when spirits of hell look into heaven, they see nothing but darkness there. This is because heavenly wisdom is like darkness to people in hell; and conversely, hellish insanity is like darkness to people in heaven.

This shows that the nature of our understanding determines the nature of our light, and that each one of us will come into his or her own light after death. We have no sight in any other. In the spiritual world, where we are all spiritual even in respect to our bodies, our eyes are adapted to see in their own light. The love of our life makes an intelligence for itself and therefore a light as well. Love is actually like the fire of life that gives off the light of life.

168

Since there are not many people who know anything about the enlightenment that envelops the discernment of people who are being led by the Lord, I need to say something about that.

There is inner and outer enlightenment from the Lord and inner and outer enlightenment from ourselves. The inner enlightenment from the Lord is our sensing on first hearing whether what someone is telling us is true or not. The outer enlightenment occurs in the thinking we do on that basis. The inner enlightenment from ourselves comes strictly from our own convictions, and the outer enlightenment from ourselves comes simply from the information we possess. But let me offer some detail.

[2] *People who are rational because of an inner enlightenment from the Lord* sense instantly, the moment they hear, whether most things are true or not. They know, for example, that love is the life of faith or that faith gets its life from love. It is from inner enlightenment that people sense that we intend what we love, and do what we intend, which means that loving is doing. They sense that what we believe because of our love we also intend and do, which means that having faith is also doing. They sense that irreverent people cannot have a love for God or faith in God.

People who are rational because of their inner enlightenment also sense certain things the moment they hear that God is one—they sense that God is omnipresent, that everything good comes from him, that everything goes back to what is good and what is true, and that everything good comes from goodness itself and everything true from truth itself. We sense these things, and others like them, deep within ourselves

when we hear them; and we have this sensitivity because we have rationality, and because it is in a light of heaven that enlightens it.

[3] *Outer enlightenment* is enlightenment of our thinking because of that inner enlightenment, and our thinking enjoys this enlightenment to the extent that it retains the sense granted by that inner enlightenment and also knows from experience what is true and good. It picks up from these the reasons that support it. Thinking from this kind of outer enlightenment sees things from both sides. On the one side such thinking sees the reasons that support it, and on the other side it sees the illusions that undermine it. It dismisses the latter and gathers in the former.

[4] *Inner enlightenment from ourselves*, though, is totally different. In this light, we see things from one side and not from the other, and once we have made up our minds, we see things in a light that looks like the light we have been talking about, but it is a wintry light. Take, for example, judges who make unjust decisions for bribes or for profit. Once they have rationalized their decisions by laws and arguments, it looks to them as though they have been fair in their decisions. They may actually see some unfairness, but since they do not want to see it, they veil it over and blind themselves so completely that they no longer see it. It is the same with judges who make decisions on the basis of friendship, to curry favor, or because of family relationships.

Much the same holds for anything that such people accept on the word of someone in authority or someone famous, or for anything they construct out of their own intellects. These are blind reasons because the distortions that convince them are the basis of their sight, and distortion closes sight, while truth opens it.

[5] People like this see nothing true in the light of truth and nothing fair from a love of fairness. They see from the light of their own convictions, which is a feeble light. In the spiritual world they look like faces without a head or like humanoid faces on heads of wood; and they are called rational sheep because potentially they do have rationality.

Outer enlightenment from ourselves, though, is characteristic of people who do their thinking and talking solely on the basis of information stamped on their memories. They are scarcely capable of coming to any conclusions on their own.

These are varieties of enlightenment and of the sensitivity and thought that it produces. There is an effective enlightenment by spiritual light, but the actual enlightenment that comes from this light is not perceptible to anyone in the physical world, because physical light has

nothing in common with spiritual light. I have seen this enlightenment several times in the spiritual world, though. It was visible with people who were being enlightened by the Lord as a radiance around their heads, the ruddy color of some human faces. A kind of radiance also appeared with people who were self-enlightened, but around their mouths and chins rather than their heads.

170

There is another kind of enlightenment besides these, one by which it is revealed to people what kind of faith and what kind of intelligence and wisdom they have. It works by enabling them to see this within themselves. They are brought into a community where there is real faith and real intelligence and wisdom and then the deeper levels of their rationality are opened. This enables them to see their own faith and their own intelligence and wisdom, to see convincingly what kind of people they are. I have seen some [spirits] coming back from these visits and heard them admit that they really did not have any faith, though in the world they had thought they had great faith—outstanding, exemplary faith—admitting the same about their intelligence and wisdom as well. They were people who had lived in faith alone and not in charity and had been impressed with their own intelligence.

171

4. *We are taught by the Lord through the Word, and teaching and preaching from the Word, and therefore directly by the Lord alone.* It has already been clearly explained [§§155–164] that we are led and taught by the Lord alone and that this happens from heaven, not through heaven or through any angel there. Since it is only the Lord who leads us, it follows that we are led directly, not indirectly. Now an explanation of how this happens is needed.

172

I explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* that the Lord is the Word and that all the teaching of the church should be based on the Word.¹⁵⁷ Since the Lord is the Word, then, it follows that when we are being taught by the Word we are being taught by the Lord alone. However, since this is hard to grasp, I need to make it clear in the following sequence. (a) The Lord is the Word because it comes from him and is about him. (b) [The Lord is the Word] also because it is divine truth coming from divine good. (c) Being taught from the Word is therefore being taught from him. (d) It does not reduce the immediacy that this happens indirectly, through sermons.¹⁵⁸

[2] (a) *The Lord is the Word because it comes from him and is about him.* No one in the church denies that the Word comes from the Lord, but even though no one denies that the Word is about no one but the Lord, no one really knows this. I have, however, explained it in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord* 1–7, 37–44; and *Teachings for the*

New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture 62–69, 80–90, and 98–100. Since the Word comes from the Lord alone and is about the Lord alone, it follows that when we are being taught from the Word we are being taught from the Lord. The Word is actually divine. Who is able to communicate something divine and instill it into our hearts except Divinity itself, the source and the subject? This is why when the Lord talks with his disciples about their union with him he talks about their abiding in him and his words abiding in them (John 15:7), about his words being spirit and life (John 6:63), and about making his dwelling with people who keep his words (John 14:20–24). This means that thinking from the Lord is thinking from the Word, to all appearances thinking by means of the Word.

I have explained throughout *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture*, from beginning to end, that everything in the Word is in touch with heaven; and since the Lord is heaven, this means that everything in the Word is in touch with the Lord himself. Heaven's angels do have access to heaven, but this too is from the Lord.

[3] (b) *The Lord is the Word also because it is divine truth coming from divine good.* The Lord teaches that he is the Word in John by saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14). Because until now this has been understood only as saying that the Lord teaches us through the Word, it has been taken as hyperbole with the implication that the Lord is not really the Word. This is because people have not realized that “the Word” means what is divine and true coming from what is divine and good, or in other words, divine wisdom from divine love. I explained that these are the Lord himself in part 1 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and explained that they are the Word in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 1–86 [1–26].

[4] Now I need to explain briefly how the Lord is what is divine and true from what is divine and good. We are not human because of our faces and bodies but because of the goodness of our love and the truths of our wisdom; and since this is what makes us human, we are also whatever is true and good about us, our own love and our own wisdom. Apart from these, we are not human. The Lord, though, is what is essentially true and essentially good, or love itself and wisdom itself; and these are the Word that was in the beginning with God, that was God, and that was made flesh.

[5] (c) *Being taught from the Word is therefore being taught by the Lord himself* because it is being taught from what is essentially good and essentially true, or from the love itself and wisdom itself that are the Word, as

just stated. Still, we all learn within the limits of the comprehension of our love. Anything beyond that is transient.

People who are taught by the Lord in the Word learn a few truths in this world, but they learn a great many when they become angels. The deeper levels of the Word, the divine spiritual and divine heavenly contents, are being instilled at the same time. However, these are not opened up until after our death, in heaven, where we come into an angelic wisdom that in comparison to our earlier human wisdom is simply indescribable. You may see in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 5–26 that the divine spiritual and divine heavenly contents that constitute the wisdom of angels are present throughout the Word, in its every detail.

[6] (d) *It does not reduce the immediacy that this happens indirectly, through sermons.* The only way the Word can be taught is indirectly, through our parents, teachers, preachers, and books, and especially by our reading it. Still, these are not our teachers: the Lord is, using them as means. This is derived from what preachers know, too. They say that they are not talking from their own resources but from the spirit of God and that everything true, like everything good, comes from God. They can talk and can convey things to the minds of many, but not to anyone's heart; and anything that does not enter the heart dies in the mind. "The heart" means our love.

We can see from this that we are led and taught by the Lord alone and that this happens directly from him when it happens from the Word. This is a most treasured secret of angelic wisdom.

173

I explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 104–113 that people who are outside the church and do not have the Word also receive light by means of the Word. Since light comes to us through the Word, and since we derive from that light a discernment (which both evil and good people possess), it follows that from its source light comes into those derivative forms that are our sensations and thoughts about whatever concerns us. The Lord said that we can do nothing apart from him (John 15:5), that we can acquire nothing unless it is given us from heaven (John 3:27), and that the Father in heaven makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). Here as elsewhere in the Word, the sun in its spiritual sense means the divine good of divine love, and the rain means the divine truth of divine wisdom. These are given to evil people and good people, to just people and unjust people, because otherwise no one would have either sensation or thought.

I have already explained [§157] that there is only one life that is the source of life for us all; and sensation and thought are functions of life, so we get sensation and thought from the same source as life. I have also presented ample evidence that all the light that constitutes our discernment comes from the sun of the spiritual world, which is the Lord.¹⁵⁹

5. *Outwardly, we are led and taught by the Lord to all appearances as though we were leading and teaching ourselves.* This happens outwardly but not inwardly. No one knows how the Lord is leading and teaching us inwardly, just as no one knows how the soul is working so that the eye can see and the ear can hear, the tongue and mouth can speak, the heart can impel the blood, the lungs can breathe, the stomach can digest, the liver and pancreas can organize, the kidneys can make separations, and countless other processes. These do not reach our notice and sensation. The same holds for the things that the Lord is doing in the inner substances and forms of our minds, which are infinitely more numerous. The Lord's workings in this realm are imperceptible to us, but their many very real effects are perceptible and so are some of the causes of those effects. These are the outward events where we are present with the Lord; and since outward things are united to inner ones, being connected in a single sequence, we cannot be inwardly organized by the Lord except to the extent that outward matters are set in order through our own efforts.

174

[2] Everyone knows that we think, intend, speak, and act with every appearance of autonomy, and everyone can see that if it were not for this appearance we would have no volition and discernment. We would therefore have no motivation and thought and no acceptance of anything good and true from the Lord. This means that without this appearance we would have no acknowledgment of God, no charity and faith, no consequent reformation and regeneration, and therefore no salvation.

We can see from this that this appearance is granted us by the Lord for all these functions, especially so that there may be something receptive and responsive within us through which the Lord can be united to us and we can be united to the Lord, and that by virtue of this union we can live forever. That is the appearance that is meant here.

It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We
Should Not Sense or Feel Anything of the Working
of Divine Providence, but That We Should Still
Know about It and Acknowledge It

175

MATERIALISTS who do not believe in divine providence think privately, “What is divine providence when evil people are promoted to high office, when their efforts are rewarded more than those of good people, when so many things go better for people who do not believe in divine providence than for people who do? Not only that, faithless and irreverent people can wreak harm, do damage, and cause misfortune to faithful and reverent people, and sometimes even murder them with their vicious schemes.” So they wind up thinking, “Can’t I see as clear as day from my own experience that as long as we use our subtle skills to make our devious plots seem honest and fair, they will defeat honesty and fairness? What is left but necessity, consequences, and chance, with no visible trace of divine providence? Is necessity anything but a characteristic of the material world? Are consequences anything more than causal chains that flow from physical or civil order?¹⁶⁰ Is chance anything more than unknown causes or no cause at all?” This is how materialists think, people who attribute everything to the material world and nothing to God; because people who ignore God ignore divine providence as well. After all, God and divine providence are inseparable.

[2] Spiritual people think and speak differently, though, within themselves. Even though they do not sense the ongoing workings of divine providence in their thoughts or see it with their eyes, they still know and acknowledge it.

The superficial views and consequent illusions I have just mentioned blind our discernment, and our discernment cannot gain any sight unless the illusions that blind it and the distortions that becloud it are dispelled. This cannot be accomplished except by means of truths that have the inherent power to dispel distortions. For these reasons, I need to disclose these truths now, and to do so in the following sequence if they are to be clear.

1. If we sensed and felt the working of divine providence, we would not act freely and rationally, and nothing would seem to be really ours. The same would hold true if we knew what was going to happen.
2. If we saw divine providence clearly, we would interfere with the orderly sequence of its processes and corrupt and destroy it.
3. If we saw divine providence clearly, we would either deny God or make ourselves God.
4. We are allowed to see divine providence from behind but not face to face, and when we are in a spiritual state, not in a materialistic state.

1. *If we sensed and felt the working of divine providence, we would not act freely and rationally, and nothing would seem to be really ours. The same would hold true if we knew what was going to happen.* In the appropriate sections above,¹⁶¹ I have explained a number of things to the discerning mind: that it is a law of divine providence that we should act freely and rationally; that everything we intend, think, say, and do seems to be on our own; that if it did not seem so, nothing would be ours, not even ourselves, so we would have no sense of self and therefore no sense of worth, and without this it would make no difference whether we did evil or good, whether we had faith in God or accepted the principles of hell—in short, we would not be human.

176

[2] Now I need to show that we would have no freedom to act rationally and no appearance of independence if we sensed and felt the working of divine providence. This is because if we did sense and feel it we would also be led by it, since the Lord is leading us all by his divine providence and it is only an appearance that we are leading ourselves, as already explained.¹⁶² So if our immediate feelings and sensations told us that we were being led, we would not be aware of our own life. We would then be impelled to make sounds and motions almost like some statue. If we were aware of our life, the only way we could be led would be like someone in handcuffs and shackles or like a cart horse. Can anyone fail to see that in this case we would have no freedom, and that if we had no freedom we would have no rationality? That is, we all think because we are free and we all think freely; and anything we think apart from this freedom or in any other way does not seem to be ours but to come from someone else. No, if you look into this more deeply, you will find that we would have no thought, let alone rationality, and that therefore we would not be human.

177

The unceasing effort of the Lord's divine providence is to deliver us from our evils. If we were to sense and feel that constant effort and still not be led like prisoners, how could we help constantly resisting and either arguing with God or becoming involved in divine providence? To do the latter is to make ourselves God; to do the former is to cast off the chains and deny God. It is quite clear that there are two forces constantly acting against each other, a force of evil from us and a force of good from the Lord. When two opposing forces act against each other, then one or the other wins, or they are both destroyed. In this case, though, if one wins then both of them lose. The evil that is ours does not instantly accept the goodness that the Lord is giving, and the goodness from the Lord does not rid us of our evil instantly. If either of these things did happen instantly, we would have no life left.

This is just some of the damage that would be done if we sensed or felt the working of divine providence vividly. I will illustrate this clearly by examples in what follows.

178

The need to preserve our ability to act in freedom and to act rationally is also the reason we are not granted foreknowledge of events. That is, it is common knowledge that if we love something, we want it to happen and we use our reason to move in that direction. Further, whenever we are considering something rationally, it is from a love of having it become a reality by means of our thought. So if we knew the result or the outcome because of some divine prediction, our reason would yield, and our love would yield along with it. Love and reason together find closure in results, and a new love takes over from there.

The very delight of our reason is to see a result that comes from love by thought, not as it happens but beforehand, or not in the present but in the future. This is what gives us what we call *hope*, waxing and waning in our rationality as we see or await a result. This delight finds its fulfillment in the outcome, but then both it and thought about it are cancelled. [2] The same thing would happen if an outcome were foreknown.

The human mind is constantly engaged with three matters called purposes, means, and results. If any of these is lacking, our mind is not engaged in its own life. The impulse of our volition is the originating purpose; the thinking of our discernment is the effectual means; and the action of the body, the speech of the mouth, or our physical sensation, is the result of the purpose that is achieved through thought. Anyone can see that the human mind is not engaged in its life when it is occupied only with the impulse of its volition and nothing more, and that the same is true if it is occupied only with the result. This means that our

minds do not have their life from any one of these elements by itself, but from the three of them together. This life of our minds wanes and ebbs when an outcome is foretold.

Since foreknowledge of what will happen destroys our essential human nature, our ability to act in freedom and rationally, no one is allowed to know the future. We can, though, draw conclusions about the future on the basis of reason. This is what brings reason and all its powers to life. This is why we do not know what our lot will be after death or know anything that is happening before we are involved in it, because if we did know we would no longer think in our deeper self about what we should do or how we should live in order to reach some particular goal. We would only think with our outer self that this was coming; and this state closes the deeper levels of the mind where, principally, those two abilities of our life dwell, freedom and rationality.

A desire to know the future is innate in many people, but since this desire originates in a love for what is evil, it is taken away from people who believe in divine providence, and they are given a trust that the Lord will take care of their fate. So they do not want to know it in advance, fearing that they might in some way interfere with the divine providence. The Lord teaches us this in several ways in Luke 12:14–48.¹⁶³

[2] There is ample proof in the spiritual world that this is a law of divine providence. Most people who arrive there after death want to know what their lot will be; but they are told that if they have lived well their lot will be in heaven and if they have lived badly it will be in hell. However, since all are afraid of hell, even evil people, they ask what they need to do and what they need to believe in order to get into heaven. They are told that they should do and believe whatever they like; but they should realize that in hell people do not do anything that is good or believe anything that is true, only in heaven: “Ask what is good and what is true and think about it and do it if you can.” So we are all left to act in freedom and to act rationally in the spiritual world just the way we are in this world. However, in that world we will behave the way we have behaved here, since in every case our own life stays with us. So does our lot, then, because our life determines our lot.

2. *If we saw divine providence clearly, we would interfere with the orderly sequence of its processes and distort and destroy it.* If these matters are to get through clearly to rational comprehension and to materialistic people, I need to illustrate them with examples in the following sequence. (a) Outward things are so closely connected to inward things that they act as a single entity in everything they do. (b) We cooperate

with the Lord only in some outward matters. If we did so in inner ones at the same time, we would corrupt and destroy the whole orderly sequence of divine providence.

However, as already stated, I need to illustrate this with examples.

[2] (a) *Outward things are so closely connected to inward things that they act as a single entity in everything they do.* This can be illustrated here by some features of the human body. There are inner and outer components of the whole body and of every part of it. The outer components are called skins and membranes and envelopes, while the inner are the forms that are variously composed and woven of nerve fibers and blood vessels. The envelope that surrounds them penetrates throughout the inner forms to their very center through extensions from itself; so the outer component, which is the envelope, unites itself to everything inside it, which comprises the forms organized from fibers and vessels. It follows from this that as the outer component acts or is acted upon, the inner ones act or are acted upon as well. There is a constant binding together of all the elements.

[3] Take just one of the body's general envelopes as an example, say the *pleura*, the general envelope of the chest cavity or of the heart and lungs, and look at it with the anatomist's eye—or if that is not your field, check with anatomists, and you will be told that by various circlings and extensions from itself, more and more delicate, this general envelope reaches deep into the lungs, even to the smallest bronchial passages and the tiny sacs that are the beginnings of the lungs, not to mention their further extension into the trachea and the larynx toward the tongue. We can see from this that there is a constant connection between the outermost and the innermost things; so if the outermost things act or are acted upon, the deeper things act or are acted upon from the very center. This is why the lungs labor from their very center when their outermost covering, the pleura, is flooded, inflamed, or afflicted with sores; and if the problems get too serious, all the action of the lungs ceases and the individual dies.

[4] It is much the same everywhere throughout the body, with the peritoneum, for example, the general envelope of all the inner organs of the abdominal cavity, and with the envelopes around each organ—the stomach, liver, pancreas, spleen, intestines, mesentery, kidneys, and reproductive organs of both sexes. Take any one of these and either examine it yourself and you will see this, or check with someone skilled in the field and you will be told this. Take the liver, for example, and you will find that there is a connection of the peritoneum with the envelope of

that organ, and a connection through that envelope with its innermost regions. There are actually constant extensions from it that reach inward toward the depths, causing continuations to the very center. This results in everything being bound together in such a way that when the envelope either acts or is acted upon, the whole form either acts or is acted upon in the same way.

It is the same with the other organs. This is because in every form, what is general and what is specific, or what is inclusive and what is individual, act as a single entity by virtue of their wonderful interconnection.

[5] We will see later [§181] that what holds true for physical forms and their workings, which have to do with motion and action, holds true also for spiritual forms, and applies to their changes and variations of state, which have to do with the workings of our volition and discernment.

Since we are cooperating with the Lord in certain outward workings, and since we are not deprived of the freedom to act rationally, it follows that the Lord can act within us only in keeping with what we are doing outwardly. So if we do not abstain and turn from evils as sins, the outer component of our thought and volition is corrupted and weakened, together with their inner components, much the way the pleura suffers from the disease called pleuritis, which leads to the death of the body.

[6] (b) *If we were conscious of inner processes at the same time, we would corrupt and destroy the whole orderly sequence of divine providence.* This too can be illustrated by examples from the human body. If we knew all the ways the two hemispheres of our brains act through our nerve fibers, how these fibers affect our muscles, and how our muscles produce actions, and used this knowledge to control these processes the way we control our actions, would we not corrupt and destroy them all? [7] If we knew how our stomachs digest, how the organs around it draw out what they need, make up our blood, and send it out for all the tasks of our lives—if we knew all this, and in our management of it behaved the way we do in outward matters like eating and drinking, would we not corrupt and destroy them all? If we cannot manage the outward realm, which seems so simple, without destroying it by our self-indulgence and excess, what would happen if we had control of inner matters, which are infinite? So to prevent us from intruding our will into these inner matters and taking control of them, they are completely exempt from our volition, except for the muscles that enclose them. We do not even know how they work; we know only that they do.

[8] It is the same with other processes. If we controlled the inner workings of our eyes for seeing, the inner workings of our ears for hearing, those of our tongues for tasting, of our skin for feeling, of our hearts for contracting, of our lungs for breathing, of our mesentery for the distribution of chyle, of our kidneys for separating elements, of our reproductive organs for generation, of our wombs for perfecting the embryo, and so on, would we not find countless ways to corrupt and destroy the orderly processes of divine providence in them? We know that we do outward things consciously—we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, taste with our tongues, feel with our skin, breathe with our lungs, impregnate our wives, and so on.¹⁶⁴ It is enough that we are conscious of these external processes and manage them for the health of body and mind. If we cannot do this, what would happen if we had control of the inner processes as well?

This shows that if we saw divine providence clearly, we would interfere with the orderly sequence of its processes and corrupt and destroy it.

181

The reason for the parallelism between the spiritual events of the mind and the physical events of the body is that there is a correspondential relationship between everything mental and everything physical. So too, the mind activates the body in its outward functions, generally doing so at will. It activates the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mouth and tongue to eat and drink and also to talk, the hands to work, the feet to walk, and the reproductive organs to propagate. The mind not only activates our outer organs to do all this, it activates the inner ones at every step, affecting the outermost ones from the innermost, and the innermost from the outermost. So when it is activating the mouth to speak, it is activating the lungs, the larynx, the glottis, the tongue, and the lips, each one individually for its particular function, and all at once. It also makes the face adapt.

[2] We can therefore see that the kind of thing we say about the physical forms of the body must also be said about the spiritual forms of the mind, and that whatever we say about the physical workings of the body must also be said about the spiritual workings of the mind. Specifically, the Lord arranges the inner forms and workings the way we arrange the outer ones. He does this differently, then, depending on whether we arrange the outer ones on our own, or whether we do so both from him and in apparent autonomy.

The human mind is a person in every element of its form. It is our spirit, which after death looks just as human as it does in this world. So there are similarities between the two, and what we have said about the

union of outer and inner events in the body must be applied also to the union of outer and inner events in the mind. The only difference is that the one realm is physical and the other spiritual.

3. *If we saw divine providence clearly, we would either deny God or make ourselves God.* People who are completely materialistic say to themselves, “What is divine providence? Is it anything but a word that the masses hear from the clergy? Has anyone ever seen a trace of it? Aren’t our planning and wisdom and deceit and malice the real causes of everything that happens in this world? Is the rest anything but needs and deductions and a lot of accidents? Is divine providence hidden away somewhere in all this? How can it be present in trickery and deceit? Yet these people say that divine providence is in control of everything. Show it to me, and I’ll believe it. Can anyone believe in it otherwise?”

182

[2] This is the voice of the strict materialist, but spiritually-minded people speak differently. Since they acknowledge God, they acknowledge divine providence too. They see it as well, but they cannot show it to anyone who thinks only in physical terms, on the basis of physical events. These people cannot raise their minds above the material world and see the signs of divine providence in its outward appearances. They cannot figure out anything about it on the basis of its laws, which are laws of divine wisdom. So if they were to see it with any clarity, they would make it material and thereby not only becloud it with distortions but also profane it. Instead of recognizing it, they would deny it; and anyone who at heart denies divine providence is denying the Lord as well.

[3] We either think that God is governing everything or that the material world is governing everything. If we think that God is governing everything, then we think that this is love itself and wisdom itself and therefore life itself. If we think that the material world is governing everything, though, we think of physical warmth and physical light, which in and of themselves are dead because they come from a lifeless sun. Does what is essentially living not govern what is dead? Can what is dead govern anything? If you think that what is dead can give you life, you are out of your mind. Life must come from life.

It may seem unlikely that we would deny God if we were to see divine providence and its workings clearly, because it would seem that if we were to see it clearly we could not help but acknowledge it and thereby acknowledge God. However, the opposite is the case.

183

Divine providence is never acting in the same direction as our deliberate love. It is always acting against it. This is because from our own inherited evil we are constantly hungering for the deepest hell, while the

Lord, through his divine providence, is constantly leading us away from it and drawing us out of it, first to some milder hell, then out of hell, and eventually to himself in heaven. This effort of divine providence is going on all the time; so if we were to see or feel vividly this carrying off and pulling away, we would be outraged. God would become our enemy, and in the evil of our self-centeredness we would deny him. So to prevent us from knowing about this, we are kept in a free state where all we can know is that *we* are leading ourselves.

[2] Let some examples serve to illustrate this. By heredity, we want to become powerful and rich, and to the extent that these loves are not held in check, we want to become more powerful and more rich until we are the most powerful and most rich of all. Even then we are not satisfied, but want to be more powerful than God and to possess heaven itself. This obsession lies hidden deep within our inherited evil and is therefore within our life and in the very nature of that life.

Divine providence does not take this evil away instantly, because if it did we would not be alive. It takes it away quietly and gradually without our knowing anything about it. It does so by letting us act according to thoughts that we fashion rationally, and then it uses various rational, civil, and moral means to lead us away. So we are led away to the extent that we can be led in freedom. Further, no evil can be taken from us unless it surfaces and is seen and recognized. It is like a wound that is not healed until it has been opened.

[3] This means that if we were to know and see that with his divine providence the Lord is acting against the love of our life, the love that gives us the greatest pleasure, all we could do would be to go in the opposite direction, to be outraged, to fight back, and to scold, ultimately distancing the working of divine providence from our own evil by denying providence, which means denying God. We would do this particularly if we saw ourselves being blocked from success, lowered in rank, or deprived of wealth.

[4] We should realize, though, that the Lord never leads us away from striving for high positions or from gaining wealth, only from an obsession with striving for high position simply for the sake of eminence, or for self-seeking reasons, and similarly from gathering wealth solely for display or for its own sake. As he leads us away from these obsessions, he brings us into a love of service so that we look at eminence not for our own sake but for the sake of service. So it becomes something we seek for service primarily and for ourselves secondarily, and not for ourselves primarily and for service secondarily. The same applies to wealth.

The Lord tells us in many places in the Word that he always humbles the proud and raises up the humble; and what it says in the Word is characteristic of his divine providence.

It is the same with any other of the evils we have by heredity—with adultery, for example, and with fraud, vengeance, blasphemy, and the like. None of these can be expelled unless our freedom to consider and intend them is preserved and we use what seems to be our own autonomy to expel them from ourselves in this way. We cannot do this unless we acknowledge divine providence and pray that the evils be expelled through providence. If it were not for this freedom and for divine providence, the evils would be like poison closed in and not excreted, which soon spreads and brings death everywhere, or like a disease of the heart itself that soon proves fatal to the whole body.

184

There is no better way to learn the truth of this than from people in the spiritual world after death. Many of them who had become powerful and wealthy in the physical world but had focused solely on themselves in their power and their wealth talk about God and divine providence at first as though they had sincerely believed in them. However, since they come to see divine providence clearly and therefore see their eventual lot, which is that they are headed for hell, they make common cause with demons there and then not only deny God but even blaspheme. They lose touch with reality so completely that they recognize the more powerful of these demons as their gods; and their most burning passion is to become gods themselves as well.

185

The reason we would go counter to God and deny him if we were to see clearly what divine providence itself is doing is that we are caught up in the pleasure of our love, and this pleasure is integral to our very life. This means that when we are kept in the pleasure of our love we are in our own freedom, our freedom and this pleasure being inseparable from each other. If we were to sense, then, that we were constantly being led away from our pleasure, we would be as angry as though someone were trying to destroy our life and would regard that person as our enemy. To prevent this from happening, the Lord does not show himself clearly in his divine providence. Rather, he uses it to lead us subtly, the way a hidden stream or favorable current carries a boat. Consequently, all we know is that we are always on our own, since this freedom is united to our sense of self. We can see from this that our freedom incorporates into us what divine providence offers, which would not happen if providence made itself known. To become incorporated is to become part of our life.

186

187

4. *We are allowed to see divine providence from behind but not face to face, and when we are in a spiritual state, not in a materialistic state.* Seeing divine providence from behind but not face to face is seeing it after the fact but not before; and seeing it when we are in a spiritual state and not in a materialistic state is seeing it from heaven and not from this world. Everyone who accepts inflow from heaven and recognizes divine providence (and especially people who have become spiritual by virtue of their reformation), on seeing events in their amazing kind of sequence, virtually sees providence from a deep recognition and confesses it. Such people do not want to see it face to face, that is, before things happen, because they are afraid their own volition would interfere with some element of its orderly sequence.

[2] It is different for people who do not let any inflow in from heaven but only from this world, especially people who have become complete materialists by accepting outward appearances as absolute truth. They see no trace of divine providence from behind, or after the fact, but they do want to see it face to face, or before things happen. Since divine providence works through means, and since these means include us and this world, if people like this were to see it either face to face or behind, they would ascribe it either to themselves or to the material world and so become even more certain in their denial.

The reason they would come to this conclusion is that their discernment is closed upward and open only downward, closed toward heaven and open toward this world, and we cannot see divine providence from this world, only from heaven.

I have sometimes asked myself whether these people would acknowledge divine providence if their minds were opened upward and they were to see in broad daylight that the material world is essentially dead and human intelligence essentially nothing, and that the contrary appearance in each case is the result of inflow. I have realized that people who have convinced themselves of the supreme value of the physical world and human prudence would not acknowledge providence, because the earthly light that flows up from below snuffs out the spiritual light that flows down from above.

189

¹⁶⁵ People who have become spiritual by virtue of their recognition of God and have become wise by casting off their sense of self-importance see divine providence in the whole world and in every least part of it. They see it if they look at natural events, they see it if they look at civic events, they see it if they look at spiritual events, in the way things coincide and the way they follow in sequence, in purposes and means and

results, in useful events, in forms, in things great and things small. They see it especially in our salvation, in the fact that Jehovah gave us the Word that tells us about God, heaven, hell, and eternal life, and that he himself came into the world to redeem and save us. All this and much more, and the divine providence within it all, people see from spiritual light within earthly light.

The strict materialist, though, sees none of this. [2] The materialist is like someone who goes to a beautiful cathedral and hears an enlightened minister preach about divine matters and then goes home and says, "All I saw was a stone building, and all I heard was some complicated noise." Or the materialist is like someone with poor eyesight who goes into an orchard gleaming with all kinds of fruit and then goes home and says, "All I saw was some forest and some trees." When people like this become spirits after death and are raised up into an angelic heaven where everything is in forms that portray love and wisdom, they do not see any of it. They do not even see that there is anything there. I have seen this happen with any number of people who have denied the Lord's divine providence.

There are many constants that have been created so that varying things can happen. The fixed regularities of the rising and setting of sun, moon, and stars are constants. There are the times called eclipses when they obscure and block out each other. There are the warmth and light they provide. There are the times of the year that we call spring, summer, fall, and winter and the times of the day called morning, noon, evening, and night. There are also atmospheres, liquids, and solids in their own right; there is the power of germination in the plant kingdom; there is this power as well as the power of reproduction in the animal kingdom; and there are all the events that consistently result from these powers when they are put into action according to the principles of the design.

These and many other constants have been provided from creation itself in order that an infinite variety of events may happen. These various events could not happen except in the context of things that are constant, fixed, and reliable.

[2] Some examples may serve to illustrate. The various kinds of vegetation could not exist if it were not for the constant rising and setting of the sun and the constancy of heat and light. There is an infinite variety of harmony, but this would be impossible if the atmosphere were not constant in its principles and the ears were not constant in their form. The things we see are of infinite variety as well, which would not happen unless the ether were constant in its laws and the eye in its form. Colors

would not be possible if light were not constant. The same holds true for our thoughts, our words, and our actions. These are of infinite variety, which would not happen unless the organization of our bodies were constant. Does not a house have to be constant so that people can do different things in it; a church, too, so that various acts of worship, sermons, teaching, and devout thoughts can happen in it? The same holds true in other matters.

[3] As for the variations themselves that happen in the context of things that are constant, fixed, and reliable, they extend to infinity and have no limit, yet there will never be one exactly like another in all the universe or any of its smallest parts. There cannot be in the march of time to eternity. Given these variations marching on to infinity and eternity, who is arranging them so that they are orderly except the one who has created the constants so that these changes can take place within them? And who is able to manage the infinite varieties of life in humans except one who is life itself, that is, love itself and wisdom itself? If it were not for his divine providence, which is like a constant creation, could the infinitely varied desires and consequent thoughts of humanity, and therefore the individual people themselves, be so arranged that they form a single whole,¹⁶⁶ with the evil desires and their thoughts forming a single demon who is hell and the good desires and thoughts a single Lord in heaven? (I have already explained a number of times that in the Lord's sight, the whole angelic heaven looks like a single person who is his image and likeness, while the whole hell, conversely, looks like one grotesque person.)¹⁶⁷

I present this because some materialistic people have used the existence of constant and reliable laws, which are essential as the context for the variety of events, as a basis for senseless arguments in favor of the material world and human prudence.¹⁶⁸

**Our Own Prudence Is Nothing—It Only Seems
to Be Something, As It Should. Rather,
Divine Providence Is All-Inclusive
Because It Extends to the Smallest Details**

THE idea that our own prudence is nothing runs directly counter to the way things seem, and therefore directly counter to most people's belief. Since this is the case, if people believe on the basis of appearances that human prudence accounts for everything, the only way to convince them is with reasoning based on deeper investigation, reasoning that must be drawn from the realm of causes. The outward appearance is an effect, and causes show where this effect comes from.

191

In this prologue, I need to say something about common belief on the subject. What the church teaches is contrary to the appearance; namely, it teaches that love and faith do not come from us but from God, as do wisdom and intelligence, prudence, and in general everything that is good and true. When these principles are accepted, we must also accept the fact that our own prudence is nothing but only seems to be something. The only basis of prudence is intelligence and wisdom, and these two qualities come only from our discernment and consequent thought about what is true and good.

What I have just said is accepted and believed by people who acknowledge divine providence and not by people who acknowledge only human prudence. [2] One thing or the other must be true—either what the church teaches, that all wisdom and prudence come from God, or what the world teaches, that all wisdom and prudence come from us. Is there any other way to resolve the contradiction than to accept the church's teaching as true and to see what the world teaches as the appearance? The church finds support for its belief in the Word, while the world finds support for its belief in our self-importance. The Word comes from God, and self-importance comes from us.

Because prudence is from God and not from us, when Christians are at worship they pray that God may guide their thoughts, plans, and deeds, adding that this is because they cannot do so on their own. Then too, when they see people doing good, they say that God has led them to do this, and so on. Could we say this if we did not believe it at some

deeper level? That deeper level of belief comes from heaven. But when we think privately and gather arguments in favor of human prudence, we can believe the opposite, which comes from this world. However, the inner belief wins out for people who at heart acknowledge God, while the outer belief wins for people who do not acknowledge God at heart, no matter what they may say.

192

I have stated that if people believe on the basis of appearances that human prudence accounts for everything, the only way to convince them is with reasoning based on deeper investigation, reasoning that must be drawn from the realm of causes. So to make these points of reasoning drawn from the realm of causes clear to the discerning mind, I need to present them in their proper sequence, which will be as follows.

1. All our thoughts arise from impulses of our life's love; there are no thoughts whatever that arise from any other source.
2. Only the Lord knows the impulses of our life's love.
3. The Lord guides the impulses of our life's love by his divine providence, and with them guides the thoughts that give rise to our prudence.
4. By his divine providence the Lord gathers these impulses of the whole human race into a single form, which is a human form.
5. Heaven and hell, which come from the human race, are therefore in this kind of form.
6. People who acknowledge only the physical world and human prudence constitute hell, while people who acknowledge God and his divine providence constitute heaven.
7. None of this could happen if it did not seem to us that we think autonomously and manage our lives autonomously.

193

1. *All our thoughts arise from impulses of our life's love, and there are no thoughts whatever that arise from any other source.* Earlier in this work, and also in the work titled *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom* (especially in parts I and 5), I have explained¹⁶⁹ the essential nature of our life's love, of our desires and consequent thoughts, and of the resulting sensations and actions that occur in our bodies. Since these are the source of the causes from which our prudence flows as an effect, I need to include something about them at this point. What has been written earlier cannot be connected all that closely with things that are written later without being recalled and brought into view.

[2] Earlier in this work and in the aforementioned *Divine Love and Wisdom*,¹⁷⁰ I explained that there is divine love and wisdom in the Lord, that these two are life itself, and that it is from these two that we get our volition and discernment, volition from divine love and discernment from divine wisdom. I have explained that in the body, these two have their analogues in our heart and lungs, and that this enables us to conclude that just as our heartbeat, united to the breathing of our lungs, governs the whole person physically, so our volition united to our discernment governs the whole person mentally. I have explained that these two fundamentals of life, the one physical and the other spiritual, are in each one of us, and that the physical basis of our life is the beating of the heart and the spiritual basis of our life is the volition of the mind. I have explained that each of these attaches to itself a partner with which it lives and carries on the business of life, the heart uniting the lungs to itself and volition uniting discernment to itself.¹⁷¹

[3] Since the soul of our volition is love, then, and the soul of our discernment is wisdom, each coming from the Lord, it follows that love is the life of each one of us and that the quality of that life depends on the quality of our love's union with wisdom. In other words, volition is the life of each one of us, and the quality of that life depends on the quality of our volition's union with discernment. However, there is more on this subject above and especially in *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom* in parts 1 and 5.

I have also explained in the aforementioned book that the life's love brings forth from itself subsidiary loves called impulses, that these may be more outward or more inward, and that all together they constitute a kind of single domain or realm in which the life's love is the lord or monarch.¹⁷² I have also explained that these subsidiary loves or impulses attach partners to themselves, each individually, the deeper impulses choosing partners called perceptions and the more outward impulses choosing partners called thoughts, and that each lives with its partner and meets the responsibilities of its own life. The union of each pair is like the union of the reality of life with its manifestation, namely, that neither one is anything apart from the other. After all, what is the reality of life unless it becomes manifest, and what is a manifestation of life if it does not come from the reality of life? The union of life is like the union of sound and harmony or sound and speech or, broadly, like the union of the heart's beating and the lungs' breathing, the kind of union in which neither partner is anything apart from the other but in which each

becomes something through its union with the other. These unions must happen either in or through their components. Take sound, for example. Anyone who thinks that sound is something unless there is something distinctive about it is in error. Sound corresponds to feelings in us; and since there is always something distinctive in it, we can tell the feelings of people's loves from the sound of their voices, and we can tell what they are thinking from the variations that constitute language. This why the wiser angels can sense the life's loves of people simply from the sounds of their voices, and can distinguish the subsidiary feelings as well.

I mention this to let it be known that there is no feeling without its own thought and no thought without its own feeling. There is more on this subject earlier in the present work [§106], and in *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom*.

195

Since our life's love has its own pleasure and its wisdom has its own appeal, so too does every impulse or feeling, which is essentially a subsidiary love derived from the life's love like a stream from a spring, a branch from a tree, or an artery from the heart. This means that each impulse has its own distinctive pleasure and each consequent perception and thought its own distinctive appeal. It follows, then, that this pleasure and appeal constitute our life. What is life without pleasure and appeal? There is nothing lively about it, only lifelessness. Reduce the pleasure and appeal and you grow cold and sluggish, take them away and you breathe your last and die. [2] Our very vital warmth comes from the pleasures of our feelings and the appeal of our perceptions and thoughts.

Since every feeling has its own pleasure and every thought therefore has its own appeal, we can tell where goodness and truth come from or what goodness and truth are in their essence. Goodness is what pleases our feelings and truth is what therefore appeals to our thinking. We call "good" whatever we feel as pleasant because of the love of our volition, and we call "true" whatever we therefore sense as appealing because of the wisdom of our discernment. In each case, this flows from our life's love like water from a spring or blood from a heart. Together they are like an atmosphere or a wave that surrounds the whole human mind.

[3] These two (the pleasure and the appeal) are spiritual in our minds and physical in our bodies. They constitute our life.

We can see from this what it is in ourselves that we call good and what it is that we call true; and we can see what it is in ourselves that we call evil and what it is that we call false. Specifically, we call something evil if it ruins the pleasure of our feeling and we call something false if it ruins the appeal of our consequent thoughts. Because of the pleasure of

evil and the appeal of falsity, we are quite capable of calling them good and true, and of believing it.

In fact, goodness and truth are shifts and variations of the state of our minds' forms, but they are sensed and come to life only through the pleasure and appeal they present. I include all this to make it clear what feeling and thought really are in their own life.

Since it is our mind, not our body, that thinks, and since its thinking is prompted by the pleasure of its feelings, and since our mind is our spirit that lives after death, it follows that our spirit is nothing but our feelings and consequent thinking.

196

It is obvious from spirits and angels in the spiritual world that there can be no thinking apart from feeling. All the people there think on the basis of the feelings of their life's loves, and the pleasure of these feelings surrounds everyone like his or her own atmosphere. All the people there are united according to these auras that are breathing out from their feelings through their thoughts, and the nature of everyone there is recognized by the aura of her or his life.

We can tell from this that every thought arises from some feeling and is the form of its feeling. It is the same with our volition and discernment, and the same with what is good and what is true, and with caring and faith.

2. *Only the Lord knows the impulses of our life's love.* We know our thoughts and the intentions that arise from them, because we see them within ourselves; and since they are the source of all our prudence, we see that in ourselves as well. If our life's love is a love for ourselves, then we find ourselves taking pride in our own intelligence and giving it credit for our prudence. We gather arguments in favor of it and drift away from any acknowledgment of divine providence. Much the same thing happens if our life's love is a love for the world, though in this case the drift is not so pronounced. We can see from this that these two loves attribute everything to ourselves and to our own prudence. If we probe deeper, we find that they attribute nothing to God and his providence. As a result, if we happen to hear someone say that human prudence is nothing, but that divine providence by itself is what controls everything, which is the truth, then if we are complete atheists we laugh at it. If we have some remnant of religion in our memory, though, and someone tells us that all wisdom comes from God, then we agree on first hearing, though inwardly, in our spirits, we are denying it.

197

This applies particularly to ministers who love themselves more than God and the world more than heaven—in other words, ministers who

worship God for the sake of high position and money—but still preach that charity and faith, everything good and true, all wisdom and in fact all prudence come from God, and nothing from us.

[2] In the spiritual world I once heard two ministers arguing with a royal envoy about whether our prudence comes from God or from ourselves. It was a lively argument. At heart, the three believed much the same thing, namely, that our own prudence accounts for everything and divine providence for nothing. However, at that point the priests, carried away by their theological zeal, kept saying that no element of wisdom or prudence comes from us; and when the envoy retorted that this meant no element of thought came from us, they said, “Not a bit.”

Since the angels noticed that the three actually shared the same belief, they said to the envoy, “Put on some priestly robes and believe that you are a priest, and then start talking.” He put on the robes and the belief, and proclaimed emphatically that there could be no possible trace of wisdom or prudence in us unless it came from God, defending this position with characteristic eloquence abundantly furnished with rational arguments. The angels then said to the two ministers, “Take off your robes and put on politicians’ robes and believe that you are politicians.” They did so, and as they did, they thought from their deeper selves and based their speech on arguments they had previously treasured up inside, arguments in favor of human prudence and against divine providence. After this, since the three of them shared the same belief, they became cordial friends and started off together down the path of human prudence, which leads to hell.

198

I have already explained [§196] that we do not have any thoughts that do not come from some feeling of our life’s love, and that thought is simply a form of feeling. This means that when we see our thoughts but cannot see our feelings (we only sense them), then on the basis of what we can see, on the basis of the way things seem, we presume that our own prudence accounts for everything. We attribute nothing to our feelings, because they do not come into our view, but are only sensed. Our feelings make themselves known only through a kind of pleasure in thinking and a sense of gratification when we reason about something. This pleasure and gratification then make common cause with the thinking in people who believe in their own prudence because they love themselves or love the world. Their thought drifts along in its pleasure like a boat in the current of a river, a current that the skipper does not notice because all attention is on the billowing sail.

199

We are actually able to reflect on the pleasure of our outward feelings when these are acting in consort with the pleasure of some physical sense.

However, we do not reflect on the fact that this pleasure comes from the pleasure of a feeling within our thinking. For example, take someone looking for sex who sees a prostitute. His eye glows with the fire of his lust, and this calls up a sensation of physical pleasure. Still, he does not feel the pleasure of the feeling or desire in his thinking except as a kind of virtually physical urge. The same holds true of a robber in a forest when he sees travelers, and for a pirate at sea when he sees ships.¹⁷³ I could give other examples as well. Clearly, the pleasures are governing their thoughts, and their thoughts would not even exist apart from the pleasures; yet they think that only the thoughts are real. In fact, the thoughts are nothing but feelings gathered into forms by their life's love so that they can be seen in the light, since all feeling is in warmth and all thought is in light. [2] We are talking here about feelings of our outer thinking that sometimes make themselves known in physical sensations but rarely in the thinking of our minds.

In contrast, the feelings of our inner thinking that give rise to the outer ones never come to our notice. We are no more aware of them than a sleeping passenger in a carriage is aware of the road, or than we are aware of the earth's rotation. Given the fact that we know nothing about the events that are happening in the depths of our minds, which are so infinite that there are no numbers to count them, and yet the few outward events that do reach our conscious thought are all brought forth by these inner ones, and the depths are governed by the Lord alone through his divine providence, and we cooperate only in the few outer ones—given all this, how can anyone say that our own prudence accounts for everything?

If you were to see only one concept of our thought fully opened up, you would see more astounding things than language can express.

[3] To see that in the depths of our minds there are so infinitely many things that there are no numbers to count them, we need only look at the infinitely many components of our bodies, none of which comes to our sight or our consciousness. All we are aware of is a single action in its utter simplicity, an action, though, that represents the concurrence of thousands of motor fibers or muscles, thousands of nerve fibers, thousands of blood vessels, thousands of lung passages all working together in this action, thousands of things in our brains and spinal column, and far more in our spiritual selves, our human minds, all of which are forms of feelings and their consequent perceptions and thoughts.

Is it not the same soul that is arranging the inner events that is arranging the actions that derive from them as well? Our soul is simply the love of our volition and the consequent love of our discernment. The nature of this love determines the nature of the whole person. We acquire

this nature by the way we manage things outwardly, where we are at work with the Lord; so if we ascribe everything to ourselves and the material world, our soul is a love for ourselves, while if we ascribe everything to the Lord, our soul is a love for the Lord. This latter love is heavenly; the other is hellish.

200

Since it is the pleasures of our feelings, working from the center through our depths out into the more outward elements and eventually into those outermost elements that are in our bodies, that carry us along the way wave and wind carry a boat, and since nothing of this comes to our awareness except what is happening in the outermost functions of our minds and the outermost functions of our bodies, how can we claim anything divine for ourselves simply because a few superficial matters seem to be under our control? How much less warrant do we have for claiming divinity for ourselves when we know from the *Word* that we can acquire nothing unless it is given us from heaven¹⁷⁴ and from *reason* that this appearance is granted us so that we can live human lives, see what is good and what is evil, choose one or the other, incorporate what we have chosen, and in this way be mutually united to the Lord, reformed, regenerated, and saved, and live forever?

I have already explained that we are granted this appearance so that we may act freely and rationally and therefore in apparent autonomy, and not slacken our hands and wait for inflow.¹⁷⁵ This provides support for principle 3 proposed above, namely, that *the Lord guides the impulses of our life's love by his divine providence, and with them guides the thoughts that give rise to our prudence.*

201

4. *By his divine providence the Lord gathers the impulses of the whole human race into a single form, which is a human form.* We will see in the next section that this is a pervasive feature of the Lord's providence. People who credit everything to the material world also credit everything to human prudence. This is because people who credit everything to the material world are at heart denying God, and people who credit everything to human prudence are at heart denying divine providence: the two are inseparable.

Still, for the sake of their good name and out of a fear of losing it, both kinds of person will claim verbally that divine providence is universal and that we are responsible for the details, the aggregate of these details being what we mean by our prudence.¹⁷⁶ [2] But think seriously: what is "universal providence" when the details are taken away? Is it anything but a mere word? By "universal" we mean something that comes from details taken together, as a generality arises from specific instances.

If you take the details away, then, what is the “universal” but something with a vacuum inside, like a surface with nothing inside it, or like a compound with no components?

If we say that divine providence is a universal government and that things are not governed but just kept connected and that the activities of government are managed by others, could this be called a universal government? No king has this kind of government, because if some king were to give his subjects control over everything in his kingdom he would no longer be a king, he would simply be called a king. He would have only the honor of the name, and no honor of real substance. We could not credit such a king with any government at all, let alone a universal government.

[3] Providence on God’s part is called prudence on our level. If we cannot speak of universal prudence in the case of a king who has not kept anything for himself but the name, so that the kingdom can be called a kingdom and thereby held together, by the same token we cannot speak of a universal providence if we are taking care of everything with our own prudence.

Much the same holds for the terms “universal providence” and “universal government” when we talk about the material world, if we assert that God created the universe and then provided the material world with the ability to manage everything on its own. What is “universal providence” in this case but a metaphysical term that apart from being a term has no reality whatever?

Many of the people who give the material world credit for everything that is brought forth and give our own prudence credit for everything that happens, but who still say that God created the material world, think of divine providence only as an empty phrase. As things really are, though, divine providence includes the smallest details of the material world and the smallest details of our prudence, which is why it is universal.

The Lord’s divine providence is universal by virtue of its attention to the smallest details, specifically through his having created the universe in such a way that an infinite and eternal process of creation by him could occur in it. This creation takes place by the Lord’s forming a heaven from humans, a heaven that in his sight is like a single individual that is his own image and likeness. I have explained in §§27–45 above that the heaven formed from humanity looks like this in the Lord’s sight, and that this was the purpose of creation. I have also explained that Divinity focuses on what is infinite and eternal in everything it does

(§§56–69 [46–69]). The infinite and eternal goal that the Lord focuses on in forming his heaven from humanity is that this heaven should keep growing without limit and forever, so that in this way he might constantly dwell in the purpose of his creation.

It is this infinite and eternal creation that the Lord provided for in creating the universe, and he is constantly present in that creation through his divine providence.

[2] *It is common to the teaching of all the churches in the Christian world that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is infinite, eternal, uncreated, and omnipotent (see the Athanasian Creed).* Can people who know and believe, on this basis, that God is infinite and eternal be so completely devoid of rationality that they will not agree on first hearing that Divinity must focus on what is infinite and eternal in the masterwork of its creation? What else can it do when it acts from itself? Must we not also agree that it focuses on this in the human race from which it is forming its heaven?

What other goal can divine providence have, then, than the reformation of the human race and its salvation? No one can be reformed by his or her own efforts and prudence, only by the Lord, through his divine providence. It follows that unless the Lord led us at every moment, even the very smallest, we would wander from the way of reformation and die. [3] Every shift and change in the state of our minds shifts and changes a whole series of present and therefore of subsequent events—why not on and on to eternity? It is like an arrow shot from a bow. If the arrow were deflected the least bit from its aim at the target, the deflection would be huge at a distance of a mile or more. That is how it would be if the Lord were not guiding the states of our minds at every least moment.

The Lord does this in keeping with the laws of his divine providence, including the law that says it seems as though we are leading ourselves. However, the Lord foresees how we will lead ourselves and constantly makes adjustments.

We will see below [§§234–274, 322–330] that the laws of permission¹⁷⁷ are also laws of divine providence, that everyone can be reformed and regenerated, and that there is no predestination.

Since we all live forever after death, then, and are assigned places either in heaven or in hell depending on how we have lived, and since both heaven and hell are necessarily in a form that causes them to act as unities (as already noted [§124]), and since none of us can be assigned to any place in that form except our own, it follows that the human race

throughout the whole world is under the Lord's supervision, and that each one of us is being led by him in the slightest details, from infancy to the end of life, with a particular place foreseen and provided for.

[2] We can see from this that divine providence is universal because it attends to the slightest details, and that it is an infinite and eternal creation that the Lord has provided for himself by creating the universe.

We see nothing of this universal providence, and if we did see it, it would look to our sight like the scattered piles and random heaps that passers-by see when a house is being built. The Lord, though, sees a magnificent palace constantly under construction and constantly being enlarged.

5. *Heaven and hell are in this kind of form.* I have noted in *Heaven and Hell* 59–102 (published in London in 1758) that heaven is in the human form and have mentioned the same in *Divine Love and Wisdom* and occasionally in the present work,¹⁷⁸ so I refrain from presenting further support.

204

I have said that hell is also in a human form, but it is in a grotesque human form, the kind of form the devil has, the devil meaning hell taken as a whole. Hell has a human form because the people there were born human and have those two human capacities called freedom and rationality even though they have misused their freedom for intending and doing evil and their rationality for thinking and justifying it.

6. *People who have acknowledged only the physical world and human prudence constitute hell, while people who have acknowledged God and divine providence constitute heaven.* All the people who lead evil lives inwardly recognize the material world and human prudence alone. This attitude is latent in all evil, no matter how well it is veiled by things that are good and true. These veils are nothing but clothes borrowed from a friend or garlands of flowers that fade, put on to hide evil in all its nakedness.

205

Because this common practice of concealment distracts our sight, people do not realize that everyone who is leading an evil life is inwardly recognizing the material world alone and human prudence alone. We can tell that this is what such people recognize if we know the source of this recognition and its reason. To uncover this, I need to explain where our own prudence comes from and what it is, then where divine providence comes from and what it is, then who the two kinds of people are and what they are like, and finally that people who acknowledge divine providence are in heaven and people who acknowledge human prudence are in hell.

206

Where our own prudence comes from and what it is. It comes from what we regard as our own. This is natural to us and is called the soul we get from our parent. This possession of ours is a love for ourselves and a consequent love for the world, or a love for the world and a consequent love for ourselves. By its nature, love for ourselves focuses solely on ourselves and regards others either as worthless or as nothing. If it attaches any importance to them, it lasts only as long as they respect and worship it. At the heart of this love, like the effort to bear fruit and propagate in a seed, is a latent desire to become great—if possible, to become monarch, and then if possible to become God. The devil is like this because the devil is pure love for oneself, a love that inherently worships only itself and favors only those who also worship it. It hates any other devil who is like itself, because it wants to be the only object of worship.

Since no love can exist without its partner, and since the partner of love or volition in humans is called discernment, when love for oneself breathes its love into its consorting discernment, that love becomes a pride that is pride in our own intelligence. That pride is the source of our own prudence.

[2] Further, since love for ourselves wants to be the only master of the world and wants to be God as well, the cravings of evil that descend from it derive their life from it, and so do the perceptions of those cravings, which are schemes. The same holds true for the pleasures of those cravings, which are evil, and for their thoughts, which are distortions. All of them are like servants and employees of their lord, and they all obey every command of their lord without realizing that they are not really acting but are being impelled, impelled by love for ourselves through the means of pride in our own intelligence. This is why our own prudence is latent in every evil from its very beginning.

[3] The reason a recognition of the material world alone is latent in it as well is that it closes the skylights through which we can see heaven and the windows in the walls as well, to prevent us from seeing or hearing that the Lord alone is in control of everything and that the material world is essentially dead, that everything that belongs to us is hell, and that love for what is our own is therefore a devil. With these windows closed, we are in darkness, so we build a hearth in the darkness and sit there with our partners, chatting cordially about the material world as opposed to God and our own prudence as opposed to divine providence.

207

Where divine providence comes from and what it is. It is Divinity working among us, banishing our love for ourselves. As already noted [§206], love for ourselves is the devil, and its cravings and their pleasures are the

evils of its kingdom, hell. Once this has been banished, the Lord comes in with impulses of love for our neighbor. He opens the skylights and then the windows in our walls and enables us to see that heaven is real, that there is a life after death, and that there is eternal happiness. By the spiritual light and the spiritual love that then flow in together, he enables us to recognize that through his divine providence, God is taking care of everything.

Who the two kinds of people are and what they are like. People who acknowledge God and divine providence are like angels of heaven, angels who hate to lead themselves and love to be led by the Lord. The sign that the Lord is leading them is that they love their neighbor. 208

On the other hand, people who acknowledge [only] the material world and their own prudence are like spirits of hell, spirits who hate to be led by the Lord and love to lead themselves. If they had been prominent in government, they want to control everything, as they do if they had been prominent in the church. If they had been judges, they warp their judicial decisions and manipulate the laws. If they had been academics, they use their scholarship to bolster human self-importance and the material world. If they had been in business, they are robbers, and if they had been farmers, they are thieves. They are all enemies of God and mockers of divine providence.

The striking fact is that when heaven is opened to people like this and they are told that they are out of their minds and even shown this with utter clarity (which is done by inflow and enlightenment), they feel insulted, close heaven to themselves, and look at the ground under which hell lies. This happens to people in the spiritual world who are still outside of hell but who are of this nature. It shows the error of people who think, “If I see heaven and hear angels talking with me, then I will believe.” However, while their discernment might believe, if their volition does not concur, then they themselves do not believe. This is because our volition’s love breathes into discernment whatever it wants to, not the other way around. In fact, our love erases anything in our discernment that it has not put there. 209

7. *None of this could happen if it did not seem to us that we think autonomously and manage our lives autonomously.* I have already given ample evidence that we would not be human if it did not seem to us that we lived on our own and that we therefore thought, intended, spoke, and acted on our own [§§71–99, 174, 176]. It follows from this that unless we seemed to be managing everything that has to do with our occupations and our lives by our own prudence, we could not be led and managed by 210

divine providence. It would be as though we stood there with our hands hanging limp, mouths open, eyes closed, holding our breath and waiting for something to flow into us. In this way we would divest ourselves of everything human, which we get from the sense and feeling that we live, think, intend, speak, and act on our own; and as we did so, we would also divest ourselves of those two abilities called freedom and rationality by which we are differentiated from animals. Earlier in this work and also in *Divine Love and Wisdom*¹⁷⁹ I have explained that if it were not for this appearance we would be incapable of receptivity and reciprocity, and therefore of immortality.

[2] So if you want to be led by divine providence, use your prudence as a servant and employee who faithfully manages the employer's assets. Prudence is the "talent" that was given to servants for business purposes, with an accounting required (Luke 19:13–25 [19:12–25]; Matthew 25:14–31).

Prudence itself seems to be something we possess, and we believe that it is, as long as we keep that deadliest enemy of God and divine providence, love for ourselves, shut in. It lives in the depths of each one of us from birth. If we do not recognize it—and it does not want to be recognized—then it lives in perfect safety and guards the door to prevent us from opening it so the Lord can evict it.

We open the door by abstaining from evils as sins, apparently on our own, but admitting that it is being done by the Lord. This is the kind of prudence with which the divine providence can cooperate.

211

There is a reason why divine providence works so subtly that hardly anyone knows it is there—to keep us from dying. That is, our own self-importance, which is what motivates us, never cooperates with divine providence. Our self-importance has an inborn hatred of divine providence. It is actually the serpent that misled our first parents, the serpent of whom it is said, "I will set enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed, and it will trample your head" (Genesis 3:15). "The serpent" is any kind of evil, and "its head" is love for ourselves. "The woman's seed" is the Lord, and "the enmity that is set" is between our love of self-importance and the Lord, and therefore also between our own prudence and the Lord's divine providence. This is because our prudence is constantly trying to raise its head and divine providence is constantly trying to push it down.

[2] If we sensed this, we would be outraged and enraged against God, and we would die. When we do not sense it, though, we get outraged and enraged against others, against ourselves, and against chance, which is not fatal.

This is why the Lord in his divine providence is constantly leading us in our freedom, and to us it seems as though this freedom were our own. Leading us against ourselves in freedom is like lifting a massive and stubborn weight from the ground with jacks and not being able to feel the weight and the resistance because of their strength. Or it is like people surrounded by enemies intent on murder, unaware that a friend is leading them out by unknown paths and will later disclose the plan of their enemies.

Is there anyone who does not talk about luck, anyone who does not acknowledge it? After all, we do talk about it and we know something about it from experience—but does anyone know what it is? No one can deny that it is something, because it does exist and it does happen, and nothing can be something or happen without some cause. However, we do not know what causes one thing and another or what causes luck. To prevent denial simply because of ignorance of a cause, think of dice or cards, and either play or talk with players. Do any of them deny luck? They play with it, and it plays with them, in quite wonderful ways. Can any succeed against it if it is against them? It laughs at prudence and wisdom then. When you roll the dice or deal the cards, does it not seem as though luck knew and managed the rolls and the deals of your wrists and for some reason favored one player more than another? Can the reason be found anywhere but in divine providence in outermost matters, where in constancy and in change alike it is working with our prudence in marvelous ways, all the while remaining hidden?

[2] It is common knowledge that non-Christians once recognized Luck and built a temple to her, as the Romans did. There is a great deal to know about this Luck (which as mentioned is divine providence in outermost matters) that I am not free to disclose. This has showed me that it is not a figment of our imagination or a trick of the material world or something with no reason: that would actually be nothing at all. Rather, it is a visible witness that divine providence is present in the slightest details of our thoughts and actions. If divine providence is at work in the slightest details of such trivial and inconsequential matters, what else can we expect in the details of matters that are not trivial and inconsequential, in matters of peace and war in this world, and in matters of salvation and life in heaven?

I do know, though, that our prudence is more persuasive to our reasoning than divine providence, because we can see prudence but not providence. It is actually easier for us to accept the notion that there is only one life, which is God, and that we are all life-receivers from him, as

I have already often explained;¹⁸⁰ and yet this amounts to the same thing, because prudence is a property of life.

Do we not all speak in favor of our own prudence and of the material world when we are arguing from our earthly or outward selves, and speak in favor of divine providence and God when we are arguing from our spiritual or inner selves?

But I have a request, a message to the materialist: Write some books and fill them with plausible, probable, credible arguments, arguments that in your judgment are solid. Write one in favor of our own prudence and one in favor of the material world, and then hand them to an angel. I know the few words the angel will inscribe on your pages: “These are all illusions and distortions.”

Divine Providence Focuses on Eternal Matters, and Focuses on Temporal Matters Only As They Coincide with Eternal Ones

214 I need to show that divine providence focuses on eternal matters and focuses on temporal matters only as they coincide with eternal ones, in the following sequence.

1. Temporal matters involve position and wealth, and therefore rank and money, in this world.
2. Eternal matters involve spiritual rank and wealth, which have to do with love and wisdom, in heaven.
3. We keep temporal and eternal matters separate, but the Lord unites them.
4. The union of temporal and eternal matters is the Lord’s divine providence.

215 1. *Temporal matters involve eminence and wealth, and therefore rank and money, in this world.* There are a great many temporal matters, but they all boil down to eminence and wealth. By “temporal matters” I

mean things that either die off in time or simply cease when our life on earth is over. By “eternal matters” I mean things that do not die off and stop either in time or at the end of our life on earth.

Since all these temporal matters boil down to eminence and wealth, as just noted, it is important to know the following things: what eminence and wealth are and where they come from; the nature of a love of them for their own sake and the nature of a love of them for the sake of service; and that the difference between them is like the difference between heaven and hell, a distinction of loves that most people find difficult to recognize. But let me discuss these one at a time.

[2] (a) *What eminence and wealth are and where they come from.* Eminence and wealth were very different in the earliest times from what they gradually became later. In the earliest times, eminence involved simply the relationships between parents and children. It was an eminence of love, full of profound respect, not for parents as the source of birth but for parents as the source of teaching and wisdom, which constitute a second birth, essentially a spiritual one, because it is a birth of their spirit. This was the only kind of eminence in the earliest times, because people were living separately in tribes, families, and households then and not under governments the way we are today. The head of the clan was the one with the eminence. The ancients called this period the Golden Age.¹⁸¹

[3] Later, though, a love of being in power simply for the pleasures of power gradually took over; and since it brought with it belligerence and enmity against anyone who was not willing to submit, people necessarily gathered their tribes, families, and households into alliances and appointed someone who was at first called a judge, then a chief, and eventually a monarch and an emperor. They also began fortifications—towers, earthworks, and walls. From these judges, chiefs, monarchs, and emperors, as from a head into the body, the craving for power spread like a contagious disease to the many. This was the beginning of grades of eminence and of corresponding grades of respect. Love for themselves accompanied all this, and pride in human prudence.

[4] Much the same happened with the love for wealth. In the earliest times, when tribes and families lived separately from each other, a love for wealth meant nothing more than having the necessities of life. People acquired these in the form of flocks and herds and in the form of the fields, pastures, and gardens that provided them with food. Their necessities of life also included attractive homes furnished with all kinds of

utensils and clothing. The parents, children, servants, and maids in a home were busily engaged with all this.

[5] After a love for being in power took over and destroyed this commonwealth, though, a love for possessing wealth beyond the limits of need took over, culminating in a desire to possess the wealth of everyone else.

These two loves are close relatives. People who want to control others also want to own everything, because this makes others their servants and makes themselves the sole masters. We can see this clearly in those individuals in Catholicism who have exalted their lordship all the way into heaven, to the very throne of the Lord, and have placed themselves upon it. We can see it also in their acquisition of all the wealth in the world and filling their treasuries without limit.

[6] (b) *The nature of a love of eminence and wealth for their own sake and the nature of a love of them for the sake of service.* A love of eminence and wealth for their own sake is a love for ourselves—strictly speaking, a love of being in control that arises from self-love; and a love of wealth and money for their own sake is a love for this world—strictly speaking, a love of gaining ownership of what belongs to others by fair means or foul. However, a love of eminence and wealth for the sake of service is a love of service. This is the same as a love for our neighbor, since the purpose of our actions is the goal that prompts them. It is the first and primary element, and everything else is intermediate and secondary.

[7] As for a love of eminence and wealth for their own sake (which is identical to love for ourselves, or strictly speaking, to a love of being in control that arises from self-love), it is a love for our own self-importance, and our sense of self-importance is wholly evil. That is why we say that we are born into utter evil and that what we inherit is nothing but evil. What we inherit is the sense of self that encompasses us and that we participate in by virtue of our self-love—especially by our love of being in control because of our self-love. This is because when we are wrapped up in this love we are totally focused on ourselves and therefore immerse our thoughts and feelings in our own sense of self-importance. As a result, within our self-love there is a love of doing harm because we have no love for our neighbor, only for ourselves. When we love only ourselves, we see others only as outside ourselves, either as completely worthless or as simply nothing. We regard them as inferior to ourselves and think nothing of doing them harm. [8] This is why people who are possessed by a love of being in control because of their self-love think nothing of cheating their neighbors, committing adultery with their neighbor's

spouses, slandering their neighbors, plotting vengeance and even murder, torturing their neighbors, and the like. We get these attitudes from the fact that the devil itself is nothing but a love of being in control because of self-love, and we are united to and being led by the devil. When we are being led by the devil, by hell, that is, we are being led into all these evils. We are constantly being led by the pleasures of these evils, which is why all the people who are in hell want to harm everyone, while the people who are in heaven want to help everyone.

From this opposition there arises an intermediate space where we are. We are in a kind of balance in this space so that we can turn either toward hell or toward heaven. As we approve of the evils of self-love we turn toward hell; as we banish them from ourselves we turn toward heaven.

[9] I have been allowed to feel the nature and strength of the pleasure of a love of being in control because of self-love. I was plunged into it in order to know it from experience, and it was so intense that it transcended all the pleasures in the world. It took over my whole mind from center to surface, while in my body it felt congenial and gratifying, a free expansion of my chest. I was also allowed to feel that the pleasures of all kinds of evil deeds bubbled up from it like water from a spring, pleasures in adultery, vengeance, fraud, and slander—in general, pleasures in doing harm.

There is a similar pleasure in the love of possessing what belongs to others by fair means or foul, and this pleasure gives rise to various compulsions that branch off from it. However, it is not so intense unless it is united to self-love.

As for eminence and wealth not for their own sake but for the sake of service, though, this is not a love of eminence and wealth but a love of service, with the eminence and wealth functioning as means. This is a heavenly love, which will be more fully discussed later [§217].

[10] (c) *The difference between these two loves is like the difference between heaven and hell.* This should be clear from what has already been said, to which I may add the following. In spirit, all the people who are caught up in a love of being in control because of their self-love are in hell. It does not matter who they are, whether they are prominent people or ordinary folk. All the people who are caught up in this love are caught up also in a love for all kinds of evil deeds. If they do not actually commit them, they still believe in their spirits that there is nothing wrong with them and therefore do them physically whenever their own eminence and respect, or a fear of the law, does not get in the way.

Beyond this, though, at the center of a love of being in control because of self-love lies a hidden hatred of God and therefore a hatred of the divine values of the church, especially a hatred of the Lord. If they do acknowledge God, it is nothing but words; and if they acknowledge the divine values of the church, it is simply from a fear of losing respect. The reason this hatred of God lies hidden deeply within is that at the center of this love there is a desire to be God, a worship and reverence of no one but themselves. This is why there is a heartfelt love for anyone who respects them to the point of saying that they have divine wisdom and are worldly demigods.

[11] It is different with a love of eminence and wealth for the sake of service. This is a heavenly love because it is the same as a love for our neighbor, as just noted.

“Service” means good actions, so performing services means doing good things; and performing services or doing good things means helping others and serving them. Even though the people who are doing this are eminent and wealthy, they still do not regard their eminence and wealth as anything but means to being helpful and therefore means to service and ministry. These are the people meant by the Lord’s statement, “Whoever of you wants to be great, must be your servant; whoever of you wants to be first must be your slave” (Matthew 20:26, 27). These are also the people whom the Lord entrusts with authority in heaven. For them, authority is a means of helping or doing good, that is, of serving; and when services or good actions are the goals or the loves, then it is not they who are in authority but the Lord, because everything good comes from him.

[12] (d) *This is a distinction of loves that most people find difficult to recognize.* This is because most people of eminence and wealth also do helpful things, but without realizing whether they are doing them for the sake of themselves or for the sake of service. It is particularly hard to tell because there is more fire and passion for service in people who love themselves and the world than there is in people who are not caught up in love for themselves and the world. Yet the first are doing helpful things for the sake of their reputation or for profit and therefore for selfish reasons. In contrast, people who are being of service for the sake of service, or doing good for the sake of the goodness itself, are not acting on their own but from the Lord.

[13] It is hard for us to tell the difference because we do not know whether we are being led by the devil or by the Lord. When we are being led by the devil, we are helpful for the sake of ourselves and the world,

but when we are being led by the Lord, we are being helpful for the sake of the Lord and heaven. All the people whose helpfulness comes from the Lord are people who are abstaining from evils as sins, while all the people whose helpfulness comes from the devil are people who are not abstaining from evils as sins. Evil comes from the devil, but service, or doing good, comes from the Lord. This is the only way to tell the difference. They look alike outwardly, but their inward form is completely different. One is like a golden object that has slag inside, while the other is like a golden object that is pure gold all the way through. One is like a piece of artificial fruit that looks outwardly like fruit from a tree but actually is colored wax with powder or tar inside, while the other is like fine fruit, appealingly delicious and fragrant, with its seeds within.

2. *Eternal matters involve spiritual rank and money, which have to do with love and wisdom, in heaven.* Since materialists call the pleasures of self-love good (these pleasures are also the pleasures of compulsions to evil) and convince themselves that they are good, they call rank and money divine blessings. However, when materialists see that just as many evil as good people are raised to high rank and advanced in wealth, and even more when they see good people living in disgrace and poverty and evil people living in splendor and wealth, they think to themselves, “What is going on here? This cannot be the work of divine providence, because if it were managing everything, it would supply the good with high rank and money and humble the evil with poverty and disgrace. This would make the evil admit that God and divine providence are real.”

216

[2] However, unless materialists are enlightened by their spiritual selves—that is, unless they are spiritual as well as materialistic—they do not see that rank and money may be either blessings or curses and that they are blessings when they come from the Lord and curses when they come from the devil. We know that the devil can give us rank and money because the devil is called “the Prince of This World.”¹⁸²

Since people do not know under what circumstances rank and money are blessings and under what circumstances they are curses, I need to explain it, but in the following sequence. (a) Rank and money may be either blessings or curses. (b) When rank and money are blessings, they are spiritual and eternal, but when they are curses, they are temporal and transient. (c) The relationship between the rank and money that are curses and the rank and money that are blessings is like a relationship of nothing to everything, or of something unreal to something real.

Now I need to illustrate these three items individually.

(a) *Rank and money may be either blessings or curses.* Everyday experience bears witness to the fact that reverent and irreverent people, just and unjust people—good and evil people, that is—may have eminence and wealth. Yet no one can deny that irreverent and unjust people, evil people, go to hell while reverent and just people, good people, go to heaven. Since this is so, it follows that eminence and wealth, or rank and money, may be either blessings or curses, and that they are blessings for the good and curses for the evil.

I explained in *Heaven and Hell* 357–365 (published in London in 1758) that both rich people and poor, both the prominent and the ordinary, may be found in heaven and in hell. This shows that for people in heaven, eminence and wealth were blessings in this world, while for people in hell, they were curses in this world.

[2] If we give the matter only a little rational thought, we can see what makes eminence and wealth blessings and what makes them curses. Specifically, they are blessings for people who do not set their heart on them and curses for people who do. To set one's heart on them is to love oneself in them, and not to set one's heart on them is to love the service they can perform and not oneself in them. I have noted in §215 above what the difference between these two loves is like; and I need to add that eminence and wealth seduce some people but not others. They are seductive when they arouse the loves of our sense of self, which is self-love.¹⁸³ (I have already noted [§§206, 207] that this is the love of hell that is called “the devil.”) They are not seductive, though, when they do not arouse that love.

[3] The reason both evil and good people are elevated to high rank and advanced in wealth is that both evil and good people do worthwhile things, though the evil are doing them for the sake of their personal worth and for the benefit of their image, while the good are doing them for the sake of the worth and benefit of the actions themselves. These latter regard the worth and benefit of the actions as the principal cause and any personal worth or benefit to their image as instrumental causes, while the evil regard their personal worth and the benefit to their image as the principal cause and the worth and benefit of the actions as instrumental causes.¹⁸⁴ Can anyone fail to see, though, that the image, our position and rank, is for the sake of our responsibilities and not the other way around? Can anyone fail to see that judges are for the sake of justice, officials for the sake of public affairs, and the monarch for the sake of the realm, and not the other way around?¹⁸⁵ So the laws of the realm provide

that we should be given the eminence and rank appropriate to the importance of the tasks of our offices. The difference is like the difference between what is primary and what is instrumental.

If people attach importance to themselves or their image, when this is portrayed in the spiritual world they seem to be upside down, feet up and head down.¹⁸⁶

[4] (b) *When rank and money are blessings, they are spiritual and eternal, but when they are curses, they are temporal and transient.* There are eminence and wealth in heaven just as in this world, because heaven has governments and therefore areas of responsibility and offices. There is also business and consequently wealth, because heaven has communities and associations.

Overall, heaven is divided into two kingdoms, one called the heavenly kingdom and the other called the spiritual kingdom. Each kingdom comprises countless larger and smaller communities, all organized according to differences in love and wisdom, as are their individual members. In the heavenly kingdom there are differences in heavenly love, which is love for the Lord; and in the spiritual kingdom there are differences in spiritual love, which is love for our neighbor.

That is what the communities are like; and all their members were once people on earth. This means that they keep the loves they had in this world, the difference being that now they are spiritual and that their actual eminence and wealth are spiritual in the spiritual kingdom and heavenly in the heavenly kingdom. Because of all this, the people who have the most eminence and wealth are the people who have the most love and wisdom. They are the ones for whom eminence and wealth were blessings in this world.

[5] This shows us what spiritual eminence and wealth are like. They are attributes of the task and not of the individual. True, individuals who have eminence live in striking splendor there, like some earthly monarch, but they attach no importance at all to the eminence itself, only to the services that belong to their area of responsibility and office. They accept the rank appropriate to their individual levels of eminence but attribute it to their services and not to themselves; and since all forms of service come from the Lord, they attribute them to the Lord as their source. This, then, is the nature of the spiritual eminence and wealth that are eternal.

[6] However, it is different for people for whom eminence and wealth were curses in this world. Because they attributed them to themselves and not to their forms of service, and because they did not want

service to be more important than they themselves were but wanted to be more important than their service (which they regarded as useful only to the extent that it furthered their own rank and fame), they are in hell. They are wretched slaves there, living in disgrace and misery. It is because this eminence and wealth perish that they are called temporal and transient.

This is what the Lord tells us about these two kinds of people: “Do not store up treasures for yourself on earth where rust and maggot corrupt and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor maggot corrupts and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be as well” (Matthew 6:19, 20, 21).

[7] (c) *The relationship between the rank and money that are curses and the rank and money that are blessings is like a relationship of nothing to everything, or of something unreal to something real.* Everything that perishes and becomes nothing is essentially, inwardly, nothing. It is something outwardly and can seem rich, can seem to some like everything, as long as it lasts, but it is not like that essentially and inwardly. It is like a surface with nothing inside it, like an actor on the stage wearing royal robes when the play is ended. What lasts forever, though, has something lasting within it and is therefore everything. It truly exists because its reality has no end.

218

3. *We keep temporal and eternal matters separate, but the Lord unites them.* This is because everything about us is time-bound, so that we ourselves may be called time-bound, while everything about the Lord is eternal, so that the Lord is called the Eternal One. Time-bound things are the ones that have a limit and that perish, while eternal things are the ones that have no limit and do not perish.

Everyone can see that these two cannot be united except by the Lord’s infinite wisdom, which means that they can be united by the Lord but not by us. To show that we separate the two but the Lord unites them, I need to present an explanation in the following sequence. (a) What “time-bound” and “eternal” things are. (b) We are essentially time-bound, and the Lord is essentially eternal. Therefore, nothing comes from us that is not time-bound, and nothing comes from the Lord that is not eternal. (c) The time-bound separates the eternal from itself, while the eternal unites the time-bound to itself. (d) The Lord unites us to himself by means of appearances, (e) and by means of correspondences.

These items need to be brought to light and defended one at a time.

(a) *What “time-bound” and “eternal” things are.* Time-bound things are all the properties of the physical world and therefore all of our own properties. The primary properties of the physical world are space and time, both of which have limits and boundaries. Our own properties, derived from them, involve the properties of our volition and of our discernment, and of the feelings and thoughts that they generate, and especially of our prudence. It is widely recognized that these are finite and limited.

In contrast, eternal things are all the properties of the Lord and the things from the Lord that seem to be ours. The properties of the Lord are all infinite and eternal, beyond time therefore, and consequently without limit and without end. Their derivatives that seem to be ours are likewise infinite and eternal, but nothing of them really belongs to us. They simply belong to the Lord, within us.

[2] (b) *We are essentially time-bound, and the Lord is essentially eternal. Therefore, nothing comes from us that is not time-bound and nothing comes from the Lord that is not eternal.* I have just stated that we are essentially time-bound and that the Lord is essentially eternal. Since nothing can come from anything that is not within it, it follows that nothing that is not time-bound can come from us and nothing that is not eternal can come from the Lord. The infinite cannot come from the finite: that would be a contradiction. Actually, something infinite can come from something finite, but it is not from the finite entity but through it, from the infinite. Conversely, too, the finite cannot come from the infinite: that too would be a contradiction. The finite can be produced by the infinite, but that is not “coming from,” it is creating. On this subject see *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom* from beginning to end.¹⁸⁷

If something finite does come from the Lord (as happens with us in many respects), then it does not come from the Lord but from us. We can still say that it comes from the Lord through us, because that is how it seems.

[3] We can illustrate this by the Lord’s words, “Let your speech be ‘Yes, yes; no, no.’ Anything beyond this comes from evil” (Matthew 5:37). This is how everyone talks in the third heaven. The people there never try to figure out whether divine things are true or not; they see within themselves, from the Lord, whether they are true or not.¹⁸⁸ This means that the reason people try to figure out whether divine things are true or not is that such thinkers are not seeing them from the Lord. They

are trying to see them on their own, and whatever we see on our own is evil.

All the same, the Lord wants us not only to think and talk about divine matters but also to try to figure them out so that we ourselves come to see whether they are true or not. As long as the purpose of this thought, speech, and reasoning is to see the truth, we can say that it is from the Lord within us. Still, it is from us as long as we are seeing the truth and acknowledging it. All the while, our ability to think, talk, and reason is from the Lord alone. We can do all this because of the two abilities called freedom and rationality; and we have these abilities solely from the Lord.

[4] (c) *The time-bound separates the eternal from itself, while the eternal unites the time-bound to itself.* “The time-bound separates the eternal from itself” refers to what we (who are time-bound) do because of all that is time-bound within us. “The eternal unites the time-bound to itself” refers to what the Lord (who is eternal) does because of all that is eternal within him, as already noted [§218].

I explained earlier [§92] that there is a union of the Lord with us and a mutual union of us with the Lord, but that our mutual union with the Lord is not from us but from the Lord. I noted also [§183] that our own volition is at odds with the Lord’s volition, or in other words, that our prudence is at odds with the Lord’s divine providence. It then follows that because of all that is time-bound within us, we separate the Lord’s eternal things from ourselves, while the Lord unites his eternal things with our time-bound ones—that is, himself with us and us with him. Since I have already said so much about this, there is no need for further support.

[5] (d) *The Lord unites us to himself by means of appearances.* It does seem as though we ourselves loved our neighbor and did good and spoke the truth; and if it did not seem as though we were doing these things on our own, we would not love our neighbor, do good, or speak the truth, so we would not be united to the Lord. However, since love, goodness, and truth come from the Lord, we can see that it is through appearances that the Lord is uniting us to himself. There has been a great deal of material already [§§100–128] about this appearance and about the Lord’s union with us and our responding union with the Lord by means of it.

[6] (e) *The Lord unites us to himself by means of correspondences.* This happens through the Word, whose literal meaning is made up entirely of correspondences. In *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture*,

from beginning to end, I have explained that there is a union of the Lord with us and a responding union of us with the Lord through this meaning.

4. *The union of temporal and eternal matters in us is the Lord's divine providence.* This will elude even the first grasp of discernment, though, unless it is broken down into a sequence and explained clearly step by step. The following is the necessary sequence. (a) It is by divine providence that we divest ourselves of what is physical and time-bound by dying, and put on what is spiritual and eternal. (b) Through his divine providence, the Lord unites himself to what is physical through what is spiritual, and to what is time-bound through what is eternal, doing so according to acts of service. (c) The Lord unites himself to acts of service by means of their correspondence, which means that he does so by means of appearances, depending on the extent to which we take them as fact. (d) This kind of union of temporal and eternal things is divine providence.

220

These propositions need to be brought into clearer light by explanations, though.

[2] (a) *It is by divine providence that we divest ourselves of what is physical and time-bound by dying, and put on what is spiritual and eternal.* The physical and time-bound things are the outermost and final substances that we first enter when we are born, in order eventually to be brought into deeper and higher things. The outermost and final things are what hold us together, and they are found in this physical world. This is why no angel or spirit has been created as such directly. Rather, all of them first came about by being born human. As a result, they all have outermost and final substances, essentially stable and constant, within which and by which their more inward substances can be held together.

[3] We ourselves, however, are clothed with even cruder elements of the material world at first. That is what our bodies are made of. We divest ourselves of them at death, though, and keep the purer elements of the material world that are closest to spiritual elements. These are what then hold us together.

Further, all the deeper and higher parts of us are present at once in these outermost or final elements, as was noted in the appropriate place above [§§108, 119]. As a result, everything the Lord does he does from beginnings and endings at once, and therefore completely.

However, the outermost and final substances of the material world cannot accept the spiritual and eternal things for which the human mind is formed, not as they are in essence, even though we are born to become

spiritual and to live to eternity. We therefore divest ourselves of them and keep only the inner substances of the material world that are adapted and congenial to what is spiritual and heavenly. These serve to hold us together. We do this by casting off the limiting time-bound, physical substances, a process that we call physical death.

[4] (b) *Through his divine providence, the Lord unites himself to what is physical through what is spiritual and to what is time-bound through what is eternal, doing so according to acts of service.* The physical and time-bound things we are talking about are not just those that are proper to the physical world but those that are proper to us in this physical world as well. We divest ourselves of both when we die and put on corresponding spiritual and eternal things. We put them on according to our acts of service, as I have already explained a number of times.¹⁸⁹

In general, the natural elements that are proper to the physical world involve time and space. More specifically, they are the things we see on earth. We leave them behind when we die and receive spiritual things in their stead, things that are much the same in their outer guise or appearance but not in their inner guise or actual essence. I have already spoken of this as well [§§102–110].

[5] The time-bound things that are proper to us in this physical world are, broadly speaking, matters of eminence and wealth, and more specifically, the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. These too we shed and leave behind at death, putting on and receiving things that are similar in their outward guise and appearance but not in their inward guise and in their essence. They all get their inward guise and essence from acts of service in temporal matters in this world. These acts of service are good actions, the good effects of our caring.

This may serve to show that through his divine providence, the Lord unites spiritual and eternal things to physical and time-bound things, doing so according to acts of service.

[6] (c) *The Lord unites himself to acts of service by means of their correspondence, which means that he does so by means of appearances, depending on the extent to which we take them as fact.* Since these thoughts cannot help but seem obscure to people who have no clear notion of what correspondences and appearances are, I need to illustrate and thereby explain them with an example. All the things we read in the Word are simply images that correspond to spiritual and heavenly realities; and since they correspond, they are appearances. That is, everything in the Word is divine good coming from divine love and divine truth coming from divine wisdom. In their own right, these things are naked, but in the Word they

are clothed with a literal meaning, so they look like a fully dressed person. This means that to us, they look as though they were dressed in clothes that correspond to our own states of love and wisdom. We can see, then, that if we take these appearances as fact, it is like believing that the clothes are the person. The appearances become illusions. It is different if we are looking for truths and see them within the appearances.

[7] Now since all the acts of service, all the true and good deeds of caring that we do for our neighbor, we do either in keeping with appearances or in keeping with actual truths from the Word, therefore if we do them in keeping with the appearances we have taken as fact, we are mired in illusions, while if we do them in keeping with the truths, we do them as we should. We can tell from this what it means to say that the Lord unites himself to acts of service by means of their correspondence, which means that he does so by means of appearances, depending on the extent to which we take them as fact.

[8] (d) *This kind of union of temporal and eternal things is divine providence.* To bring this into some mental light, I need to illustrate it with two examples, one having to do with eminence and rank and the other with wealth and resources. Both of these are physical and time-bound in their outward form and spiritual and eternal in their inward form.

Both eminence and the rank it offers are physical and time-bound when we focus on ourselves and our role in them and not on the state and service. Then we cannot help but think to ourselves that the state exists for our sake and not that we exist for the sake of the state. It is like monarchs who think that the realm and all its citizens exist for their sake and not that they are monarchs for the sake of the realm and its citizens.

[9] The very same eminence and rank are spiritual and eternal, though, when we see ourselves and our role as existing for the sake of the state and service, and not the state and service for our own sake. If we do this, then we have the truth and the essence of our eminence and rank. Otherwise, we have the image and appearance; and if we take them as fact, then we are mired in illusions, and are no more united with the Lord than people who are bent on distortion and its consequent evil. After all, illusions are the distortions that evils seek out as consorts. We may actually do some good and useful things, but we do them from ourselves and not from the Lord; so we put ourselves in place of the Lord.

[10] It is much the same with wealth and resources. These are also both earthly and time-bound on the one hand and spiritual and eternal on the other. Wealth and resources are earthly and time-bound if we focus on them alone and on ourselves in them and look only for our own

comfort and pleasure in both. They are spiritual and eternal if we focus on the good we can do with them and look for a deeper comfort and pleasure in that good. In that case, even the outer comfort and pleasure is spiritual, and the time-bound is eternal. This means also that after death, people of the latter sort are in heaven, living in mansions whose useful furnishings gleam with gold and jewels. Yet all they see is an outer beauty and translucence shining through from what lies within, which is the usefulness that is the basis of their real comfort and pleasure, the essential blessedness and happiness of heaven.

The opposite lot falls to people who focused¹⁹⁰ on their wealth and resources solely for the sake of the wealth and resources and for themselves. This means that they valued them for their outward worth and not for their inward worth as well, guided by their appearance and not by their essence. When they are divested of them, which happens when they die, they put on what was within them; and since this was not spiritual it can only be hellish. The contents of wealth and resources must be either one or the other; they cannot coexist. So instead of wealth they have poverty, and instead of resources they have misery.

[11] Useful things include not only the necessities of life—food, clothing, and shelter for oneself and one's own—but also the good of the country, community, and fellow citizen. Business is useful when it is the real love and money is a subservient, supporting love, provided the merchant avoids and recoils from fraud and deceptive practices as sins. It is different when money is the real love and business is the subservient, supporting love. This is greed, the root of evils. See Luke 12:15 and the parable about greed in verses 16–21.¹⁹¹

**We Are Not Granted Inner Access to the Truths
That Our Faith Discloses and the Good Effects of
Our Caring Except As We Can Be Kept in
Them to the End of Our Life**

IN the Christian world, people know that the Lord wants everyone to be saved. They also know that the Lord is omnipotent. As a result, many of them conclude that he can save everyone and does save those who beg for his mercy—especially if they do so with the formula of the standard faith, namely, that God the Father may have mercy for the sake of the Son, and especially if they also ask to be granted this faith. However, in the closing section of the present work [§§331–340] we shall see that the actual situation is very different indeed. There I will explain that the Lord cannot violate the laws of his divine providence, because violating them would be violating his own divine love and his own divine wisdom, actually violating himself. We shall see there that this kind of instant mercy is impossible because our salvation is accomplished by specific means. No one can lead us by these means except one who both intends the salvation of everyone and is omnipotent, namely, the Lord.

221

The means by which the Lord leads us are what we are calling “the laws of divine providence.” One of them is this: that we are not granted inner access to the truths that wisdom discloses and the good that love does except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life. To demonstrate this rationally, though, I need to lay it out in the following sequence.

1. It is possible for us to be granted wisdom about spiritual matters and even a love for them and still not be reformed.
2. If we then backslide from them and go against them, we profane what is holy.
3. There are many kinds of profanation, but this is the worst of all.
4. This is why the Lord does not grant us inner access to the truths that wisdom discloses and the good that love does except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life.

222

1. *It is possible for us to be granted wisdom about spiritual matters and even a love for them and still not be reformed.* This is because we have rationality and freedom. Our rationality enables us to be lifted up into a wisdom that is almost angelic; and our freedom enables us to be lifted up into a love that is not wholly unlike angelic love. However, the nature of our love determines the nature of our wisdom. If our love is heavenly and spiritual, then our wisdom is heavenly and spiritual too; but if our love is demonic and hellish, then our wisdom is demonic and hellish too. It may look heavenly and spiritual in its outward form, to others, but in its inward form or actual essence it is demonic and hellish, not outside us but within us.

People do not notice this, because they live on the earthly level and see and hear on that level, and the outward form is earthly. The inner nature is clear to angels, though, because angels are spiritual and see and hear on the spiritual level, and the inner form is spiritual.

[2] We can see from this that we can be granted wisdom about spiritual matters and a love for them as well and still not be reformed. In this case, though, we are being granted only an earthly love for these matters, not a spiritual love for them. This is because we can give ourselves earthly love, but only the Lord can give us spiritual love. If we are given this latter love, we are reformed; while if all we receive is the former love, we are not. Most hypocrites are like this, and many Jesuits,¹⁹² people who do not believe in anything divine inwardly but outwardly go through their religious motions like actors in a play.

223

I have learned from an abundance of experience in the spiritual world that we have within us the ability to understand mysteries of wisdom just as real angels do, since I have seen fiery demons who not only understood mysteries of wisdom when they heard them but even stated them quite rationally. However, the moment they went back to their demonic love they did not understand them. They replaced them with their opposites, with insanity, and called that wisdom. I have even been allowed to hear them ridiculing their insanity when they were in their wise state and ridiculing their wisdom when they were in their insane state.

People who have been like this in the world are often led to experience alternate states of wisdom and insanity after death, when they become spirits, so that they can see each from the perspective of the other. However, even though they do see themselves as insane from the perspective of wisdom, when they are given the choice (as we all are), they commit themselves to insanity. This is what they love, and they then have

nothing but hatred for wisdom. This is because their inner natures are demonic, while their outer natures seem divine. These are the people meant by devils who make themselves angels of light,¹⁹³ and by the guest at the marriage feast who was not wearing a wedding garment and was cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:11, 12, 13).

Can anyone fail to see that it is the inner level from which the outer level arises and that the outer level therefore derives its essence from the inner level? Surely everyone knows from experience that the outer level can appear in a guise that differs from the essence that it derives from what lies within. This is obvious in the case of hypocrites, flatterers, and con artists. Then too, we can imitate the characteristics of other people outwardly, as is obvious in the case of comics and mimes. They know how to portray monarchs, emperors, and even angels with their tone of voice, language, expression, and gesture as though they really were what they seem, even though they are only actors. I mention this because we too can put on pretenses in our civic and moral dealings as well as in our spiritual ones. We know that many people do.

[2] When our inner nature is essentially hellish, then, and our outer nature seems spiritual in its form, though (as just noted) the outer derives its essence from the inner, you may ask where that essence is hiding in the outer. It is not in our gestures, our tone of voice, our language, or our expression. However, it is still hidden in all four of these. What is hidden shows through them very clearly in the spiritual world, because when we move from this physical world into the spiritual world, which happens when we die, then we leave behind those outward appearances along with our bodies, but keep the inner qualities that were hidden away in our spirits. Then if that inner nature was hellish, we look like demons just as we were in spirit while we were living in this world. Surely everyone realizes that we all leave those outward things behind along with our bodies and become engaged with deeper things when we become spirits.

[3] Let me also add that in the spiritual world there is a sharing of feelings and consequent thoughts, which means that none of us can say anything except what we are actually thinking. Also, our faces change there and become images of our feelings, so others can see from our faces what we are really like. Hypocrites are sometimes allowed to say what they are not thinking, but their tone of voice sounds discordant because of their deeper thoughts, and they can be recognized by this discord. So we can tell that the inner nature is hidden within the tone, the language, the expression, and the gestures of the outer, and that while people in the

physical world are not sensitive to this, it is obvious to angels in the spiritual world.

225

We can see from this that as long as we are living in this physical world, we can be let into wisdom about spiritual matters and even into a love for them, and that this does and can happen both to people who are completely earthly-minded as well as to people who are spiritual. The difference is, though, that the latter are reformed when this happens, while the former are not. It may seem as though they love wisdom, but they love it only the way an adulterer loves a fine woman—like a prostitute. He talks soothingly to her and gives her beautiful clothes, but privately he is thinking, “She is nothing but a worthless whore. I will get her to believe that I love her, because she takes my fancy, but if she does not take to me, then I will discard her.” The inner self is the adulterer, and the outer self is the woman.

226

2. *If we then backslide from wisdom and love and go against them, we profane what is holy.* There are many kinds of profanation of what is holy, which will be discussed in the next section. This is the worst of all, though, because people who commit this kind of profanation are no longer human after death. They are alive, but they are trapped in their wild hallucinations. They seem to themselves to be flying around in the air; and when they come to rest they toy with their illusions, which they see as real. Since they are no longer human, they are not referred to as “he” or “she,” but as “it.” In fact, when they are exposed to view in heaven’s light they look like skeletons, sometimes the color of bones, sometimes fiery, and sometimes charred.

In this world, people do not know that this is what happens after death to individuals who commit profanation; and they do not know this because they do not understand the reason for it. The real reason is that if we acknowledge divine things and believe them at first and then backslide and deny them, we mix what is holy with what is profane; and once they have been mixed together, the only way they can be separated results in complete destruction.

To clarify this, several things need to be set forth, as follows. (a) Everything we willingly think and say and do becomes part of us and remains so, whether it is good or evil. (b) The Lord is constantly using his divine providence to make provisions and arrangements so that what is evil will be by itself and what is good by itself, and so that they can be kept separate. (c) However, this cannot be accomplished if we first acknowledge the truths that faith discloses and live by them and afterwards backslide and deny them. (d) Then we mingle what is good and what is evil so completely that they cannot be separated. (e) Since what is good

and what is evil need to be separated in each one of us, and since they cannot be separated in people like this, everything truly human about them is destroyed.

These are the reasons such disasters happen, but because of the darkness of ignorance, they need further explanation if they are to reach the light of comprehension.

227

(a) *Everything we willingly think and say and do becomes part of us and remains so, whether it is good or evil.* This has already been presented in §§78–81. We have an outer or earthly memory and an inner or spiritual memory. In this latter memory is recorded everything we have willingly thought, said, and done in this world so inclusively and in such detail that nothing whatever is left out. This memory is our “book of life” that is opened after death and by which we are judged.¹⁹⁴ (There is more about this memory in *Heaven and Hell* 461–465 [461–469], drawn from personal experience.)

[2] (b) *The Lord is constantly using his divine providence to make provisions and arrangements so that what is evil will be by itself and what is good by itself, and so that they can be kept separate.* Each of us has both good and evil qualities. The evil ones come from us and the good ones from the Lord; and we could not be alive if we did not have both. If we were totally wrapped up in ourselves and therefore in our evil natures we would not have any trace of life; and if we were totally wrapped up in the Lord and therefore in our good natures we would not have any trace of life either. In the latter case, that is, we would be like people who are suffocating and constantly gasping for breath, or like people in the last throes of dying. In the former case life would have been snuffed out because evil totally devoid of anything good is intrinsically dead. So each of us has both. The difference is that for some the inner self is devoted to the Lord while the outer is apparently concerned with self, while in others the inner self is wrapped up in self and the outer is apparently devoted to the Lord. The one is focused on evil and the other on good, though both are present in each.

The reason evil people have both sides is that they are involved in the constructive activities of civic and moral living, and outwardly, too, in a kind of constructive spiritual life. Further, the Lord keeps them in enough rationality and freedom that they can engage in something good. It is this good through which all of us, even the evil ones, are being led by the Lord.

So we can see that the Lord keeps the evil and the goodness separate so that one is inside and the other outside, thus providing that they do not become mingled.

[3] (c) *This cannot be accomplished, however, if we first acknowledge the truths that faith discloses and live by them and afterwards backslide and deny them.* This can be seen from what has just been presented: first of all that everything we have willingly thought, said, and done becomes part of us and stays with us; and second, that the Lord is constantly using his divine providence to make provisions and arrangements that what is evil will be by itself and what is good by itself so that they can be kept separate. The Lord does separate them after our death. If we have been inwardly evil and outwardly good, then the goodness is taken away and we are left to our evil. In contrast, if we have been inwardly good, but—like everyone else—have outwardly struggled for wealth, vied for eminence, relished various worldly pleasures, and given in to some of our compulsions, then still the goodness and the evil in us have not been mingled but kept separate, one inside and the other outside. Outwardly, then, we have been very much like evil people, but not inwardly. Conversely, for evil people who have outwardly looked like good ones as far as their piety, worship, speech, and behavior are concerned, but who have still been evil inwardly, the evil is separated from the goodness in them as well.

However, if people have at first acknowledged the truths that faith discloses and have lived by them but later have turned in the opposite direction and rejected them (and especially if they have denied them), then their good and evil qualities are no longer separated but are mingled. That is, such people internalize good and also internalize evil, which unites and mingles them.

[4] (d) *We then mingle what is good and what is evil so completely that they cannot be separated.* This follows from what has just been said. If the evil in us cannot be separated from the goodness and the goodness from the evil, then we cannot be either in heaven or in hell. Each of us must be in one or the other, and we cannot be in both, now in heaven and now in hell. When we were in heaven we would be working for hell, and when we were in hell we would be working for heaven; so we would destroy the life of everyone around us, the heavenly life for angels and the hellish life for demons. This would be the end of life for both, since we all need our own life and cannot live in someone else's life, let alone in an opposite life.

This is why when we become spirits or spiritual people after our death, the Lord separates what is good from what is evil and what is evil from what is good in each one of us. The goodness is separated from the evil if we have been inwardly evil and the evil from the goodness if we

have been inwardly good. This is the intent of the Lord's saying, "To all those who have, more will be given in abundance, and from those who do [not]¹⁹⁵ have, even what they have will be taken away" (Matthew 13:12; 25:29; Mark 4:25; Luke 8:18; 19:26).

[5] (e) *Since what is good and what is evil need to be separated in each one of us, and since they cannot be separated in people like this, everything truly human about them is destroyed.* What is truly human about us is our rationality, our ability to see and know, if we try, what is true and what is good, and also our ability freely to intend, think, say, and do it, as already explained [§§96–97]. However, both this freedom and its rationality are destroyed in people who have mingled good and evil in themselves. They cannot see what is evil from the perspective of what is good or recognize what is good from the perspective of what is evil because they have identified them with each other. This means that they no longer have either the actual or the potential ability to function rationally, so they no longer have any freedom. This is why they are simply like wild hallucinations, as already noted [§226], and no longer look like people but like bones with some skin on them. It is why they are not called "he" or "she" when they are named, but "it." This is what finally becomes of people who mingle sacred things with profane ones in this fashion. There are, though, other kinds of profanation that are not so dire. These will be discussed in the next section.

No one profanes holy things who does not know about them, since if we do not know about them we cannot first acknowledge and then deny them. This means that people who live outside the Christian world and know nothing about the Lord or about the redemption and salvation he offers do not profane this holy faith even when they argue against it because they do not accept it.

228

Even Jews do not profane this holy matter either, since from infancy they have been reluctant to accept and acknowledge it. It is different if they do accept and acknowledge it, and then deny it, but this rarely happens. Many of them acknowledge it outwardly but deny it inwardly, in which case they are like hypocrites.

The people who profane holy things by mingling them with the profane, though, are the ones who accept and acknowledge at first but then backslide and deny. [2] The acceptance and belief of early childhood and youth is not at issue. That is common to all Christians. This is not profanation, because they are not accepting and acknowledging sacred things of faith and caring at all rationally and freely, that is, in their own discernment and of their own volition, but simply as a matter of memory

and out of trust in their teachers. If they live by these principles, it is in blind obedience. However, when they come into their own rationality and freedom as they gradually mature and grow up, then if they acknowledge truths and live by them but later deny them, they mingle the holy with the profane and change from humans into the kind of monster I have just described.

In contrast, if people have been engaged in evil from the beginning of their rationality and freedom, the beginning of their independence, until their maturity, but later acknowledge the truths that faith discloses and live by them, they do not mingle them. The Lord then separates the evils of their former life from the good qualities of their later life. This is what happens to everyone who repents. There will be more on this later, though [§§279–280].

229

3. *There are many kinds of profanation of what is holy, but this is the worst of all.* In everyday language, profanation is understood to mean all kinds of irreverence, so the category of profane people includes everyone who at heart denies God and the holiness of the Word and therefore the spiritual gifts of the church. These are the very holy things that even irreverent people talk about.

I am not talking about these people, though, but about people who confess God, insist on the holiness of the Word, and acknowledge the spiritual gifts of the church, most of whom do so only verbally. The reason they are committing profanation is that there is something holy from the Word within and among them. It is this something within them, something that is part of their own discernment and volition, that they are profaning. In irreverent people, people who deny the Divinity and divine matters, there is nothing holy for them to profane. It is the former who commit profanation, then, even though they are not irreverent.

230

The profanation of what is holy is referred to in the second of the Ten Commandments in the words, “You shall not profane the name of your God” [Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11]; and the Lord’s prayer is telling us that we must not profane what is holy when it says, “Hallowed be your name” [Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2]. Hardly anyone in all Christendom knows what “the name of God” means. This is because people do not know that people in the spiritual world do not have names the way we do in this physical world. Rather, each individual is named for her or his own love and wisdom. As soon as we enter a community or a gathering of people, we are immediately given a name that expresses our nature. We are named in a spiritual language that is essentially able to give a distinctive name to every individual thing, because every letter in its

alphabet means something definite; and when many letters are combined into a single word, as happens with an individual's name, they include the whole state of that object. This is just one of the marvels of the spiritual world.

[2] We can see from this that in the Word, "the name of God" means both God and everything divine that is in him and that emanates from him. Since the Word is a divine emanation, it is a name of God; and since all the divine gifts that we refer to as the spiritual gifts of the church come from the Word, they too are a name of God.

This enables us to see what "You shall not profane the name of your God" means in the second of the Ten Commandments, and what "Hallowed be your name" means in the Lord's Prayer.

"The name of God" and "the name of the Lord" mean much the same in many passages in the Word in both Testaments. See, for example, Matthew 7:22; 10:22; 18:5, 20; 19:29; 21:9; 24:9, 10; John 1:12; 2:23; 3:17, 18; 12:13, 28; 14:14, 15, 16; 16:23, 24, 26, 27; 17:6; and 20:31, among others, as well as a great many in the Old Testament.¹⁹⁶

[3] If you know the meaning of this "name," then you can know the meaning of the Lord's words, "Whoever accepts a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Whoever receives a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward; and whoever gives one of these little ones something cold to drink in the name of a disciple will not lose the reward" (Matthew 10:21 [10:41, 42]). If you understand the name of a prophet or a righteous person or a disciple to mean nothing but the prophet or the righteous person or the disciple, then the only meaning you get will be a literal one. You will not know, either, what is meant by the reward of the prophet or the reward of the righteous person or the reward for the cold drink given on behalf of the disciple. Yet the name and the reward of the prophet mean the blessed state of people who enjoy divine gifts of truth, and the name and the reward of the righteous person mean the blessed state of people who enjoy divine gifts of what is good, while the disciple means the state of people who have some of the spiritual gifts of the church, and the cold drink is any element of truth.

[4] We can also tell that the name means the nature of the state of love and wisdom, or of what is good and true, from these words of the Lord: "The one who comes in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to him and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (Matthew 10:2, 3 [John 10:2, 3]). "Calling sheep by name" is teaching and leading every individual

whose deeds are prompted by caring, and doing so in keeping with that individual's state of love and wisdom. "The door" means the Lord, as we can tell from verse 9: "I am the door. Anyone who enters in by me will be saved" [John 10:9]. This shows that we need to turn to the Lord himself if we are to be saved, and that the one who does turn to him is a shepherd of his sheep. Anyone who does not turn to him is a thief and a robber, as it says in the first verse of the same chapter.

231

"Profanation of what is holy" means profanation by people who know the truths that their faith discloses and the good effects of caring taught by the Word, and who in one way or another acknowledge them. It does not mean people who have no knowledge of such things or who simply reject them out of irreverence. What follows, then, is about the former people, not the latter.

There are many kinds of profanation, some less serious and some more, but they boil down to the following seven kinds.

The first kind of profanation is committed by people who make light of the Word or use it lightly, or who do the same with the divine gifts of the church. Some people do this because of habitual immorality, pulling words and phrases out of the Word and including them in conversations of questionable quality, sometimes indecent ones. This necessarily involves some disrespect for the Word, when in fact the Word is divine and holy throughout and in every detail. At the heart of everything it says, there is something divine lying hidden; and it is through this that it is in touch with heaven. This kind of profanation is more or less serious, though, depending on the recognition of the Word's holiness and on the indecency of the conversation into which the supposed humorists inject it.

[2] *A second kind of profanation is committed by people who understand and acknowledge divine truths but who violate them in their lives.* This is less serious, though, if they simply understand the truths and more serious if they actually acknowledge them. All our discernment does is teach, much the way a preacher does. It does not automatically unite the teaching with our volition. Acknowledgment, on the other hand, does unite itself. There can be no acknowledgment unless our volition agrees. Still, this union may vary, and the severity of the profanation depends on the closeness of the union when our lives violate the truths that we acknowledge. For example, if we acknowledge that vengefulness and hatred, adultery and promiscuity, fraud and deceit, slander and lying, are sins against God and still commit them, we are guilty of this more serious kind of profanation. The Lord says, "The slave who knows the Lord's will and does not do it will be beaten severely" (Luke 12:48 [12:47]). Elsewhere, "If

you were blind you would not have sin, but now you say that you can see, so your sin remains” (John 9:41).

Acknowledging things that are apparently true, though, is different from acknowledging things that are really true. If we acknowledge things that are really true and violate them with our lives, then in the spiritual world we seem to have no light or warmth in our voice and speech, as though we were completely listless.

[3] *A third kind of profanation is committed by people who use the literal meaning of the Word to justify their evil loves and false principles.* This is because the justification of falsity is the denial of truth and the justification of evil is the rejection of goodness; and at heart the Word is pure divine truth and divine goodness. In its outermost meaning, its literal meaning, this does not come out as real truth except where it tells about the Lord and the actual path of salvation. Rather, it comes out in those outer garments of truth that we may call “appearances of truth.” As a result, this level of meaning can be persuaded to support all kinds of heresy; and if we justify our evil loves we do violence to things that are divinely good, while if we justify our false principles we do violence to things that are divinely true. This latter violence is called “the falsification of what is true,” while the former is called “the adulteration of what is good.” Both are meant by “blood” in the Word.

There is something spiritual and holy in the details of the literal meaning of the Word—the spirit of truth that emanates from the Lord. This holy content is damaged when the Word is falsified and adulterated. Clearly, this amounts to profanation.

[4] *A fourth kind of profanation is committed by people who utter devout and holy words and whose voice and body language seem to express loving feelings, but who at heart neither believe nor love what they are pretending.* Most of these are hypocrites and Pharisees.¹⁹⁷ Everything true and good is taken from them after death, and they are dismissed into outer darkness. People of this sort who have also become fixed in their rejection of Divinity, the Word, and the holy gifts of the church sit in silence in the darkness, incapable of speech. They want to utter devout and holy words the way they did in this world, but they cannot, because in the spiritual world speech must be in accord with thought. Hypocrites, though, want to say what they do not really think. This gives rise to a resistance in the mouth, and the result is that they can only be silent.

However, there are less and more serious forms of hypocrisy depending on how resolute the opposition to God is, and on the outward arguments in favor of God.

[5] *A fifth kind of profanation is committed by people who claim divine qualities for themselves.* These are the people meant by Lucifer in Isaiah 14.¹⁹⁸ “Lucifer” there means Babylon, as we can tell from verses 4 and 22 of the same chapter, which also tell of their fate.¹⁹⁹ These are the same people who are described as a harlot sitting on a scarlet beast in Revelation 17[:3].

There are many mentions of Babylon and Chaldea in the Word. “Babylon” means the profanation of what is good and “Chaldea” the profanation of what is true. In each case, it applies to people who claim divine qualities for themselves.

[6] *A sixth kind of profanation is committed by people who accept the Word but still deny the divine nature of the Lord.* These are the people known as Socinians and Arians in the world.²⁰⁰ Both kinds of person ultimately find themselves praying to the Father, not to the Lord. They pray constantly to the Father for admission to heaven (some also praying for the sake of the Son), but their prayers are in vain. Eventually, they lose all hope of salvation and are sent down into hell with people who deny God. These are the people meant by those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit, who are not forgiven in this world or the next (Matthew 12:32).

The reason is that God is one in both person and essence, comprising a Trinity; and this God is the Lord. Since the Lord is heaven as well, and since this means that the people who are in heaven are in the Lord, people who deny the Lord’s divine nature cannot be granted admission to heaven and be in the Lord. I have already explained [§§28, 60–67] that the Lord is heaven and that therefore people who are in heaven are in the Lord.

[7] *A seventh kind of profanation is committed by people who at first accept divine truths and live by them but later backslide from them and deny them.* The reason this is the worst kind of profanation is that these people are mixing what is holy with what is profane to the point that they cannot be separated, and yet they need to be separated for people to be either in heaven or in hell. Since this is impossible for such individuals, their whole human volition and discernment is torn away from them and they become no longer human, as already noted [§§226, 227].

Almost the same thing happens to people who at heart acknowledge the divine contents of the Word and the church but submerge them completely in their own sense of self-importance. This is the love of being in control of everything that has been mentioned several times before [§§38, 112, 146, 215]. When they become spirits after death, they are absolutely unwilling to be led by the Lord, only by themselves; and when

the reins of their love are loosened, they try to control not only heaven but even the Lord. Since they cannot do this, they deny the Lord and become demons.

It is important to realize that for all of us, our life's love, our predominant love, stays the same after death and cannot be taken away.

[8] This kind of profanation is meant by the lukewarm church described in the Book of Revelation: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. If only you were cold or hot! Since you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:14, 15 [3:15, 16]). This is how the Lord describes this kind of profanation in Matthew: "When an unclean spirit leaves someone, it wanders in dry places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will go back to the home I left.' Then it does go back and finds it empty, swept clean and furnished for itself. It goes off and allies itself with seven other spirits worse than itself, and they come in and live there; and the latter times of that individual are worse than the earlier ones" (Matthew 12:43, 45 [12:43, 44, 45]). The departure of the unclean spirit describes our turning;²⁰¹ and the return of the unclean spirit with seven worse spirits to the house made ready for them describes our turning back to our former evils once our true and good qualities have been banished. The profanation of what is holy is described by the profanation that makes our later times worse than our former ones.

The following passage from John means much the same: "Jesus said to the man who had been healed at the Pool of Bethesda, 'Do not sin any more, or something worse will happen to you'" (John 5:14).

[9] The following passage tells of the Lord's provision that we do not inwardly acknowledge truths and then backslide and become profane: "He has closed their eyes and blinded their hearts so that they do not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts and turn themselves, and I heal them" (John 12:4 [12:40]). "So that they do not turn themselves and I heal them" means so that they do not acknowledge truths and then backslide and so become profane. This is also why the Lord spoke in parables, as he himself explained—see Matthew 13:13.²⁰² The Jewish prohibition against eating fat and blood (Leviticus 3:17; 7:23, 25 [7:23, 26]) meant that they should not profane holy things. The fat meant what is divinely good and the blood what is divinely true. Once we have turned to what is good and true, we should remain turned to the end of our life, as the Lord tells us in Matthew: "Jesus said, 'Whoever will have remained faithful to the end will be saved'" (Matthew 10:22; likewise Mark 13:13).

232

4. *This is why the Lord does not grant us inner access to the truths that wisdom discloses and the good that love does except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life.* I need to proceed with particular care in explaining this for two reasons: first because it is vital to our salvation, and second because an appreciation of this principle is key to appreciating the laws of permission that will be dealt with in the next section [§§234–274]. It is vital to our salvation because, as already noted [§§226–227], if we first accept the divine contents of the Word and therefore of the church but then backslide from them, we profane what is holy in the most harmful way. To uncover this secret of divine providence so that rational people can see it in their own light, then, it will be laid out in the following sequence. (a) At our deeper levels, good and evil cannot coexist within us, so neither can malicious distortion and beneficent truth. (b) The Lord can bring into our deeper levels what is good and the truth that comes from it only to the extent that evil and its distortions have been banished. (c) If what is good and its truth were brought in before evil and its distortions were removed, or to a greater extent than they were removed, then we would backslide from the goodness and return to our evil. (d) When we are absorbed in evil, much that is true can be introduced into our minds and stored in our memory without being profaned. (e) The Lord in his divine providence, however, takes the greatest care that we do not accept it into our volition before we have, in our apparent autonomy, banished evils from our outer self, or do not accept it to a greater extent than we have banished our outer evils. (f) If this were done too early or too fully, then our volition would adulterate the goodness and our discernment would falsify the truth by mingling them with what is evil and with what is false. (g) This is why the Lord does not grant us the truths that wisdom discloses and the good that love does except as we can be enabled to keep them to the end of our life.

233

To uncover this secret of divine providence so that rational people can see it in its own light, I need to explain the points just listed one at a time.

(a) *At our deeper levels, good and evil cannot coexist within us, so neither can malicious distortion and beneficent truth.* These “deeper levels” mean our inner thought processes, processes of which we are quite unaware until we come into the spiritual world and its light, which happens after death. The only way we can recognize them in this earthly world is by a pleasure of love in our outer thought processes, as well as by recognizing the evils themselves when we practice self-examination. This is because our inner and outer thought processes are so closely connected that

they cannot be separated, as already noted—there is a good deal about this above.²⁰³

I speak of goodness and its truth and of evil and its distortions because goodness cannot exist without its truth or evil without its distortions. They are lovers or spouses, since the life of what is good comes from its truth, and the life of what is true comes from goodness. The same holds true for evil and its distortions.

[2] Rational people need no explanation to see that evil and its distortion cannot coexist with goodness and its truth at our deeper levels. Evil is the opposite of good, and good is the opposite of evil; and two opposites cannot coexist. Every evil harbors an intrinsic hatred for everything good, and everything good has an infinite love for keeping itself safe from evil and banishing it from itself. It then follows that neither can coexist with the other. If they were together, there would be at first a violent battle and eventually destruction. This is what the Lord is telling us when he says, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and every city or home divided against itself will not stand. Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me, scatters” (Matthew 25:30 [12:25, 30]). And again, “No one can serve two masters at the same time, for one or the other will be hated or loved” (Matthew 6:24).

Two opposite elements cannot coexist in one substance or form without tearing it apart and destroying it. If one comes too close to the other, they separate at all costs like two enemy forces, one withdrawing within its camp or fortifications and the other withdrawing outside. That is what happens with evil and good qualities in hypocrites. Both qualities are present, but the evil is inside and the goodness is outside so that the two are separated and not mingled.

This enables us to see that evil and its distortions and goodness and its truth cannot coexist.

[3] (b) *The Lord can bring into our deeper levels what is good and the truth that comes from it only to the extent that evil and its distortions have been banished.* This is simply a corollary of what has just been said, since if evil and good cannot coexist, goodness cannot be brought in until the evil has been moved out.

“Our deeper levels” means our inner thought processes. They are what we are dealing with. This is where either the Lord or the devil must be present. The Lord is there after our reformation and the devil is there before it. To the extent that we let ourselves be reformed, then, the devil is evicted; while to the extent that we do not let ourselves be reformed,

the devil stays in residence. Can anyone fail to see that the Lord cannot enter us as long as the devil is there? And the devil is there as long as we keep the door closed where we are together with the Lord. The Lord tells us in the Book of Revelation that he will come in when that door is opened by our efforts: “I am standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to them and dine with them, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20).

The door is opened when we banish evil by abstaining and turning from it as hellish and demonic—it is one and the same thing if you say “evil” or “the devil.” By the same token, it is one and the same thing if you say “goodness” or “the Lord”; because within everything good there is the Lord, and within everything evil there is the devil. This illustrates the truth of the matter.

[4] (c) *If what is good and its truth were brought in before evil and its distortions were removed, or to a greater extent than they were removed, then we would backslide from the goodness and return to our evil.* This is because the evil would be stronger, and whatever is stronger wins, eventually if not immediately. Once evil has won, the goodness cannot gain entrance to the inner suite but only to the vestibule, because evil and good cannot coexist, as just noted. Anything that is restricted to the vestibule will be evicted by its enemy who lives in the suite, which means that there will be a departure from goodness and a return to evil, which is the worst kind of profanation.

[5] Further, the essential pleasure of our life is to love ourselves and the world more than anything else. This pleasure cannot be taken away instantly, only gradually; and to the extent that any of this pleasure stays with us, evil is stronger. The only way this evil can be taken away is for our love for ourselves to become a love of service, or for our love of power for our own sake to become a love of power for the sake of service. This makes service the head and for the first time makes love for ourselves, or for power, the body beneath the head, and eventually the feet we walk on. Can anyone fail to see that goodness should be the head, and that when it is, the Lord is present? Goodness and service are the same thing. Can anyone fail to see that if evil is the head, the devil is present, and that since we still need to accept some civic and moral good and even some outward form of spiritual good, these are our feet and their soles, and are trodden down?

[6] Our state of life has to be inverted, then, so that what is on top is on the bottom, and this inversion cannot be accomplished instantly. What gives us the most pleasure of all is what comes from our love for

ourselves and therefore for power; and this fades and turns into a love of service only gradually. So the Lord cannot introduce goodness before this evil is removed, or to a greater extent than it is removed. If he did, then we would backslide from the goodness and return to our evil.

[7] (d) *When we are absorbed in evil, much that is true can be introduced into our minds and stored in our memory without being profaned.* This is because our discernment does not flow into our volition but our volition does flow into our discernment; and since our discernment does not flow into our volition, all kinds of truths can be accepted into our minds and stored in our memories without becoming mixed in with the evils in our volition; so sacred things are not profaned. It is up to us to learn truths from the Word or from sermons, to store them in memory, and to think about them. Our discernment then draws on these truths in our memory, truths we have thought about, to teach our volition, that is, to tell us what we should do. This is our primary means of reformation. As long as these truths are only in our discernment and therefore in our memory, they are not really in us but are outside of us.

[8] We might compare our memory to the ruminatory stomach that some animals have. What they eat goes there; and as long as it is there, it is not really in their body but is outside it. Only as they take it out and ingest it does it become part of their life and nourish their body. The contents of our memory are not physical foods, of course, but spiritual ones. This means that they are truths, essentially thoughts. To the extent to which we have taken them out by thinking, by ruminating, so to speak, our spiritual mind is nourished. It is our volition's love that wants this, that is in its own way hungry, and impels us to draw truths out for our nourishment. If that love is evil, then it has a longing and a kind of hunger for unclean thoughts. On the other hand, if it is good it has a longing and a kind of hunger for clean thoughts; and if thoughts are unsuitable it sets them aside, dismisses them, and evicts them by various means.

[9] (e) *The Lord in his divine providence, however, takes the greatest care that we do not accept it into our volition before we have, in our apparent autonomy, banished evils from our outer self, or do not accept it to a greater extent than we have banished our outer evils.* That is, whatever we take into ourselves willingly becomes part of us, part of our life; and in our actual life, the life we derive from our volition, evil and good cannot coexist. That would destroy us. However, we can have both in our discernment. We can have there what we call malicious distortions and beneficent truths, but not at the same time. Otherwise, we would not be

able to see what is evil from the perspective of goodness or to recognize what is good from the perspective of evil. However, they are marked off and separated there like the inside and the outside of a house. When evil people think and say good things, they are thinking and speaking outwardly, but when they think and say evil things, then they are thinking and speaking inwardly. If they say something good, then, it is like talking from the wall. They are like fruit that is superficially attractive but wormy and rotten inside, or like the shell of a dragon's egg.

[10] (f) *If this were done too early or too fully, then our volition would adulterate the goodness and our discernment would falsify the truth by mingling them with what is evil and with what is false.* When our volition is focused on something evil, it adulterates whatever is good in our discernment, and this adulterated good in our discernment is evil in our volition. It convinces us that evil is good and the reverse. Evil does this to everything good that opposes it. Evil also distorts anything that is true, because the truth that is inspired by goodness opposes the distortion that comes from evil. Our volition does this in our discernment as well: our discernment does not do so on its own.

The Word describes adulteration of what is good as adultery and the distortions of truth as promiscuity. This adulteration and distortion are accomplished through specious reasoning by that earthly self that is bent on evil as well as through finding support in the way things seem to be described in the literal sense of the Word.

[11] Our love for ourselves, the head of all our evils, is more adept than any other love at adulterating what is good and distorting what is true. It does this by misusing the rationality that the Lord gives to the worst and the best of us alike. It can actually rationalize things so that something evil seems perfectly good and something false seems perfectly true. What is beyond its power, when it can marshal a thousand arguments to prove that Nature created itself and then created humanity, animals, and plants of all kinds, and that Nature then infused something from within itself to enable us to live, think analytically, and discern wisely?

The reason our love for ourselves is so good at proving whatever it wants to is that it endows its outer surface with a kind of bright, multi-colored radiance. This radiance is the love's reveling in wisdom and therefore in rank and power.

[12] However, once this love has become convinced of all this, it is so blind that all it can see is that people are animals and think like animals. It even believes that if animals could only talk, they would be humans in

a different form. If for some secondary reason this love has been led to believe that some aspect of us goes on living after death, it is so blind that it also believes that this is true of animals as well, and that what goes on living after death is nothing but some tenuous breath of life, like a mist that eventually returns to its corpse. Either that, or it is something alive with no sight, hearing, or voice—blind, then, and deaf and mute, just flying around and thinking. There are many other crazy notions as well that the material world itself, which is essentially dead, breathes into our hallucinations.

This is what our love for ourselves does, a love that in and of itself is our love for self-importance; and as far as its desires are concerned, which are all centered on this physical world, our sense of self-importance is very much like animal life. In respect to the perceptions that are prompted by these desires, our love for ourselves is very much like an owl. If we constantly immerse our thinking in our sense of self-importance, then, we cannot be raised from earthly light into spiritual light to see anything of God, heaven, or eternal life.

Since this is the nature of this love, and since it is so ingenious at proving whatever it wants to, it is just as ingenious at adulterating whatever is good in the Word and falsifying whatever is true in the Word if by some necessity it is constrained to confess them.

[13] (g) *This is why the Lord does not grant us inner access to the truths that wisdom discloses and the good that love does except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life.* The Lord does this to prevent us from falling into the worst kind of profanation of what is holy, the kind I have been discussing in this section. It is because of this danger that the Lord allows evil kinds of living and many heretical kinds of religion. The next sections will deal with the Lord's tolerance of such things.

Laws of Permission Are Also Laws of Divine Providence

234

THERE are no “laws of permission”²⁰⁴ that are simply that, or that are separate from the laws of divine providence. They are the same thing; so saying that God allows something to happen does not mean that he wants it to happen but that he cannot prevent it because of his goal, which is our salvation. Whatever happens for the sake of this goal, our salvation, is in accord with the laws of divine providence, since as already noted [§§183, 211], divine providence is always moving away from and contrary to our own intentions. It is constantly focused on its goal; so at every moment of its work, at every single step of its course, when it notices that we are straying from that goal it leads and turns and adapts us in accord with its laws, leading us away from evil and toward good. We will see shortly that this cannot be accomplished without allowing bad things to happen.

Further, nothing can be allowed to happen without some cause, and causes are to be found only in some law of divine providence, a law that tells us why something is allowed to happen.

235

At heart, people who have no belief whatever in divine providence do not believe in God either. They believe in the material world instead of God, and in their own prudence instead of divine providence. This may not be obvious, because we can think either way and talk either way. We can think and talk one way from our inner self and the other way from our outer self. It is like a hinge that enables a door to open in either direction, one way when we come in and the other way when we go out; or it is like a sail that can turn a ship one way or another depending on how the skipper sets it.

If we convince ourselves of human prudence to the point of denying divine providence, then even if we do happen to see, hear, or read something when we are thinking about it, we do not really notice it. In fact, we cannot, because we are not open to anything from heaven, only to what comes from ourselves. Since we are basing our conclusions on nothing but deceptive appearances and not actually seeing anything, we can swear that we are right. Then if we also believe in nothing but the material world, we get angry at people who stand up for divine providence—

unless they are ministers, because we think that this is a matter of their theology or their profession.

Let me list some instances of permission that are still in accord with divine providence, instances that strict materialists use to justify their preference for the material world over God and human prudence over divine providence.²⁰⁵ When they read the Word, for example, they find that the wisest people²⁰⁶ of all, Adam and his wife, let themselves be led astray by the serpent and that God did not use his divine providence to prevent it [Genesis 3:1–5]. Their first son, Cain, killed his brother Abel, and God did not dissuade him by talking with him beforehand, but simply cursed him after the fact [Genesis 4:1–16]. The Israelites worshiped a golden calf in the wilderness and acknowledged it as the God who had led them out of the land of Egypt, while Jehovah was watching from nearby Mount Sinai and doing nothing to prevent it [Exodus 32:1–6]. Because David had taken a census of the people a plague was sent and thousands of people died; and God did not send Gad the prophet to announce the punishment beforehand but only after the fact [2 Samuel 24:10–25]. Solomon was allowed to revive idolatrous worship, and many of the later kings were allowed to profane the temple and the holy practices of the church.²⁰⁷ Finally, that nation was allowed to crucify the Lord.²⁰⁸

236

Worshippers of the material world and human prudence see in these instances and in many others in the Word nothing but contradictions of divine providence, so they can use them as arguments for denying providence. If they do not do so in their outward thinking, the thinking that is closest to speech, they still do it in their deeper thinking, which is distanced from their speech.

Everyone who worships self and the material world instead of divine providence feels justified in this on seeing so many irreverent people acting out their irreverence in so many ways and even boasting about it, and still not seeing any kind of punishment from God because of this. Such people feel even more justified in their rejection of divine providence when they see the success of manipulation, plots, and deceit, especially against people who are devout, fair-minded, and honest, and when they see injustice defeating justice in legal and business affairs.

237

Above all, they feel justified when they see irreligious people raised to high rank, getting positions of power in government and the church,²⁰⁹ amply supplied with wealth, and living in ostentatious luxury, while people who worship God are living in disgrace and poverty.

People who worship themselves and the material world justify their rejection of divine providence as well when they think that wars are permitted, in which so many people are killed and so many cities, nations, and families plundered.²¹⁰ Further, victories come to the prudent side and sometimes not to the just side. It does not matter, either, whether the commander is a person of integrity or not, and so on. All these matters are instances of permission under the laws of divine providence.

238

These same materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they look at the religious practices of various peoples. There are some with no knowledge of God at all, some who worship the sun and the moon, some who worship images and grotesque statues, and some who worship the dead. Particularly, they see that Islam²¹¹ has been accepted by so many empires and nations while Christianity is restricted to that smallest part of the inhabited world that we call Europe, and even there is divided. There are people in the Christian world who claim divine power for themselves and want to be worshiped as gods and who call upon the dead. There are some who place salvation in particular words that they think about and say, and who attach no value to the good things that they do. In fact, there are few who actually live out their religion. Not only that, there are all the heresies of the past and some in existence today, those of the Quakers, for example, and the Moravians and the Anabaptists;²¹² and there is the fact of the continued survival of Judaism.

Seeing this, people who deny divine providence draw the conclusion that religion is really nothing in its own right, but that it is still needed as a kind of restraint.

239

Nowadays, too, people whose inner thoughts favor the material world and human prudence alone could add more to the arguments they use to justify their position. There is the fact, for example, that all Christendom worships three gods, not realizing that God is one in person and in essence and that he is the Lord. There is also the fact that until now people have not known that there is spiritual meaning in the details of the Word and that this is the basis of its holiness. There is also ignorance of the fact that the essence of the Christian religion is to abstain from evils as sins and ignorance of the fact that we go on living as people after death. Skeptics can say privately and to each other, “If there is a divine providence, why is it only now revealing things like this?”

240

All the examples listed in §§237, 238, and 239 [236, 237, 238, and 239] have been cited to show that every least thing that happens in the world, whether to evil people or to good people, is under divine providence, and

particularly that divine providence is active in the smallest details of our own thoughts and actions and is therefore universal.

However, since these examples will not make it clear without a presentation of the details of each one individually, I need to expand briefly on the items cited in the order of their listing, beginning at §236.

1. *The wisest people of all, Adam and his wife, let themselves be led astray by the serpent, and God did not use his divine providence to prevent it.* The reason for this is that Adam and his wife do not mean the first people created on earth but the people of the earliest church. It is their new creation or regeneration that is being described in this way, the actual new creation or regeneration by the creation of heaven and earth in the first chapter, their wisdom and intelligence by the Garden of Eden, and the end of that church by their eating of the tree of knowledge.

At heart, the Word is spiritual, containing secrets of divine wisdom; and in order to contain them it has been written entirely in symbolic and figurative language. We can therefore see that the people of that church—who were supremely wise at first, but who eventually became the worst because of their pride in their intelligence—were not misled by any serpent but by self-love. That is the head of the serpent that the seed of the woman, that is, the Lord, would eventually trample under foot.²¹³

[2] Can anyone fail to see on rational grounds that this means more than what is being said in the literal narrative?²¹⁴ Can anyone take in the notion that the creation of the world happened the way it is described here? That is why scholars sweat to explain what it says in this opening chapter and finally say that they do not understand it.

Then there are the two trees in the garden or paradise, one of life and one of knowledge, with the second there to make problems; and there is the fact that simply eating from this tree is such an immense sin that not only Adam and Eve but the whole human race as well, as their descendants, became liable to damnation. There is the serpent's ability to mislead them, along with other matters; there is the creation of the wife from her husband's rib; there is their recognition of their nakedness after the fall and covering themselves with fig leaves; there is the provision of leather garments to cover their bodies; and there is the stationing of the cherub with a flaming sword to guard the path to the tree of life.²¹⁵

[3] These are all images used to describe the establishment of the earliest church, its state and its change, and eventually its demise. You may find explanation of the secrets of them all, secrets contained in that spiritual meaning that is in the details, in the volumes on Genesis and Exodus published in London under the title *Secrets of Heaven*.

We may conclude, then, that the tree of life in Genesis means the Lord as to his divine providence, and that the tree of knowledge means humanity as to its own prudence.

242

2. *Their first son, Cain, killed his brother Abel, and God did not dissuade him by talking with him beforehand, but simply cursed him after the fact.* Since Adam and his wife mean the earliest church, as just noted [§241], Cain and Abel as their first sons mean the two essential qualities of that church, love and wisdom, or charity and faith. Abel means love and charity, and Cain means wisdom or faith, particularly wisdom separated from love or faith separated from charity. When faith has been separated, wisdom tends not only to reject love and charity but to destroy them, killing its own brother.

It is reasonably well known in Christian circles that this is what faith does when it is separated from charity—see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith*.²¹⁶ [2] The curse of Cain is about the spiritual state that people who separate faith from charity, or wisdom from love, arrive at after death. However, in order to prevent the death of wisdom or faith, a mark is placed on Cain so that no one will kill him [Genesis 4:15]. This is because love cannot exist without wisdom, or charity without faith.

Since the meaning of this is very much like the meaning of eating from the tree of knowledge, it follows right after the description of Adam and his wife. People who have separated faith from charity are wrapped up in their own intelligence; while people who have faith because of their caring have a gift of intelligence from the Lord and are in sympathy with divine providence.

243

3. *The Israelites worshiped a golden calf in the wilderness and acknowledged it as the God who had led them out of the land of Egypt, while God was watching from nearby Mount Sinai and doing nothing to prevent it.* This happened in the wilderness of Sinai near the mountain. The fact that Jehovah did not dissuade them from this outrageous worship is in keeping with all the laws of divine providence, both those already mentioned and those that will follow. They were allowed this evil to keep them all from destruction. That is, the Israelites had been led out of Egypt in order to portray the Lord's church, and they could not portray it until Egyptian idolatry had been uprooted from their hearts. This could not be accomplished unless they were given room to act out what was in their hearts and get rid of it because of severe punishment.

Further meanings of this worship, including the threat of total rejection and the raising up of a new nation by Moses, may be found in the discussion of Exodus 22 [32] in *Secrets of Heaven* [10393–10512], where these subjects are discussed.

4. *Because David had taken a census of the people, a plague was sent and thousands of people died; and God did not send Gad the prophet to announce the punishment beforehand but only after the fact.* Various thoughts and ruminations about this may occur to people who resolutely deny divine providence. They may ask particularly why David was not warned in advance and why the people were punished so severely for David's transgression.

244

The reason he was not warned in advance comes under laws of divine providence already presented, especially the two²¹⁷ explained in §§129–153 and 154–174. The reason the people were punished so severely for the transgression of their king (seventy thousand were struck by the plague) had to do not with the king but with the people, since it says, "Jehovah became more angry with Israel, so he prompted David against them by saying, 'Go, number Israel and Judah'" (2 Samuel 24:1).

5. *Solomon was allowed to start idolatrous worship.* This was in order that he might provide an image of the Lord's kingdom or the church in all the religions of the whole world, since the church established among the people of Judah and Israel was a representative church. This means that all the laws and statutes of that church were images of spiritual principles of the church, its inner reality. The people themselves represented the church, their king represented the Lord—David the Lord who was to come into the world, and Solomon the Lord after his coming. Since after the transformation of his human nature the Lord had power over heaven and earth (as he himself says in Matthew 28:18), Solomon as an image of him is portrayed in impressive splendor and had more wisdom than all the other kings on earth. He built the temple as well, and particularly allowed and initiated the religions of many nations, which provides an image of the various religions in our own world. His seven hundred wives mean much the same, as do his three hundred concubines (see 1 Kings 11:3), since a wife in the Word means the church and a concubine means a religion.

245

This enables us to see why it fell to Solomon to build the temple, which means the divine human nature of the Lord (John 2:19, 21) as well as the church, and why he was allowed to initiate idolatrous worship and marry so many wives.

In *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord* 43, 44, you may see that in many passages in the Word David means the Lord who was to come into the world.

6. *Many of the kings after Solomon were allowed to profane the temple and the holy practices of the church.* This was because the people portrayed the church, and the king was their head. It was also because the people of

246

Israel and Judah were a kind of people who could not represent the church for very long. At heart, they were idolaters. Because of this, they gradually drifted away from their representative worship by so misconstruing everything the church stood for that ultimately they destroyed it. This was portrayed by the way the kings profaned the temple and by their idolatry; and the actual ruin of the church was portrayed by the destruction of the temple itself, the carrying off of the people of Israel, and the Babylonian captivity of the people of Judah.

That was the reason, and anything that happens for some reason happens under divine providence, under one of its laws.

247

7. *That nation was allowed to crucify the Lord.* This was because the church in that nation was in ruins, so much so that it not only did not recognize and believe in the Lord but actually felt hatred toward him. Still, everything they did to him was under the laws of his own divine providence. On the passion of the cross as the last temptation or the last battle, by which the Lord completely defeated the hells and completely transformed his human nature, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord* 12–14 and *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* 34–35.

248

So far, I have been explaining the instances listed in §236 above, instances from the Word that materialists may use to support their reasoning against divine providence, because as already noted [§235] anything such people see or hear or read they can use as arguments against it. However, relatively few people justify their rejection of divine providence by passages from the Word. Most of them draw on what meets their eyes; and it is the list of these in §237 that will now be explained in the same way.

249

1. *Everyone who worships self and the material world instead of divine providence feels justified in this on seeing so many irreligious people acting out their irreverence in so many ways even as they boast about it, and still not seeing any kind of punishment from God because of this.* All instances of irreverence and of boasting about it are instances of permission whose reasons are laws of divine providence. All of us are free, perfectly free, to think whatever we wish, whether against God or for God. People who oppose God in their thoughts are rarely punished in this world, because they are always susceptible to reformation. They are punished in the spiritual world, though. This happens after they die, when they can no longer be reformed.

[2] We can see that laws of divine providence cause these instances of permission if we recall the laws already presented and look at them closely, as follows. We should act in freedom and in accord with reason

(§§71–97 [71–99]). We should not be compelled by outside forces to think and intend and so to believe and love in matters of our religion, but we should guide ourselves and sometimes compel ourselves (§§129–153).²¹⁸ Our own prudence is nothing. It only seems to be something, as it should. Rather, divine providence is all-inclusive because it extends to the smallest details (§§191–213). Divine providence focuses on eternal matters, and focuses on temporal matters only as they coincide with eternal ones (§§214–220). We are not granted inner access to the truths that our faith discloses and the good effects of our caring except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life (§§221–233).

[3] It will also become clear that the reasons behind instances of permission are the laws of divine providence from the principles about to be presented as follows. Evils are allowed for the sake of the goal, which is salvation (§§275–284). Divine providence is constantly just as much with the evil as with the good (§§285–307). And lastly, the Lord cannot act contrary to the laws of his divine providence, because to do so would be to act contrary to his divine love and his divine wisdom and therefore contrary to himself (§§331–340).

If we put these laws together, they can show us the reasons why acts of irreverence are allowed by the Lord and not punished when they happen in our thoughts and are rarely punished even when they are intended and therefore in our volition but are not acted out.

However, every evil entails its own punishment. It is as though there were engraved on the evil the punishment that the unbeliever will suffer after death.

[4] What has just been presented will serve to explain the following other instances cited in §237 as well. *People who worship themselves and the material world feel justified in their denial of divine providence when they see the success of manipulation, plots, and deceit even against people who are devout, fair-minded, and honest, and when they see injustice defeating justice in legal and business affairs.*

All the laws of divine providence are needed. Since they are the reasons things like this are allowed, we can see that if we are to live human lives, to be reformed and saved, the only way the Lord can keep us from such actions is indirectly. For people who realize that all kinds of murder, adultery, theft, and perjury are sins, this is accomplished through the Word, specifically through the provisions of the Ten Commandments. For people who do not realize that they are sins, civil laws and a fear of their penalties serve as means. Other means are moral laws including our fear of losing reputation, rank, and profit. The Lord uses these means to

lead evil people, but he prevents them only from actions, not from thinking about acting or wanting to act. The Lord uses the other means to lead good people not only away from the actions but also away from thinking about acting and wanting to act.

250

2. *People who worship themselves and the material world instead of divine providence feel justified when they see irreligious people raised to high rank, getting positions of power in government and the church,²¹⁹ amply supplied with wealth, and living in ostentatious luxury, while people who worship God are living in disgrace and poverty.* People who worship themselves and the material world think that rank and wealth are the highest possible joys, the only possible joys, joy itself. If they think at all about God because of their first childhood religion, they call these things divine blessings; and as long as they have no higher aspirations than this, they believe that God exists and worship him. However, there is something hidden in their worship that they themselves do not know about, an assumption that God will keep raising them to higher honor and greater wealth. If they do achieve this, their worship tends more and more into superficiality until it drifts away, and eventually they trivialize and deny God. They do the same if they lose the respect and wealth on which they have set their hearts.

In that case, what are rank and wealth but problems to these evil people? [2] They are not problems to the good, because they do not set their hearts on them. They focus rather on the service or the good that respect and wealth can help them accomplish. Only people who worship themselves and the material world, then, can reject divine providence on seeing that irreverent people are given high rank and wealth and get positions of power in the state and the church.

Further, what is higher or lower rank; what is more or less wealth? Is it really anything but something we imagine? Is one person more contented or happier than the other? Look at a government official or even a monarch or emperor. After a few years, does their rank not become simply commonplace, something that no longer brings joy to the heart, something that can even seem worthless? Are people of high rank any happier on that account than people of lower rank, or even than people of no rank at all, like commoners or their servants? These can be even happier when things go well for them and they are content with their lot. What troubles the heart more, what is more often wounded, what is more intensely angered, than self-love? This happens whenever it is not given the respect to which, at heart, it raises itself, whenever things do not turn out the way it wills and wishes.

If rank is not a matter of substance or service, then, what is it but a concept? Can this concept have a place in any kind of thinking except thinking about oneself and the world, and precisely in the thought that the world is everything and eternity is nothing?

[3] I need now to say something about why divine providence allows people who are irreligious at heart to be raised to high rank and to become wealthy. Irreverent or evil people can be just as useful as devout or good people. In fact, they can be more ardent about it because they are focused on themselves in the good they do and regard advancement as intrinsically useful. The stronger their self-love grows, then, the more intense is their passion for service for the sake of their own renown. Devout or good people do not have this kind of fire unless it is subtly fueled by rank. So the Lord controls people of high rank who are irreligious at heart through their concern for their reputation. He inspires them to do what is good for the commonwealth or the country, for the community or the city in which they live, and also for their own fellow-citizens or neighbors. This is the Lord's government, his divine providence, with people like this. The Lord's kingdom is in fact an organized realm of constructive activities;²²⁰ and where there are only a few individuals who perform service for the sake of service, he works things out so that people who worship themselves are raised to the higher offices where they are inspired to do good by their own love.

[4] Imagine some hellish country on earth (though there is no such thing), where nothing but self-love held sway, where self-love itself was the devil. Would everyone not do more constructive things because of the fire of self-love and the radiance of his or her own renown than people did in any other country? While all of them mouthed off about the public good, they would have their own good at heart. All of them would be turning to their leader in order to be promoted, each one wanting to be the greatest. Can people like this see that God exists? They are enveloped by smoke like a burning building, and no gleam of spiritual truth can get through to them with its light. I have seen this smoke surrounding a hell made up of people like this.

Light your lantern²²¹ and ask how many people there are in quest of high office in today's countries who are not loves for themselves and the world. Will you find fifty in a thousand who are loves for God?²²² And only a few of those will be looking for high office. Given the fact, then, that so few are loves for God and so many are loves for themselves and the world, and given the fact that these latter kinds of love inspire more acts of service with their fires than loves for God do with theirs, how can

people justify their beliefs by the fact that more evil people than good people are eminent and wealthy?

[5] These words of the Lord lend their support: “The lord praised the unjust steward because he had acted prudently, for the children of this generation are more prudent than the children of light in their generation. So I tell you, make friends for yourself of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when you lose it they may accept you into eternal tents” (Luke 16:8, 9).

The earthly sense of this is obvious. In its spiritual meaning, though, the mammon of unrighteousness means those insights into what is true and good that evil people have and that they use solely for gaining rank and wealth for themselves. It is these insights with which good people or children of light make friends, and which accept them into eternal tents.

The Lord tells us that there are many people who are loves for themselves and the world and few who are loves for God when he says, “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in through it; but tight and narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13, 14). On rank and wealth as either curses or blessings, and for whom, see §217 above.

251

3. *People who worship themselves and the world justify their rejection of divine providence as well when they think that wars are permitted, in which so many people are killed and their wealth plundered.* It is not because of divine providence that wars happen, because wars are inseparable from murder, plunder, violence, cruelty, and other appalling evils that are diametrically opposed to Christian caring. However, it is absolutely necessary that they be permitted, because since the earliest people, the times meant by Adam and his wife (see §241 above), our life’s love has become basically a love of controlling others, ultimately everyone, and of gaining possession of the world’s wealth, ultimately all of it. These two loves cannot be kept in chains as long as it is the intent of divine providence that we act freely and rationally, as already explained in §§71–97 [71–99]. There is also the fact that if it were not for this permission, the Lord could not lead us out of our evil, so we could not be reformed and saved. That is, unless evils were allowed to surface, we would not see them and therefore would not admit to them; so we could not be induced to resist them. That is why evils cannot be suppressed by some exercise of divine providence. If they were, they would stay closed in, and like the diseases called cancer and gangrene, would spread and devour everything that is alive and human.

[2] From birth, each of us is like a little hell in constant conflict with heaven. The Lord cannot rescue any of us from our hell unless we see

that we are in it and want to be rescued. This cannot happen unless there are instances of permission that are caused by laws of divine providence.

This is why there are lesser and greater wars, the lesser ones between property owners and their neighbors and the greater ones between the rulers of nations and their neighbors.²²³ The only difference between the lesser and the greater ones is that the lesser ones are limited by national laws and the greater ones by international laws. There is also the fact that in both cases the participants want to violate the laws, and that the lesser ones cannot, but the greater ones can, though still not beyond the bounds of possibility.

[3] There are several reasons hidden in the treasury of divine wisdom why the greater wars, with all their inevitable murder, plunder, violence, and cruelty, are not suppressed by the Lord, acting on the monarchs and leaders, either at the outset or while the wars are in progress. They are suppressed only at the end, when the power of one side or the other has become so weak that there is a threat of extinction. Some of these reasons have been revealed to me, and one of them is that all wars, regardless of the civil issues involved, portray states of the church in heaven and are corresponding images.²²⁴ This was true of all the wars described in the Word, and it is true of all wars today. The wars described in the Word are the ones the Israelites waged with various nations such as the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Assyrians. When the Israelites, portraying the church, departed from their precepts and laws and fell into the evils meant by these nations (each of the nations the Israelites went to war with portrayed some particular kind of evil), then they were punished by that nation. For example, when they profaned the holy practices of the church by committing gross idolatry they were punished by the Assyrians and Chaldeans, because Assyria and Chaldea stand for the profanation of what is holy. For the meaning of the wars with the Philistines, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* 50–54 [49–54].

[4] Wars in our own times, wherever they occur, portray the same kind of things. Everything that happens in this physical world is in response to something that is happening in the spiritual world, and everything spiritual involves the church. In this world, no one knows what countries in Christendom are the equivalents of the Moabites and the Ammonites, the Syrians and the Philistines, the Chaldeans and the Assyrians, and the other nations against whom the Israelites waged war, but their equivalents do exist.

We in this physical world are absolutely incapable of seeing what the quality of the earthly church is, and which are the particular evils it has given way to, for which it is suffering the punishments of war. This is because all that show in this world are outward matters that do not constitute the church. We can see them in the spiritual world, though, where the inner realities are visible that the real church is concerned with. All the people there form alliances in keeping with their states. Their conflicts in the spiritual world correspond to our wars; and both are correspondingly governed by the Lord according to his divine providence.

[5] Spiritual-minded people realize that the Lord is governing wars in this world by his divine providence, but materialists do not, except when a holiday is declared because of a victory. Then they may get down on their knees and thank God for giving them victory; and they may have said a few prayerful words before the battle began. When they come to their own senses, though, they credit the victory either to their leader's skill or to some decision or event in the middle of the battle, something that they did not think about at the time, but that led to the victory.

[6] On the fact that divine providence, called "luck," is at work in even the smallest, most trivial details, see §212 above. If you recognize divine providence in these matters, you must surely recognize it in affairs of war. In everyday language, we refer to a war's progress and serendipitous events as "the fortunes of war." This is divine providence, especially in the decisions and planning of the leaders, even if at the time and afterwards they attribute everything to their own prudence.

But they may do this if they want to, since they are in complete freedom to think in favor of divine providence or against it, in favor of God or against him. However, they might know that no trace of their decisions or planning comes from themselves. It all comes either from heaven or from hell—from hell by permission, and from heaven by providence.

252

4. *People who worship themselves and the world justify their rejection of divine providence when they base their thinking on the observation that victories come to the prudent side and sometimes not to the just side. It does not matter, either, whether an officer is a person of integrity or not.* The reason it seems as though victories come to the prudent side and sometimes not to the just side is that we judge by appearances. We lean toward one side rather than the other, and we justify the side we prefer by rationalizations. Then too, people do not know that the rightness of a cause is spiritual in heaven and earthly in this world, as has just been explained, and that these two levels are united by a connection between things past and things to come, a connection known only to the Lord.

[2] The reason it makes no difference whether the leader is a person of integrity or not is the same as the reason argued in §250, namely, that evil people are just as useful as good people and because of their fire are more avid than good people. This is true especially in wars because evil people are more skilled and ingenious than good people in devious strategizing, and because of their love for glory they find more pleasure in murdering and plundering people they recognize and identify as enemies. Good people have only care and passion for protecting, and rarely any care and passion for aggression.

It is much the same with spirits of hell and angels of heaven. Spirits of hell attack, and angels of heaven protect.

We may conclude, then, that it is appropriate for all to protect their country and their fellow citizens against invading enemies, even using evil officers; but it is not appropriate to make enemies for no cause. When the cause is one's own glory, that is essentially diabolical, since it comes from self-love.²²⁵

Up to this point I have been explaining the instances listed in §237 that strict materialists use to justify their opposition to divine providence. Now I need to explain the ones about the religions of many nations that follow in §238, which also serve strict materialists as arguments against divine providence. These people say at heart, "How can there be so many contradictory religions rather than one worldwide, true religion when the goal of divine providence is a heaven from the human race [as explained in §§27–45 above]?"²²⁶

Please listen, though! No matter what religion people are born into, people can all be saved if they believe in God and live by the precepts of the Ten Commandments—not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to commit perjury, because to do so would be contrary to their religion and therefore contrary to God. They have a fear of God and a love for their neighbor, a fear of God because they think that committing these acts is against God and a love for their neighbor because murder, adultery, theft, perjury, and coveting their neighbor's house and spouse are against their neighbor. Because these people turn to the Lord during their lives and do no harm to their neighbors, they are led by the Lord; and people who are so led are also taught about God and their neighbor according to their religions. This is because people who live this way want to be taught, while people who live otherwise do not. Further, people who want to be taught are taught by angels after death, when they become spirits, and gladly accept the kind of truths we find in the Word. On this subject see the material in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 91–97 and 104–113.

254

1. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they look at the religious practices of various peoples. There are some with no knowledge of God at all, some who worship the sun and the moon, some who worship images and statues.* People who use this as a source of arguments against divine providence do not know the secrets of heaven, the innumerable secrets of heaven of which we know scarcely one. One of them is that we are not taught directly from heaven but indirectly (see §§154–174 above). Since we are taught indirectly, and since the Gospel could not be brought to everyone in the whole world by missionaries, while some religion could be carried by various means even to people in the remote corners of the world, this has therefore been accomplished by divine providence. That is, people do not simply originate a religion by themselves, they learn from others (who learned it from the Word either directly or by transmission through others) that there is a God, that there is a heaven and a hell and a life after death, and that we must worship God in order to be blessed.

[2] On the way religion has been transplanted throughout the world from the ancient Word and then from the Israelite Word, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 101–103; and on the fact that if it were not for the Word no one would know about God, heaven and hell, or life after death, let alone about the Lord, see §§114–118 of that work.

Once a religion has taken root, the Lord leads its people by the laws and principles of that religion. Further, the Lord makes sure that in every religion there are laws like those of the Ten Commandments, stating that we are to worship God, not to profane his name, to observe holy days, to honor our parents, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, and not to commit perjury. Any people that regards these laws as divine and lives by them because of its religion is saved, as stated in §253 above. Most of the peoples remote from Christianity regard these not as civil laws but as divine laws and keep them sacred. In *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem Drawn from the Ten Commandments*,²²⁷ from beginning to end, it shows that we are saved by living according to these laws.

[3] Another of heaven's secrets is that in the Lord's sight the angelic heaven looks like a single person whose soul and life is the Lord, and that the form of this divine person is human in every respect, not only as to its outer members and organs but also as to its inner members and organs, which are abundant, and even as to its skin, membranes, cartilage, and bones. In this person, though, all these components are not material but spiritual; and the Lord has arranged that even people

whom the Gospel has not reached, people who simply have some religion, can have a place in that divine person who is heaven. They can make up the parts we call skin, membranes, cartilage, and bones, and they are as full of heavenly joy as anyone else. It makes no difference whether their joy is like that of angels in the highest heaven or like that of angels in the lowest heaven, since all the people who get to heaven attain the highest joy of their hearts. They could not bear anything higher or they would suffocate.

[4] It is like a farmer and a king. A farmer can have his highest joy when he is dressed in new clothes of plain wool and sits down at a table where there is some pork, a joint of beef, some cheese, and some beer and mulled wine. He would be profoundly uncomfortable if he were dressed up like a king in purple, silk, gold, and silver and confronted with a table where there was a feast of all kinds of rich delicacies and fine wine. We can see, then, that there is heavenly happiness for the last as well as for the first, all on their own level. So there is happiness for people outside Christendom, if they simply abstain from evils as sins against God because evils are against their religion.²²⁸

[5] There are a few people who know nothing whatever about God. You may see in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 116 that if they have lived moral lives, after death they are taught by angels and accept something spiritual in their moral life. Much the same is true of people who worship the sun and the moon and believe that God is there. That is all they know, so it is not charged to them as a sin. After all, the Lord says “If you were blind,” that is, if you did not know, “then you would have no sin” (John 9:41).

There are many people, though, who worship images and statues, even in the Christian world. This really is idolatry, but not for all of them. For some, the statues serve to awaken thoughts of God. It is from an inflow from heaven that people who believe in God want to see God; and since some of them cannot raise their minds above the sensory level the way deeper, spiritual people can, they awaken their thought with a statue or image. If people who do this are not worshiping the statue as God, and if they live by the laws of the Ten Commandments for religious reasons, they are saved. [6] We can see from this that because the Lord wants to save everyone, he makes sure that all of us can have our places in heaven if we live well.

Heaven is like a single person in the Lord’s sight, and therefore heaven corresponds to the human overall and in every detail, with people there who are equivalent to our skin, membranes, cartilages, and bones:

see *Heaven and Hell* 59–102 (published in London in 1758) and *Secrets of Heaven* 5552–5564 [5552–5569], as well as §§201–204 above.

255

2. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they see that Islam has been accepted by so many empires and nations.* The fact that this religion has been accepted by more nations than Christianity can be a real problem for people who give thought to divine providence and also believe that we cannot be saved unless we have been born Christian, born, that is, where the Word is and people therefore know about the Lord. Islam presents no problem, though, to people who believe that divine providence is over everything. They try to discern where it is, and they find it. It is because of divine providence that Islam recognizes the Lord as the Son of God, the wisest of mortals, and a supreme prophet, one who came into the world to teach us. Most of them regard him as greater than Muhammad.²²⁹

[2] To make it abundantly clear that this religion was prompted by the Lord's divine providence in order to eliminate the idolatrous practices of many nations, I need to lay things out in sequence, so I shall start with the origins of idolatry.

Before Islam, the worship of idols was widespread over the whole world. This was because the churches that existed before the Lord's coming were "symbolic churches." The Israelite church was like this, with its tabernacle, Aaron's garments, its sacrifices, all the furnishings of the temple in Jerusalem, and its laws. All of these were symbolic. Further, for our early ancestors the knowledge of correspondential relationships, which are also symbolic, was the essential knowledge of the sages. It was especially developed in Egypt, and was the basis of their hieroglyphs. On the basis of this knowledge they understood the meaning of all kinds of animals and all kinds of trees, as well as the meaning of mountains, hills, rivers, and springs, of the sun, the moon, and the stars. It was because their worship was symbolic, wholly made up of correspondences, that they conducted their worship on mountains and hills and in groves and gardens. That is why they regarded springs as holy and turned their faces toward the sun in reverence to God. Particularly, it is why they made statues of horses, cattle, calves, and sheep, even of birds, fish, and snakes, and set them up in their houses and elsewhere in patterns that embodied the spiritual characteristics of the church that they reflected or symbolized. They put similar images in their temples to call to their minds the holy things that they symbolized.

[3] In later times, when the knowledge of correspondential relationships had been forgotten, their descendants began to worship the images

as holy in and of themselves. They did not realize that their ancestors had not seen anything holy about them, but saw them simply as symbolizing and therefore pointing to something holy by virtue of their correspondence. This was how the idolatry started that was to fill the whole world, including Asia, its surrounding islands,²³⁰ Africa, and Europe.

In order to uproot all these idolatrous practices, under the auspices of divine providence a new religion developed²³¹ that was appropriate to the character of people of the Near East. In this religion there would be material from both Testaments of the Word to teach that the Lord had come into the world and that he was the greatest prophet, the wisest of all, and the son of God. The agent of this was Muhammad, which is why the religion is called Muhammadanism.²³²

[4] This religion, which as just noted was suited to the character of the people of the Near East, was awakened under the Lord's divine providence in order to counter the idolatrous beliefs of so many people and to give them some awareness of the Lord before they entered the spiritual world. This religion would not have been accepted by all these nations, it would not have been able to uproot their idolatrous practices, unless it had been made concordant with and suitable to the mental concepts and the lives of all these people.

The reason they did not recognize the Lord as the God of heaven and earth was that the people of the Near East believed in God as the Creator of the universe and could not grasp the idea that he had come into the world and taken on a human nature. Actually, Christians cannot grasp this either, so in thought they separate his divine nature from his human nature, associate divinity with the Father in heaven, and do not know what to do with the humanity.

[5] We can see from this that Islam too was started under the guidance of the Lord's divine providence and that all its adherents who believe in the Lord as the Son of God and live by the laws of the Ten Commandments (which they also have) by abstaining from evils as sins, come into a heaven called the Islamic heaven. This heaven is divided into three heavens, the highest, the intermediate, and the lowest. Muslims who believe that the Lord is one with the Father and is the only God come into the highest; people who give up polygamy and live with one wife come into the second; and people who are starting on this path come into the first.

There is more on this in my *Supplements on the Last Judgment and the Spiritual World* 68–72, where Muslims and Muhammad are discussed.

3. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they see that Christianity is restricted to that smaller part of the inhabited world*

that we call Europe, and even there is divided. The reason Christianity is found only in that smaller part of the habitable world called Europe is that it is not suited to the character of people of the Middle East the way Islam is, Islam being a kind of compound religion, as already noted [§255]. Any religion that is not suitable is not accepted. For example, a religion that prohibits marrying more than one wife will not be accepted but rejected by people who have been polygamists for centuries; and the same principle applies to other practices mandated by Christianity.

[2] It does not matter whether a larger or a smaller part of the world accepts a religion as long as there are people who have the Word, since there is still light from them to people who are outside the church and do not have the Word. This has been explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 104–113. Strange as it may seem, wherever the Word is read reverently and the Lord is worshiped because of the Word, the Lord is present along with heaven. This is because the Lord is the Word, and the Word is that divine truth that makes heaven what it is. This is why the Lord says, “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst” (Matthew 18:20). This can be done with the Word by Europeans, then, in many places in the habitable world, because Europeans are in business all around the world and are either reading the Word or teaching from it everywhere. It may seem as though I am making this up, but it is true.

[3] The reason Christianity is divided is that it is based on the Word, and the Word is composed entirely of correspondential imagery. For the most part, these images are semblances of truth that contain hidden genuine truth. Since the church must necessarily derive its teaching from the literal meaning of the Word, and that meaning is of this nature, it is inevitable that there should be quarrels and arguments and dissent in the church especially about the interpretation of the Word, though not about the Word itself or the divine nature of the Lord himself. It is universally believed that the Word is holy and that the Lord is divine, and these two beliefs are essential features of the church. This means that people who deny the Lord’s divine nature, the ones called Socinians, are excommunicated by the church, while people who deny the holiness of the Word are not even considered Christians.

I may add at this point something striking about the Word, something that points to the conclusion that inwardly the Word is divine truth itself, and that at its very heart it is the Lord. [4] When spirits open the Word and rub it against their face or clothing, then simply from this touch their faces or clothing glow as brightly as the moon or a star.

Everyone they meet can see this. This is a witness to the fact that nothing in the world is more holy than the Word.

On the Word being composed entirely of correspondential imagery, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 5–26; on the need to draw and corroborate the teaching of the church from the literal meaning of the Word, see §§50–61 of that work; on the fact that it is possible to get heresies from the literal meaning of the Word but harmful to validate them, see §§91–97; and on the church being derived from the Word, with its quality determined by its understanding of the Word, see §§76–79.

4. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence by observing that in many nations where Christianity is accepted, there are people who claim divine power for themselves and want to be worshiped as gods and who call upon the dead.* They²³³ do actually say that they are not claiming divine power and wanting²³⁴ to be worshiped as gods, but they still say that they can open and close heaven, forgive or bind sins, and essentially save or damn people, and this is strictly divine doing. The only goal of divine providence is our reformation and salvation. This is what it is constantly working for with each one of us. Salvation comes only through belief in the divine nature of the Lord and a trust that he saves us when we live by his commandments. [2] Can anyone fail to see that this is the Babylon described in the Book of Revelation²³⁵ and the Babel that we find throughout the prophets? We can see that it is the Lucifer²³⁶ of Isaiah 14 if we read verses 4 and 22 of that chapter. It says in verse 4, “You will proclaim this parable about the king of Babel,” and goes on to say, “I will cut down the name and remainder of Babel” in verse 22. This makes it very clear that “Babel” there is “Lucifer” when it says, “How have you fallen from heaven, Lucifer, child of the dawn. And you said in your heart, ‘I will scale the heavens, I will raise my throne above the stars of God and sit on the mountain of the meeting in the northern regions; I will rise above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’” (verses 12, 13, 14).

It is widely recognized that they call upon the dead and pray for their help. We refer to this as invocation because the practice was established by the Papal Bull that confirmed the decisions of the Council of Trent, where it states explicitly that they are to be invoked.²³⁷ Is anyone unaware that we should pray only to God and not to any dead mortal?

[3] Now, though, I need to explain why the Lord let things like this happen. There is no denying that it was for the sake of the goal, our salvation. We know that there is no salvation apart from the Lord;

and because this is true, it was vital that the Lord be preached from the Word and that the Christian church be established by this means. This called for leaders who would do this with passion, and the only ones available were people who would preach with the kind of flaming passion that comes from self-love. It was primarily this fire that roused them to proclaim the Lord and preach the Word. It is because their initial state was like this that Lucifer is called “the child of the dawn” in verse 12.

However, once they realized that they could use the holy nature of the Word and the church to gain power, the self-love that had at first roused them to proclaim the Lord broke loose from within and eventually rose to such a height that they transferred all of the Lord’s divine power to themselves, leaving nothing unclaimed. [4] This could not be prevented by the Lord’s divine providence, because if it had been, they would have preached that the Lord was not God and that the Word was not holy, and would have become Socinians or Arians, thereby destroying the whole church. The church, though, despite the quality of its leadership, did survive among its subject people. All the people of that religion who turn to the Lord and abstain from evils as sins are saved; so they make up many heavenly communities in the spiritual world. It has also been provided that one of these nations should not accept the yoke of this kind of control, because they regarded the Word as holy. These noble people are the French.²³⁸

But what has happened? [5] When self-love has promoted its power all the way to the Lord’s throne, has removed him from it and set itself there, then the only thing that can happen is that the other love, the Lucifer, will profane everything that has to do with the Word and the church. To prevent this, the Lord in his divine providence made sure that they would distance themselves from worship of him; invoke the dead by praying to their statues, kissing their bones, and kneeling at their tombs; prohibit the reading of the Word; ascribe holiness to a Mass that ordinary people do not understand; and sell salvation for cash. They were allowed to do this because otherwise they would have profaned the holy nature of the Word and the church. As explained in the preceding section, we cannot profane what is holy unless we know about it.

[6] To prevent the profanation of the Most Holy Supper, it has happened under the Lord’s divine providence that they have divided it. They give the bread to the congregation and drink the wine themselves. The wine in the Holy Supper means what is holy and true, while the bread means what is holy and good. When they are separated, the wine means

truth profaned and the bread means what is good adulterated. Particularly, they have made the Supper physical and material and focused on it as the primary feature of religion.

Anyone who looks closely at these individual items and weighs them in some mental enlightenment can see the marvelous workings of divine providence in protecting what is holy in the church and in saving everyone who can be saved, virtually snatching from the flames everyone who is willing to be rescued.

5. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they see that there are some professing Christians who place salvation in particular words that they think about and say, and attach no value to the good things that they do.*²³⁹ I have explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* that this is what people are like who make nothing but faith the basis of salvation, not a caring life, and especially who separate faith from charity. I also noted there [§§44–68] that these people are meant in the Word by the Philistines, the dragon, and goats.

[2] The reason a teaching like this is permitted under divine providence is to prevent the profanation of the divine nature of the Lord and the holy nature of the Word. The Lord's divine nature is not profaned when salvation is thought to consist of saying, "May God the Father have mercy for the sake of his Son who suffered the cross and made satisfaction for us," because this is addressing not the divine nature of the Lord but his human nature, without believing that it is divine. There is no profanation of the Word, either, because no attention is paid to the passages that speak of love, caring, doing, and works. They say that all of these are included in their statement of faith. People who advocate this belief say to themselves, "Since the law does not condemn me, neither does evil; and since any good that I myself do is not good, that does not save me." So they are like people who do not know anything true from the Word, which means that they cannot profane it.

However, the only people who really advocate this belief are the ones who are caught up in pride in their own intellect because of their self-love. At heart, they are not even Christians, though they want to appear to be.

I need now to explain that the Lord's divine providence is constantly at work to save people for whom faith separated from charity has become a theological principle. [3] Under the Lord's divine providence, even though this kind of faith has become a theological tenet, everyone knows that this kind of faith does not bring salvation. Salvation requires a caring life in which faith participates. All the churches where this theology is accepted teach that there is no salvation unless we examine ourselves, see

our sins, admit them, repent, and refrain from the sins and begin a new life. This is the urgent preface read to all who come to the Holy Supper, together with the statement that unless they do so, they mingle the sacred and the profane and consign themselves to eternal damnation. In England they even say that unless they do so the devil will enter into them as he did into Judas and destroy them, soul and body alike. We can see from this that everyone in churches where faith alone is accepted is still taught that we should abstain from evils as sins.

[4] Not only that, everyone who is born Christian knows that we are to abstain from evils as sins, because the Ten Commandments are placed in the hand of every boy and every girl and taught them by their parents and teachers. Further, all the citizens of the realm, especially commoners, are questioned by priests as to their knowledge of Christian theology solely on the basis of their recitation of the Ten Commandments from memory and warned that they should do what the Commandments say. At such times, the religious authority never tells them that they are not under the yoke of this law²⁴⁰ or that they cannot obey it because they cannot do anything good on their own.

The Athanasian Creed is accepted throughout Christendom, and people believe what it says at the end, that the Lord is going to come to judge the living and the dead and that then those who have done what is good will enter into eternal life and those who have done what is evil will enter into eternal fire.²⁴¹

[5] In Sweden, where a theology of faith alone is accepted, it is clearly taught that there is no such thing as faith separated from charity or from good actions. We find this in an “Added Reminder” inserted in all Psalters under the title “Obotfertigas foerhinder,” or “Obstacles or Obstructions to the Impenitent.” It says there, “People who are rich in good actions thereby show that they are rich in faith, because when faith is a saving faith, it works through charity. There is no faith that justifies us by itself, apart from good actions, just as there is no good tree without good fruit, no sun without light and warmth, no water without moisture.”

[6] I include these few things to show that even though a theology of faith alone may be accepted, the good effects of our caring are taught everywhere—that is, good actions. This happens under the Lord’s divine providence so that the common people will not be led astray by this faith.

I have heard Luther (having talked with him several times in the spiritual world) totally disclaiming faith alone. He has said that when he

decreed faith alone, an angel of the Lord warned him not to. However, he thought to himself that if he did not reject works,²⁴² there could be no separation from Catholic theology, so in spite of the warning he insisted on it.

6. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence by noting that there have been many heresies in Christendom and that there still are—those of the Quakers, for example, and the Moravians and the Anabaptists, among many others.* The thought may occur that if divine providence were over every least detail and did have as its goal the salvation of everyone, it would have made sure that there was one true religion throughout the whole world, one religion undivided, and certainly not torn apart by heresies. Use your reason, though, and think as deeply as you can. Can we be saved if we are not first reformed? After all, we are born immersed in love for ourselves and the world; and since these loves have within themselves no trace of love for God or love for our neighbor except for selfish reasons, we are also born involved in all kinds of evil. What trace of love or mercy is there in these loves? Does it matter to them if we cheat others, or slander them, or harbor murderous hatred toward them, or seduce their spouses, or torture them in order to get even? Our basic agenda is to be the greatest of all and to take possession of everyone's wealth. This means that we see others as insignificant in comparison to ourselves, as worthless. Can people like this be saved? First they need to be led out of their evils and thereby reformed. I have already offered abundant evidence that that this can be done only within the limits of the many laws of divine providence.²⁴³ For the most part, these laws are unknown even though they are matters of divine love and divine wisdom alike, laws the Lord cannot violate because to do so would be to destroy us rather than to save us. [2] Review the laws already presented and compare them, and you will see.

Consider, then, that according to these laws there can be no inflow directly from heaven, only indirectly through the Word, through teaching, and through sermons. Add the fact that in order to be divine the Word had to be composed entirely of correspondential imagery. It then follows that disagreements and heresies are inevitable. Permitting them is quite within the laws of divine providence. Not only that, once the church itself has taken matters of intellect alone to be essential to it—matters of belief, that is, and not matters of volition and therefore of life—and once these matters of life are not essential to the church, then our discernment leads us into utter darkness. We wander around like blind people, bumping into everything and falling into pits. It is our

volition that must see in our discernment and not our discernment in our volition, which is the same as saying that our life and its love must lead our discernment to think, speak, and act, and not the reverse. If it were the other way around, then a discernment motivated by evil love, actually by diabolical love, would seize on anything our senses offered and demand that our volition do it. This shows where dissent and heresy come from.

[3] However, provision is still made that all of us can be reformed and saved no matter what heresy we may adopt intellectually, as long as we abstain from evils as sins and do not justify our heretical distortions. This is because our volition is reformed by our abstaining from evils as sins, and through our volition our discernment is reformed. Then for the first time it emerges from darkness into light.

There are three essential principles of the church: belief in the divine nature of the Lord, belief in the holiness of the Word, and the life that we call “charity.” For each of us, our faith is determined by that life that is charity; our recognition of what that life must be comes from the Word, and reformation and salvation come from the Lord.

If these three principles had functioned as the essential principles of the church, then intellectual dissent would not have divided it. It would only have varied it the way light varies the colors of beautiful things, and the way different gems make up the beauty of a royal crown.

260

7. *Strict materialists justify their rejection of divine providence when they see the continued survival of Judaism.* They observe that after all these centuries the Jews have still not been converted even though they live among Christians, and that in keeping with the prophecies in the Word they do not confess the Lord and recognize him as the Messiah who, in their minds, will lead them back into the land of Canaan. They remain steadfast in their denial, and yet they prosper. However, people who think along these lines and therefore raise doubts about divine providence are not aware that “the Jews” in the Word means all the people who are part of the church and believe in the Lord, and that “the land of Canaan” where it promises to lead them means the Lord’s church.

[2] The reason they are steadfast in their denial of the Lord is that given their own nature, if they were to accept and believe in the Lord’s divine nature and the holy attributes of the church, they would profane them. This is why the Lord said of them, “He²⁴⁴ has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart so that they will not see with their eyes

or understand with their heart and turn, and I heal them” (John 12:42 [12:40]; Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Isaiah 6:9, 10). It says “so that they will not turn, and I heal them,” because if they did turn and were healed, they would commit profanation, and the law of divine providence given in §§221–233 above is that the Lord does not grant us deeper access to the truths that our faith discloses and the good effects of our caring except as we can be kept in them to the end of our life; and if we were granted access, we would profane these holy things.

[3] The reason that the Jewish people has been cared for and spread around much of the world is for the sake of the Word in its original tongue.²⁴⁵ They revere this more than Christians do; and the Lord’s divine nature is present there in every detail. It is actually divine truth united to divine good, emanating from the Lord. As a result, the Word is a union of the Lord and the church and a presence of heaven, as explained in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 62–69. The presence of the Lord and heaven takes place wherever the Word is read reverently. This is the purpose of divine providence for which the Jews are maintained and spread over much of the world.

For their lot after death, see *Supplements on the Last Judgment and the Spiritual World* 79–82.

That covers the instances listed in §238 that strict materialists use or may use to justify their rejection of divine providence. Next we turn to the ones listed in §239. These too may serve materialists as arguments against divine providence; and they may cross other minds as well and raise doubts. They are the following.

1. *Doubts about divine providence may be raised by the fact that all Christendom worships one God in three persons, which is really three gods. Up to the present time they have not realized that God is one in person and in essence, containing a trinity, and that this God is the Lord.* Anyone who thinks rationally about divine providence may say, “Are not three persons three gods when each person by itself is God?” Can anyone think anything else? Does anyone think anything else? Athanasius himself could not think anything else, so the Creed that bears his name says, “Although Christian truth requires us to acknowledge each individual Person as God and Lord, still Christian faith forbids us from saying or naming three gods or three Lords.” This can only mean that we are supposed to believe in three gods and Lords but that we must not say or name three gods and three Lords.

261

262

[2] Is there any way we can see one God unless that God is one person as well? Someone may suggest that we can see this if we think that the three have a single essence; but does anyone, can anyone see this as saying any more than that they are of one mind, that they agree? There are still three gods.

If we think more deeply, we ask ourselves how a divine essence that is infinite can be divided, and how it can beget another divine essence from eternity and then bring forth another that emanates from both of them.

If someone says that we are to believe it but not think about it, can we really help thinking about what we are supposed to believe? What else is the basis of that acknowledgment that is faith in its essence? Is not thinking about God and about the three Persons the source for Socinianism and Arianism, which are uppermost in more hearts than you might believe? What really makes the church is a faith in one God and that this one God is the Lord. The divine trinity is within that God. This you may find presented in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord*, from beginning to end.

[3] But what do people think about the Lord these days? Do they not think that he is God and Human, God from Jehovah the Father who begot him, and Human from the virgin Mary who bore him? Does anyone think that the God and the Human in him, his divine nature and his human nature, are one person, and that they are actually just as “one” as soul and body are one? Is anyone aware of this? Ask the church’s learned theologians and they will tell you that they do not know this. Yet it is part of the theology of the church accepted throughout Christendom, as follows: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Human; and even though he is God and Human, still there are not two but one Christ. There is one because the Divinity took a human nature to itself, so it is absolutely one. There is a single Person because just as soul and body make a single human, so God and Human make a single Christ.” This is from the Athanasian Faith or Creed.

The reason people do not know what the Creed is saying is that when they have read it they have been thinking about the Lord not as God but only as human.

[4] If you ask them whether they know how he was conceived, whether it was by God the Father or by his own divine nature, they will answer that it was by God the Father. This is what the Bible says. Are he and the Father not one the way soul and body are one? Can anyone think that he was conceived by two deities? And if he was conceived by his own divine nature, then he would be his own father.

If you then go on to ask, “What is your concept of the Lord’s divine nature and of his human nature?” they will tell you that his divine nature came from the essence of the Father, that his human nature came from the essence of his mother, and that his divine nature is with the Father. Then if you ask, “And where is his human nature?” they will have no answer for you. In their concept, they have separated his divine nature and his human nature, making the divine equal to the divine nature of the Father and his human nature like that of any other human. They do not realize that this is separating the soul from the body; and they do not see the contradiction involved, that this would have his rational self born from his mother alone.

[5] This ingrained concept that the Lord’s human nature was like that of any other human has made it almost impossible for a Christian to be induced to think about a *Divine Human* nature, even given the statement that his soul or life from conception was and is Jehovah himself.

Organize your propositions now and think hard. Is there any God of the universe other than the Lord alone, in whom is that essential, originating divine nature called the Father, the divine human nature called the Son, and the emanating divine nature called the Holy Spirit? This makes God one in person and in essence, and this God is the Lord.

[6] If you insist on saying that the Lord himself named the three in Matthew—“Go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)—he said this in order to let them know that now that he was glorified the Trinity was within him, as we can see from the verses immediately before and after this command. In the verse just before he says that he has been given all power in heaven and on earth, and in the verse just after he says that he will be with them even to the close of the age. So he is talking about himself alone, and not about some trio.

[7] But let us return to divine providence, to why Christians have been allowed to worship one God in three persons—that is, three gods—and why it has not yet been known that God is one in person and in essence, containing a trinity, and that this God is the Lord. We are responsible for this situation, not the Lord. The Lord teaches these things clearly in the Word, as you can tell from all the passages collected in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord*.²⁴⁶ Further, the theology of all churches teaches that his divine and his human natures are not two but one person, united like soul and body. But the church has separated the divine from the human and equates the divine nature with the divine nature of Jehovah the Father and the human nature with that of anyone

else. [8] The church has done this primarily because from the start it has strayed into a Babylon that has transferred divine power to itself.²⁴⁷ In order to call it human power rather than divine power, though, they have made the Lord's human nature like that of anyone else. Then later, at the Reformation, when faith alone was accepted as the sole means of salvation ("faith alone" meaning that God the Father should have mercy on us for the sake of the Son), there was no other way to view the Lord's human nature. This was because we cannot approach the Lord and in full sincerity recognize him as the God of heaven and earth unless we are living by his commandments. In the spiritual world, where we are all constrained to say exactly what we think, people cannot even say the name "Jesus" unless they have lived Christian lives on earth. This is under his divine providence, to prevent the profanation of his name.

263

For a clearer view of all this, I may add some material presented at the close (§§60–61) of *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord*, as follows.²⁴⁸

It is quite clear from many things that the Lord said that God and Human in him are not two but are one, as the theology says, and are completely one, like soul and body. He said, for example, that the Father and he are one [John 10:30], that whatever belongs to the Father is his and that whatever belongs to him is the Father's [John 16:15], that he is in the Father and the Father in him [John 14:10], that everything has been given into his hand [John 3:35], that he has all power [Matthew 28:18], that he is God of heaven and earth,²⁴⁹ that everyone who believes in him has eternal life [John 3:15], and that the wrath of God rests on everyone who does not believe in him.²⁵⁰ He says further that both the divine and the human have been raised up into heaven,²⁵¹ and in regard to both he is sitting at the right hand of God (that is, he is omnipotent),²⁵² and more passages from the Word about his divine human nature that have already been cited in abundance. All of this material bears witness to the fact that God is one in both person and essence, containing a trinity, and that this God is the Lord.

[2] The reason this information about the Lord is only now being made public is that it was foretold in chapters 21 and 22 of the Book of Revelation that a new church would be established at the close of the former one, a church in which this would be fundamental. This church is what "the New Jerusalem" means in those chapters, where no one will enter except those who recognize the Lord as the God of heaven and earth, which is why that church is called "the Lamb's bride."²⁵³

I am able to proclaim that the whole heaven believes in the Lord alone and that anyone who does not believe this is not allowed into heaven. Heaven is heaven because of the Lord. It is this belief, held in love and in faith, that puts us in the Lord and the Lord in us, as he tells us in John: “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (John 14:20); and “Abide in me, and I in you. I am the vine, you are the branches; all who abide in me, and I in them, bear abundant fruit, for without me you cannot do anything. Whoever does not abide in me is cast out” (John 15:4, 5, 6; 17:22, 23).

[3] The reason this has not been seen in the Word before is that if it had been seen any earlier it would not have been accepted. The last judgment had not yet been completed; and until that happened, hell was stronger than heaven. We are in the middle, between heaven and hell; so if we had seen this any earlier, the devil—hell, that is—would have snatched it from our hearts and would have profaned it as well.

This state of hell’s power was shattered by the Last Judgment, which has now been completed. Once that was done, in other words now, anyone who wants to be enlightened and wise can be.

2. *Doubts about divine providence may be raised by the fact that until now people have not known that there is spiritual meaning in the details of the Word and that this is the basis of its holiness.* It may raise doubts about divine providence when people ask, “Why is this only being revealed now? And why is it happening through this particular individual, and not through some prominent clergyman?” Whether it is some prominent clergyman or some prominent clergyman’s servant, though, is up to the Lord. He knows the nature of each.

264

There are two reasons, though, that this meaning of the Word has not been revealed earlier. The first is that if it had been revealed earlier, the church would have profaned it, and in so doing would have profaned the very holiness of the Word; and the second is that the genuine truths that constitute the Word’s spiritual meaning could not be revealed until the Last Judgment had been completed and the new church meant by the Holy Jerusalem was being founded by the Lord. But let us look at these separately.

[2] (a) *The Word’s spiritual meaning was not revealed earlier because if it had been, the church would have profaned it, and in so doing would have profaned the very holiness of the Word.* Not long after the church was begun it turned into a Babylon, and later it turned into a Philistia.²⁵⁴

Babylon does actually recognize the Word, but it looks down on it. They²⁵⁵ say that the Holy Spirit gives just as much inspiration to the members of its supreme council as it did to the prophets. They recognize the Word because the papacy was founded on the Lord's words to Peter,²⁵⁶ but they still look down on it because it does not agree with them. That is why they have taken it away from the people and hidden it in monasteries, where there are few who actually read it. So if the spiritual meaning had been revealed, where the Lord and all angelic wisdom are present, they would have profaned the Word not only as it is in its outermost form, in what we find in the literal meaning, but in its deepest meanings as well.

[3] Philistia too (meaning faith separated from charity) would have profaned the Word's spiritual meaning, because as already noted [§258] it puts salvation in some words that we are to think about and say and not in good deeds that we are to do. So it attributes the power to save to something that has no such power. Particularly, it creates a gap between our intelligence and what we are to believe. For people like this, what becomes of the light that the spiritual meaning of the Word is in? Does it not turn into darkness? And when the outer meaning is turned into darkness, what else can happen to the spiritual meaning? Does anyone who has decided on faith separated from charity and on justification by that kind of faith want to know what a good life really is, what love for the Lord and our neighbor are, what caring and its good effects are, what good actions are, what "doing" is—actually what faith is in its essence, or any of the real truth that constitutes it? Such people write volumes, and all they do is prove what they call faith, claiming that all the things I have just listed are inherent in that faith.

We can see from this that if spiritual meaning had been disclosed earlier, it would have turned out as described by the Lord's words in Matthew, "If your eye had been evil, your whole body would have been full of darkness. So if the light that is in you is darkness, what a darkness!" (Matthew 6:23). In the Word's spiritual meaning, "the eye" means our discernment.

[4] (b) *The genuine truths that constitute the Word's spiritual meaning could not be revealed by the Lord until the Last Judgment had been completed and the new church meant by the Holy Jerusalem was being founded by the Lord.* The Lord foretold in the Book of Revelation that after the Last Judgment had been completed genuine truths would be disclosed, a new church would be begun, and spiritual meaning would be disclosed. On the completion of the Last Judgment, see what is presented in the

booklet *Last Judgment* and in its supplement.²⁵⁷ This is the meaning of the heaven and earth that will pass away (Revelation 21:1). The disclosure of genuine truths is foretold by these words in the Book of Revelation, “The one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look! I am making all things new!’” (Revelation 21:5). See also Revelation 19:17, 18; 21:18–21; and 22:1, 2. On the need for a revelation of the Word’s spiritual meaning, see Revelation 19:11–16. This is the meaning of the white horse on which was seated the one called “The Word of God,” the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. On this, see the booklet on *The White Horse*.²⁵⁸ On the holy Jerusalem meaning a new church that the Lord would begin, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on the Lord* 62–65, where this is explained.

[5] We can see, then, that the Word’s spiritual meaning was to be revealed for a new church that would recognize and worship the Lord alone and would keep his Word holy, loving divine truths and rejecting any faith that is separated from charity. There is more about this meaning of the Word, though, in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 5–26 and following. There the nature of the spiritual meaning is discussed in §§5–26. Its presence throughout the Word and in every detail is discussed in §§9–17; the spiritual meaning as the reason that the Word is divinely inspired and holy in every word, in §§18–19; why the spiritual meaning has as yet been unknown and was not revealed earlier, in §§20–25; and the granting of the spiritual meaning, from now on, only to people who have genuine truths from the Lord, in §26.

[6] We can therefore tell that it is under the Lord’s divine providence that the spiritual meaning has been hidden from the world until this present age, and has been kept safe in the meanwhile among angels, who draw their wisdom from it. This meaning was known and cherished by the people of very ancient times, the ones who lived before Moses; but since their descendants took the correspondential relationships that were the sole basis of their Word and therefore of their religion and diverted them to various forms of idolatry (and to magic in Egypt), that meaning was closed off under the Lord’s divine providence, first among Israelites and later among Christians, for the reasons just given. Only now is it being opened for the Lord’s new church.

3. *Doubt about divine providence may be raised by observing the ignorance of the fact that the essence of the Christian religion is to abstain from evils as sins.* I have explained in *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem*, from beginning to end, that this is the essence of the Christian religion; and since a faith divorced from charity does nothing but prevent it from being accepted, that topic was dealt with as well. We can say that people

have not known that abstaining from evils as sins is the essence of the Christian religion, because hardly anyone does know, and yet everyone does know, really (see §258 above). The reason hardly anyone knows, still, is that faith separated [from charity] has blotted it out. This theology claims that faith alone is what saves us, not any good work or goodness effected by our caring. It claims that we are no longer under the yoke of the law²⁵⁹ but are in freedom. People who keep hearing this stop thinking about any evil life they may be leading or any good life. We are all inclined by nature to embrace this belief; and once we have done so, we no longer think about the state of our lives. This is the reason for our ignorance.

[2] I have been shown this ignorance in the spiritual world. I have asked more than a thousand newcomers from our world whether they knew that abstaining from evils as sins was the essence of religion, and they have told me that they did not, that this was something new that they were hearing for the first time. They had heard, though, that they could do nothing good on their own and that they were not under the yoke of the law. When I have asked whether they knew that they should examine themselves, see their sins, repent, and then begin a new life, and that otherwise their sins were not forgiven, and that if their sins were not forgiven they would not be saved, noting that they had been told this loud and clear every time they came to the Holy Supper, they have answered that they had not noticed this. All they had really heard was that they were being granted forgiveness of sins through the sacrament of the Supper and that their faith would take care of everything else without their knowing about it.

[3] I have said repeatedly, “Why have you taught your children the Ten Commandments, if it is not so that they would know which evils are the sins that they should abstain from? Is it just that they should know this and believe it, and not do anything about it? So why are you telling me that this is something new?” The only answer they have had is that they knew but did not know. They never thought about the sixth commandment when they were committing adultery or about the seventh when they were engaged in surreptitious theft or fraud, and so on, let alone about the fact that such actions are against divine law and therefore against God.

[4] When I have recited any number of statements from the teachings of the church, along with their scriptural basis, statements that abstaining and turning from evils as sins is the essence of the Christian religion and that our faith depends on the extent to which we have abstained and turned from them, they have been silent. The truth of the matter was proved to them, however, when they saw that they were all

being examined in terms of their lives and judged by what they had done, no one being judged by a faith separated from life, because in all cases their faith depended on their life.

[5] It is under a law of divine providence that Christendom is so largely ignorant of this. We are all left to act in freedom and rationally (see above, §§71–99 and 100–128). The law also applies that no one is taught directly from heaven but indirectly through the Word and through teaching and preaching from it (see §§154–174). This ignorance is also under all the laws of permission, which are also laws of divine providence. There is more on these in §258 above.

4. *Doubts about divine providence may be raised by observing the widespread ignorance of the fact that we go on living as individuals after death, and also observing that this has not been disclosed before.* The reason for this ignorance is that deep inside everyone who does not abstain from evils as sins there is a secret belief that we do not go on living after death and that therefore it does not matter whether you say that we go right on living after death or that we are resurrected on the day of the Last Judgment. If some belief in resurrection does occur, people say to themselves, “I am no worse than anyone else. Whether I go to hell or to heaven, I will have plenty of company.”

274²⁶⁰

But everyone who has any religion at all has an instinctive realization that we do live as individuals after death. The belief that we live as souls and not as individuals is not held by any people except those who have been deluded by their own intelligence. The following observations show that everyone who has any religion at all has this instinctive realization that we live as individuals after death.

1. Everyone thinks this when dying.
- [2] 2. All who deliver eulogies over the dear departed raise them into heaven and describe them as among the angels, as talking with them and sharing their joy. Sometimes these speakers even deify the dead.
- [3] 3. The common people all believe that if they have lived well, then when they die they will enter a heavenly paradise and be clothed with white robes and enjoy eternal life.
- [4] 4. Clergy all say something like this to the dying; and they believe it while they are saying it—unless they happen to be thinking about the Last Judgment.
- [5] 5. All believe that their [deceased] children are in heaven and that after their own death they will see the [deceased] spouse whom they love. No one believes that these dear ones are

ghosts or, even worse, that they are disembodied minds floating around the universe.

- [6] 6. No one raises any objections when something is said about the lot and state of people who have crossed from time to eternal life. I have told any number of people that this was the lot and state of one individual or another and I have never heard anyone reply that their state was nothing at this point and would not be anything until the Last Judgment.
- [7] 7. When people see paintings or statues of angels, they believe that this is what they look like. No one thinks then that angels are bodiless spirits or breezes or clouds the way some scholars describe them.
- [8] 8. Catholics believe that their saints are real people in heaven and that other people are somewhere else as well. Muslims believe this about their deceased; Africans especially do so; and so do most peoples. How can it be different for Protestants who know this from the Word?
- [9] 9. This universal instinctive realization leads some people to strive for deathless fame, so that they translate their instinct into a form that makes them powerful heroes in times of war.
- [10] 10. I have asked around in the spiritual world whether everyone has this instinctive realization and have discovered that it is there in the spiritual concepts of everyone's inner thinking, but not in the more material concepts of everyone's outer thinking.

We can tell from this that we need have no doubt about the Lord's divine providence because of the thought that it is only now being disclosed that we live after death. That is only our sensory self talking, the self that wants to see and touch in order to believe. People who cannot think on a higher level than that are in total darkness about the actual state of their lives.

Evils Are Permitted for a Purpose: Salvation

IF we were born loving, as we were when we were created, we would not be prone to any evil. We would not even know what evil is, because if we have not been drawn to evil and therefore are not inclined to evil, there is no way we can know what it is. If we were told that one thing or another was evil, we would not believe that it was possible. This is the state of innocence that Adam and his wife Eve were in; the nakedness that did not embarrass them portrayed that state. Familiarity with evil after the fall is meant by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

275

The love we were created with is a love for our neighbor that makes us as generous with our neighbor as we are with ourselves, and even more so. We find ourselves full of the joy of that love when we do something good for others, very much the way parents feel toward their children.

This love is truly human. There is something spiritual within it that makes it different from the earthly love that the lower animals have. If we were born loving like this, we would not be born into the darkness of ignorance the way all of us are nowadays, but into some light of knowledge and intelligence; and before long we would actually be informed and intelligent. At first we would go on all fours like animals, but would have an inborn urge to walk on our feet, because even though we were on all fours we would not be looking down toward the ground, but forward toward heaven; and we would be straightening up so that we could look upward.

However, when our love for our neighbor turned into love for ourselves and this love grew stronger, then our human love turned into an animal love and we became animals instead of humans. The only difference was that we could think about what our bodies were sensing and tell one thing from another rationally and could be taught and become civic and moral people and eventually spiritual people. That is, as already noted [§275], we do have a spiritual nature that distinguishes us from the lower animals. That nature enables us to learn what is evil and good on the civic level, what is evil and good on the moral level, and even, if we are willing, what is evil and good on the spiritual level.

276

Once love for our neighbor had changed into love for ourselves, we could no longer be born into the light of knowledge and intelligence but

only into the darkness of ignorance. This is because we were born into that lowest level of life that we call sensory and bodily. We are led from there into the deeper functions of our earthly mind by being taught, always with spirituality close at hand. We shall see later²⁶¹ why we are born into that lowest level of life that we call sensory and bodily and therefore into the darkness of ignorance.

[2] Everyone can see that love for our neighbor and love for ourselves are opposing loves. Love for our neighbor wants to do good to everyone, while love for ourselves wants everyone to do good to us alone. Love for our neighbor wants to serve everyone, and love for ourselves wants everyone to be our servants. Love for our neighbor sees all people as our family and friends, while love for ourselves sees all people as our slaves, and if people are not subservient, it sees them as our enemies. In short, it focuses on ourselves alone and sees others as scarcely human. At heart it values them no more than our horses and dogs, and since it regards them as basically worthless, it thinks nothing of doing them harm. This leads to hatred and vengeance, adultery and promiscuity, theft and fraud, deceit and slander, brutality and cruelty, and other evils like that. These are the evils to which we are prone from birth.

To explain that they are permitted for the purpose of salvation, I need to proceed in the following sequence.

1. We are all involved in evil and need to be led away from it in order to be reformed.
2. Evils cannot be set aside unless they come to light.
3. To the extent that our evils are set aside, they are forgiven.
4. So evil is permitted for the purpose of salvation.

277a²⁶²

1. *We are all involved in evil and need to be led away from it in order to be reformed.* It is well known in the church that we all have an inherited evil nature and that this is the source of our obsession with many evils. This is also why we can do nothing good on our own. The only kind of good that evil can do is good with evil within it. The inner evil is the fact that we are doing it for selfish reasons, and solely for the sake of appearances.

We know that we get this inherited evil from our parents. Some do say that it comes from Adam and his wife, but this is wrong. We all get it by birth from our parents, who got it from their parents, who got it from theirs. So it is handed down from one to another, growing greater and

stronger, piling up, and being inflicted on the offspring. That is why there is nothing sound within us, why everything in us is so evil. Does anyone feel that there is anything wrong with loving oneself more than others? If not, then who knows what evil is, since this is the head of all evils?

[2] We can see from much that is common knowledge in our world that our heredity comes from our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. For example, we can tell what household and larger family and even nation people belong to simply from their faces; the face bears the stamp of the spirit, and the spirit is determined by our desires of love. Sometimes the face of an ancestor crops up in a grandchild or great-grandchild. I can tell simply from their faces whether people are Jewish or not, and I can tell what family group others belong to. I have no doubt that others can do the same.

If our desires of love are derived and passed down from our parents in this way, then it follows that their evils are as well, since these are matters of desire.

I need now to state where this similarity comes from. [3] For all of us, the soul comes from the father and simply puts on a body in the mother.²⁶³ The fact that the soul comes from the father follows not only from what has just been said but also from a number of other indications. One of these is the fact that the baby of a black or Moorish man by a white or European woman will be born black, and the reverse.²⁶⁴ In particular, the soul dwells in the semen, for this is what brings about impregnation, and this is what the mother clothes with a body. The semen is the elemental form of the father's characteristic love, the form of his dominant love and its immediate derivatives, the deepest desires of that love.

[4] In all of us, these desires are veiled by the decencies of moral life and the virtues that are partly matters of our civic life and partly matters of our spiritual life. These make up the outward form of life even for evil people. We are all born with this outer form of life. That is why little children are so lovable; but as they get older or grow up, they shift from this outer form toward their deeper natures and ultimately to the dominant love of their fathers. If the father was evil, and if this nature is not somehow softened and deflected by teachers, then the child's love becomes just like that of the father.

Still, evil is not uprooted, only set aside, as we shall see below [§279]. We can tell, then, that we are all immersed in evil.

No explanation is necessary to see that we need to be led away from our evils in order to be reformed, since if we are given to evil in this

world, we will be given to evil after we leave this world. This means that if our evil is not set aside in this world, it cannot be set aside afterwards. The tree lies where it falls; and so too our life retains its basic quality when we die. We are all judged according to our deeds. It is not that these deeds are tallied up but that we return to them and behave the same. Death is a continuation of life, with the difference that then we cannot be reformed.

All our reformation is thorough—that is, it includes both first things and last things.²⁶⁵ The last things are reformed in this world in harmony with the first ones. They cannot be reformed afterwards, because the outermost things of our lives that we take with us after death become dormant and simply cooperate or act in unison with the inner ones.

278a²⁶⁶

2. *Evils cannot be set aside unless they come to light.* This does not mean that we have to act out our evils in order to bring them to light but that we need to look carefully not only at our actions but also at our thoughts, at what we would do if it were not for our fear of the laws and of ill repute. We need to look especially at which evils we see as permissible in our spirit and do not regard as sins, for eventually we do them.

It is for this self-examination that we have been given discernment, a discernment separate from our volition, so that we can know, discern, and recognize what is good and what is evil. It is also so that we can see what the real nature of our volition is—that is, what we love and what we desire. It is to enable us to see this that our discernment has been given both higher and lower thought processes, both more inward and more outward thought processes. It is so that we can use the higher or more inward thoughts to see what our volition is up to in our lower or outer thoughts. We see this the way we see our face in a mirror; and when we see and recognize what a sin is, then if we want to and ask the Lord for help, we can stop intending it, abstain from it, and later act against it. If we cannot go through this process easily, we can still make it happen by trying to go through it so that finally we reject that evil and detest it. Then for the first time we actually sense and feel that evil is evil and good is good.

This is what it means to examine ourselves, to see and acknowledge our evils, and to confess them and then refrain from them. However, there are so few who know that this is the essence of the Christian religion (because the only people who do so are ones who have charity and faith and are led by the Lord and do what is good in his strength) that I need to say something about the people who do not do this and still think that they are religious. They are (a) people who confess that they

are guilty of all sins but do not look for any single sin in themselves; (b) people who for religious reasons do not bother to look; (c) people who for worldly reasons do not think about sins and therefore do not know what they are; (d) people who cherish their sins and therefore cannot know what they are. (e) In all these cases, the sins do not come to light and therefore cannot be set aside. (f) Finally, I need to expose a previously unrecognized reason why evils could not be set aside apart from this examination, this bringing to light, this recognition, this confession, and this resistance.

These items need to be looked at one at a time, though, because they are the basic elements of the Christian religion on our part.

278b

(a) *They are people who confess that they are guilty of all sins but do not look for any single sin in themselves.* They say, “I am a sinner! I was born in sins; there is no soundness in me from head to toe! I am nothing but evil! Gracious God, look on me with favor, forgive me, purify me, save me, make me walk in purity, in the way of the righteous,” and the like. Yet they do not look into themselves and therefore do not identify any particular evil; and no one who does not identify an evil can abstain from it, let alone fight against it. They think that they are clean and washed after these confessions when in fact they are unclean and unwashed from their heads to the soles of their feet. This blanket confession is nothing but a lullaby that leads finally to blindness. It is like some grand generalization with no details, which is actually nothing.

[2] (b) *They are people who for religious reasons do not bother to look.* These are primarily people who separate charity from faith. They say to themselves, “Why should I ask whether something is evil or good? Why should I ask about evil when it does not damn me? Why should I ask about goodness when it does not save me? It is my faith alone, the faith that I have thought about and proclaimed with trust and confidence, that justifies me and purifies me from all sin; and once I have been justified I am whole in God’s sight. Of course I am immersed in evil, but God wipes this away the moment it happens so that it is no longer present,” and more of the same sort.

Can anyone whose eyes are open fail to see that these are meaningless words, words that have no content because they have no worth in them? Anyone can think and talk like this, and can do so “with trust and confidence,” when thinking about hell and eternal damnation. Do people like this want to know anything further, whether anything is really true or good? As to truth, they say, “What is truth other than whatever reinforces my faith?” As to goodness, they say, “What is good other than

what I have because of my faith? In order to have it within me, though, I do not need to do it as though I were doing it myself, because that would be for credit, and good done for credit is not truly good.” So they skip over the whole subject so completely that they do not know what evil is. What will they look for and see in themselves, then? What is their state but a fire of obsessions with evil that is confined within them, devouring the inner substance of their minds and destroying everything right up to the door? All they are doing is guarding the door so that no one can see the fire; but the door is opened after death, and then everyone can see.

[3] (c) *They are people who for worldly reasons do not think about sins and therefore do not know what they are.* These are people who love the world above all and will not give a hearing to any truth that might deflect them from the false principles of their religion. They say to themselves, “What do I care about this? This is not the way I think.” So they reject it as soon as they hear it; or if it does get through at all, they suppress it. They do much the same thing when they hear sermons, retaining only a few words and no substance.

Since this is how they treat truths, they do not know what good is, since the two act in unison; and there is no way to identify evil on the basis of any good that is not based on truth. All they can do is call evil “good” by rationalizing it with their distortions.

These are the people meant by the seeds that fell among thorns. The Lord said of them, “Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. These are people who hear the Word, but the cares of this world and the deceptiveness of riches choke the Word so that it becomes unfruitful” (Matthew 13:7, 22; Mark 4:7, 14 [4:7, 18, 19]; Luke 8:7, 14).

[4] (d) *They are people who cherish their sins and therefore cannot know what they are.* These are people who believe in God and worship him with the usual rituals and yet rationalize for themselves that some evil that is a sin is really not a sin. They camouflage it with disguises and cosmetics that conceal how grotesque it is; and once they have accomplished this they cherish it and make it their friend and constant companion.

I have said that these people believe in God because only people who believe in God are capable of regarding evil as sin: all sin is sin against God.

But some examples may make this clear. When people who are bent on profit make different kinds of cheating permissible by inventing ratio-

nalizations, they are saying that an evil is not a sin. People who rationalize taking vengeance on their enemies are doing the same thing, as are people who rationalize plundering people who are not their enemies in times of war.

[5] (e) *In these cases, the sins do not come to light and therefore cannot be set aside.* Any evil that is not brought to light feeds on itself. It is like fire in wood buried in ashes. It is like poison in a wound that has not been lanced; for any evil that is shut away keeps growing and growing until everything has been brought to an end. So to prevent any evil from being shut away, we are allowed to think in favor of God and against God, in favor of the holy practices of the church or against them, without being punished for it in this world.

The Lord speaks of this in Isaiah:

From the soles of the feet to the head there is no soundness; there is wound and scar and fresh beating, not squeezed out or bound up or anointed with oil. Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Take away the evil of your deeds from before my eyes. Stop doing evil, learn to do good. Then if your sins have been like scarlet, they will be white as snow; if they have been ruddy as a purple robe, they will be like wool. If you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. (Isaiah 1:6, 16, 18, 10 [1:6, 16, 17, 18, 20])

“Being devoured by the sword” means being destroyed by our malicious distortions.

[6] (f) *There is a previously unrecognized reason why evils could not be set aside apart from this examination, this bringing to light, this recognition, this confession, and this resistance.* I have already mentioned [§§62, 65, 217] that heaven overall is arranged in communities according to [people’s desires for what is good, and that hell overall is arranged in communities according to] desires for what is evil that are opposite to those desires for what is good.²⁶⁷ As to our spirits, each of us is in some community—in a heavenly one when our good desires are in control, and in a hellish one when our evil desires are in control. We are unaware of this while we are living in this world, but in spirit that is where we are. We could not go on living otherwise, and that is how the Lord is guiding us.

If we are in a hellish community, the only way the Lord can lead us out is under the laws of his divine providence. One of them says that we must see that we are there, must want to get out, and must ourselves

make an effort with what seems to be our own strength. We can do this while we are in this world but not after death. Then we stay forever in the community we joined in this world. This is why we need to examine ourselves, see and acknowledge our sins, repent, and remain constant for the rest of our lives.

I could support this with enough experience to warrant complete belief, but this is not the place to bring in proofs from experience.

279

3. *To the extent that our evils are set aside, they are forgiven.* One currently popular misconception is that our evils are taken from us and discarded when they are forgiven, and that the state of our life can be changed instantly, even totally reversed, so that we become good instead of evil. This would be leading us out of hell and transporting us instantly into heaven, all by some direct mercy of the Lord.

However, people who hold this kind of belief or thought have no idea whatever of what evil and good really are or what the state of our own life is. They are utterly unaware that the feelings of our volition are simply shifts and changes of state of the purely organic²⁶⁸ substances of our minds, that the thoughts of our discernment are simply shifts and changes of their forms, and that memory is the ongoing effect of these changes. This enables us to see clearly that evil can be taken away only gradually and that the forgiveness of evil is not the same as its removal. This, though, is presenting the ideas in condensed form. If they are not explained at greater length, they can be recognized but not grasped; and if they are not grasped, that is like a wheel that we turn by hand.²⁶⁹ I need to explain these propositions, then, one at a time in the order just given.

[2] (a) *One currently popular misconception is that our evils are taken from us and discarded when they are forgiven.* I have been taught in heaven that no evil that we are born with or that we ourselves adopt by our behavior is taken completely away from us. Evils are set aside so that they are no longer visible. Like so many other people in this world, I used to believe that when our evils are forgiven they are thrown away just as dirt is rinsed and washed away from our faces by water. That is not what it is like with our evils or sins, though. They are all still there, and when they are forgiven after we have repented, they are moved from the center to the sides. Whatever is in the middle is right in front of our eyes and seems to be out in broad daylight. What is off to the sides seems to be in the shade, or at times, even in the dark of night. Since our evils are not taken completely away, then, but are only displaced or put off to the side, and since

we can be transported from the center to the boundaries, it can happen that we once again get involved in evils we thought we had left behind. It is part of our own nature that we can move from one desire to another, and sometimes into an opposite one. This means that we can move from one center to another. A desire determines our center as long as we are caught up in it. Then we are absorbed in its pleasure and its light.

[3] There are some people who are raised into heaven by the Lord after death because they have lived good lives but who bring with them a belief that they are free and clean from sins and therefore wholly without guilt. At first they are given white robes that reflect this belief, since white robes portray a state of having been purified from evils. Later, though, they begin to think the way they did in the world, to think that they have been washed clean from all evil; so they boast that they are no longer sinners like everyone else. It is almost impossible to separate this from a kind of mental “high” that includes a measure of looking down on others. So at this point, in order to free them from the faith they imagine they have, they are sent down from heaven and back into the evils they had fallen prey to in the world. This shows them that they have inherited evils that they had not known about before. This brings them to admit that their evils have not been taken away from them but only set aside, and that they themselves are still unclean, and in fact nothing but evil; that it is the Lord who is protecting them from their evils and keeping them focused on those good qualities; and that all this seems to be their own doing. Once this has happened, the Lord brings them back up into heaven.

[4] (b) *A second popular misconception is that the state of our life can be changed instantly, so that we become good instead of evil. This would be leading us out of hell and transporting us instantly into heaven, all by some direct mercy of the Lord.* This is the misconception of people who separate charity from faith and attribute salvation to faith alone. That is, they think that the mere thought and utterance of a statement of that faith, performed with trust and confidence, will justify and save them. Many of them also think that this can happen instantaneously, either before the hour of death or as it approaches. They cannot avoid believing that the state of our life can be changed in an instant and that we can be saved by direct mercy. We shall see in the last section of this book, though, that the Lord’s mercy does not operate in this direct way, that we cannot become good instead of evil in an instant and be led out of hell and transported into heaven except by the ongoing efforts of divine providence from our infancy to the end of our lives.²⁷⁰

At this point we may rest the case simply on the fact that all the laws of divine providence are aimed at our reformation, and therefore at our salvation, which means inverting the hellish state into which we are born into its opposite, a heavenly state. This can be done only gradually as we move away from evil and its pleasure and move into what is good and its pleasure.

[5] (c) *People who hold this kind of belief have no idea whatever of what evil and good really are.* They do not really know that evil is the pleasure we find in the urge to act and think in violation of the divine pattern, and that goodness is the pleasure we feel when we act and think in harmony with the divine pattern. They do not realize that there are thousands of individual impulses that go to make up any particular evil, and that there are thousands of individual impulses that go to make up any particular good tendency. These thousands of impulses are so precisely structured and so intimately interconnected within us that no single one of them can be changed without changing all the rest at the same time.

If people are unaware of this, they can entertain the belief or the thought that an evil that seems to be all by itself can be set aside easily and that something good that also seems to be all by itself can be brought in to replace it. Since they do not know what good and evil are, they cannot help thinking that there are such things as instantaneous salvation and direct mercy. The last section of this book will show that this is not possible.

[6] (d) *People who believe in instantaneous salvation and direct mercy are utterly unaware that the feelings of our volition are simply changes of state of the purely organic substances of our minds, that the thoughts of our discernment are simply changes and shifts of their forms, and that memory is the on-going effect of those changes and shifts.* Once someone mentions it, everyone will realize that feelings and thoughts can happen only with substances and their forms as subjects. Since they happen in our brains, which are full of substances and forms, we say that these forms are purely organic. If we think rationally, we cannot help laughing at the wild idea that feelings and thoughts do not happen in substantial subjects but are breezes affected by warmth and light, like illusions seen in the air or the ether. In fact, thought can no more happen apart from its substantial form than sight can happen apart from its substantial form, the eye, or hearing from its ear, or taste from its tongue.²⁷¹ Look at the brain and you will see countless substances and fibers, and nothing there that is not structured. What need is there of more proof than this visual one?

[7] Just what is this “feeling,” though, and just what is this “thought”? We can figure this out by looking at the body overall and in detail. There are many internal organs there, all set in their own places, all carrying out their functions by shifts and changes in their states and forms. We know that they are occupied with their tasks. The stomach has its task, the intestines have theirs, the kidneys have theirs, the liver, pancreas, and spleen have theirs, and the heart and lungs have theirs. All of them are inwardly activated solely for their tasks, and this inward activation happens by shifts and changes of their states and forms.

This leads us to the conclusion that the workings of the purely organic substances of the mind are no different, except that the workings of the organic substances of the body are physical and the workings of the organic substances of the mind are spiritual. The two act as a unity by means of responsiveness [to each other].²⁷²

[8] There is no way to offer visual evidence of the nature of the shifts and changes of state and form of the organic substances of the mind, the shifts and changes that constitute our feelings and thoughts. We can see them in a kind of mirror, though, if we look at the shifts and changes of state of our lungs in the acts of speech and singing. There is a parallelism, since the sounds of speech and song as well as the differentiations of sound that make the words of speech and the melodies of song are produced by the lungs. The sound itself answers to our feeling and the language to our thought. That is what causes them; and it is accomplished by shifts and changes of the state and form of the organic substances in our lungs, from the lungs into the trachea or windpipe in the larynx and glottis, then in the tongue, and finally in our lips.

The first shifts and changes of state and form of sound happen in the lungs, the second in the trachea and larynx, the third in the glottis by opening its aperture in various ways, the fourth by the tongue by touching the palate and teeth in various places, and the fifth by our lips through taking different shapes. We can see from this that both the sound and its modifications that constitute speech and song are produced solely by sequential and constant shifts and changes in the states of these organic forms.

Since the only source of sound and speech is our mental feelings and thoughts—that is where they come from, and there is no other source—we can see that the feelings of our volition are shifts and changes of state of the purely organic substances of our minds, and that the thoughts of our discernment are shifts and changes of the forms of those substances, just the way it happens in our lungs.

[9] Further, since our feelings and thoughts are simply changes of state of the forms of our minds, it follows that our memory is nothing but their ongoing effect. It is characteristic of all the shifts and changes of state in organic substances that once they have been learned they do not disappear. So the lungs are trained to produce various sounds in the trachea and to modify them in the glottis, articulate them with the tongue, and shape them with the mouth; and once these organs have been trained to do these things, the actions are ingrained and can be repeated.

Material presented in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 119–204 [199–204] shows that the shifts and changes in the organic substances of the mind are infinitely more perfect than those in the body. There it is explained that all processes of perfection increase and rise by and according to levels. There is more on the subject in §319 below.

280

Another popular misconception is that when sins have been forgiven they are also set aside. This misconception is characteristic of people who believe that their sins are forgiven through the sacrament of the Holy Supper even though they have not set them aside by repenting from them. It is characteristic also of people who believe they are saved by faith alone or by papal dispensations. They all believe in direct mercy and instant salvation.

When the sequence is reversed, though, it is true: when sins have been set aside, they are forgiven. Repentance must precede forgiveness, and apart from repentance there is no forgiveness. That is why the Lord told his disciples to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:27) and why John preached the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3).

The Lord forgives everyone's sins. He does not accuse us or keep score. However, he cannot take our sins away except by the laws of his divine providence; for when Peter asked him how many times he should forgive someone who had sinned against him, whether seven was enough, he said that Peter should forgive not seven times but seventy times seven times (Matthew 18:21, 22). What does this tell us about the Lord, who is mercy itself?

281

4. *So the permission of evil is for the purpose of salvation.* We know that we are quite free in our thinking and intentions, but are not free to say and do whatever we think and intend. We can be atheists in our thoughts, denying the existence of God and blaspheming the holy contents of the church's Word; we can even want to destroy them utterly by what we say and do; but civil and moral and ecclesiastical laws hold us

back. So we indulge in these ungodly and criminal practices in our thoughts and our wishes and even in our intentions, but still not in our actions. People who are not atheists are still quite free to harbor any number of evil thoughts, thoughts about cheating, lust, vengeance, and other senseless things, and even act them out at times.

Is it credible that if we did not have this complete freedom we would not only be beyond salvation but would completely perish? [2] Listen to the reason. We are all immersed in many kinds of evil from birth. They are in our volition, and we love whatever is in our volition. That is, we love all the intentions that come from within; and we intend whatever we love. This love of our volition flows into our discernment and makes itself felt there as pleasure. It moves from there into our thoughts and into our conscious intentions. So if we were not allowed to think the way the love of our volition wants us to, the love that is within us by heredity, that love would stay closed in and never come out where we could see it. Any such hidden love for evil is like an enemy plotting against us, like pus in a sore, like a toxin in the blood, and like an infection in the chest. If they are kept hidden, they hasten us to our end.

On the other hand, when we are allowed to think about the evils of our life's love even to the point of wanting to act them out, they are healed by spiritual means the way a life-threatening illness is cured by physical means.

[3] I need to explain what we would be like if we were not allowed to think in keeping with the pleasures of our life's love. We would no longer be human. We would have lost the two abilities called freedom and rationality that are the essence of our humanity. The pleasures of those loves would take control of the inner reaches of our minds so completely that the door would be opened wide. We then would not be able to avoid talking and acting in similar fashion, displaying our madness not only to ourselves but to the whole world. Eventually we would not know enough to cover our private parts. It is to keep this from happening that we are allowed to think about and to intend the evils we have inherited, but not to utter and do them. In the meanwhile, we learn civic, moral, and spiritual principles that also work their way into our thinking and displace these insane principles. The Lord heals us by this means, though only to the extent that we know how to guard the door, and not unless we believe in God and ask for his help to resist our evils. Then to the extent that we resist them, he does not let them into our intentions, and eventually not into our thoughts.

[4] We do therefore have a freedom to think as we wish, in order that our life's love may come out of hiding into the light of our discernment; otherwise we would have no knowledge of our evil and could not abstain from it. It would then follow that the evil would gain strength within us to the point that there was no space for recovery within us and, since the evil of parents is passed on to their progeny, hardly any space for recovery in any children we might beget. The Lord makes sure, however, that this does not happen.

282

The Lord could heal everyone's discernment and make us incapable of thinking evil, capable only of thinking good. He could do this by various fears, by miracles, by messages from the dead, and by visions and dreams. However, healing only our discernment is healing us only superficially. Our discernment and its thought processes are the outside of our life, while our volition and its desire is the inside of our life. This means that healing only our discernment would be curing nothing but the symptoms. The deeper malignance, closed in and with no way out, would first devour what was nearest to it and then what was farther away until finally everything was dying. It is our volition itself that needs to be healed, not by our discernment flowing into it but by being taught and encouraged by our discernment.

If our discernment alone were healed we would be like an embalmed body or a corpse bathed in fragrant perfumes and roses. Before long the perfumes would draw forth from the body such a stench that none of us could put our nose anywhere near it. That is what it would be like for heavenly truths in our discernment if the evil love of our volition were repressed.

283

As already noted [§281], the purpose of letting us think about our evils even to the point of intending them is so that they can be displaced by civic, moral, and spiritual principles. This happens when we consider that something is in opposition to what is lawful and fair, what is sincere and decent, what is good and true, and therefore what is peaceful, happy, and blessed in our lives. The Lord heals the love of our volition by these three sets of principles as means, using our fears at first but our loves later.

Still, our evils are not taken away from us and discarded, they are only displaced and relegated to the sides. Once they are there and goodness is in the center, the evils are out of sight, since whatever is in the center is right in front of our eyes, visible and perceptible. We need to realize, though, that even though goodness may be in the center, this still does not mean we are devoted to it unless the evils that are off to the

sides are tending downward and outward. If they are turned upward and inward they have not been displaced, because they are still trying to get back to the center. They are tending and turned downward and outward when we are abstaining from our evils as sins, and even more so when we find them distasteful. Then we are condemning them and consigning them to hell, which turns them in that direction.

Our discernment can accept what is good and what is evil, what is true and what is false, but our essential volition cannot. This must be focused on what is evil or what is good and not on both, because our volition is our essential self. It is where our life's love is. In our discernment, what is good and what is evil are kept apart like an inside and an outside, so we can be inwardly focused on evil and outwardly on good. However, when we are being reformed, the goodness and the evil are brought face to face. Then a clash occurs, a battle that is called a temptation if it is severe. If it is not severe, though, it happens like the fermentation of wine or beer. If the goodness wins, then the evil and its distortion are moved to the sides much as dregs settle to the bottom of the bottles. The goodness comes to be like a wine that has become vintage wine after fermentation, or beer that has become clear. If the evil wins, though, then the goodness and its truth are moved to the sides and become murky and dark like half-fermented wine or half-fermented beer.

The comparison with fermentation is based on the fact that in the Word, yeast means the falsity that comes from evil, as it does in Hosea 7:4; Luke 12:1; and elsewhere.²⁷³

Divine Providence Is for Evil People and Good People Alike

285

WITHIN each of us, good and evil alike, there are two abilities. One of them makes up our discernment and the other our volition. The ability that makes up our discernment is our ability to differentiate and think, so we call it “rationality.” The ability that makes up our volition is our ability freely to do these things—think, and therefore speak and act as well—as long as they do not violate our reason or rationality. Acting freely is doing whatever we want to whenever we want to do it.

These two abilities are constant. They are unbroken from beginnings to endings overall and in detail in everything we think and do. They are not intrinsic to us but are in us from the Lord. It therefore follows that when the Lord’s presence is in these abilities it is a presence in details as well, even in the very smallest details of our discernment and thought, of our volition and desire, and therefore of our speech and action. Take these abilities out of any least detail and you could not think it or speak of it like a human being.

[2] I have already offered abundant evidence that it is by virtue of these two abilities that we are human, that we can think and talk, that we can sense what is good and discern what is true not only in civic and moral issues but in spiritual ones as well, and that we can be reformed and regenerated—in short, it is by virtue of these two abilities that we can be united to the Lord and therefore live forever. I have also explained²⁷⁴ that not only good people but evil ones as well have these two abilities. Since these abilities are given us by the Lord and we are not to claim them as our own, we are not to claim anything divine as our own either, though something divine can be attached to us so that it seems to be ours. Since this divine gift to us is in the smallest details of our nature, it follows that the Lord is in control of these smallest details in evil people as well as in good people; and the Lord’s control is what we call divine providence.

286

Now since it is a law of divine providence that we can act freely and rationally (that is, availing ourselves of the two abilities called freedom and rationality), and since it is also a law of divine providence that whatever we do seems to be done by us and therefore to be ours, and since we can infer from these laws that evils have to be permitted, it follows that

we can misuse these abilities. We can freely and rationally justify anything we please. We can take anything we please and make it rational, whether it is inherently rational or not. This leads some people to say, “What is truth? Can’t I make anything true that I choose? Isn’t that what the world does?” People do this by rationalizing if they can.

Take the most false proposition you can and tell clever individuals to justify it, and they will. For example, tell them to prove that we are nothing but animals, or that the soul is like a spider in its web, controlling the body by its filaments, or that religion is nothing but a restraint, and they will prove whichever you choose so that it actually seems true. Nothing could be easier, because they cannot identify an appearance or a false proposition that is taken in blind faith to be true. [2] This is why people cannot see the truth that divine providence is at work in the smallest details of everyone’s discernment and volition, the smallest details of everyone’s thoughts and impulses (which amounts to the same thing), in evil and good people alike.

The main thing that misleads them is that this seems to make the Lord responsible for evil when in fact no trace whatever of evil comes from the Lord. It all comes from us through our accepting as fact the appearance that we think, intend, talk, and act autonomously, as we shall shortly see. To make it clear, I need to proceed in the following sequence.

1. Divine providence is at work in the smallest details everywhere, not only with the good but with the evil as well; but it is not in their evils.
2. Evil people are constantly leading themselves into evils, and the Lord is constantly leading them away from evils.
3. The Lord cannot fully lead evil people away from their evils and guide them in what is good as long as they believe that their own intelligence is everything and that divine providence is nothing.
4. The Lord controls the hells by means of opposites. As for evil people who are still in this world, he controls them in hell as to their deeper natures, but not as to their more outward natures.

1. *Divine providence is at work in the smallest details everywhere, not only with the good but with the evil as well, but it is not in their evils.* I have already explained²⁷⁵ that divine providence is in the smallest details of our thoughts and desires, which means that we cannot think or intend anything on our own. Everything we think and intend, and therefore

everything we say and do, is the result of an inflow. If it is good, something is flowing in from heaven; if it is bad, something is flowing in from hell. In other words, if it is good it is flowing in from the Lord, and if it is bad it is flowing in from our own sense of self-importance.

I do realize, though, that all this is hard to grasp because it differentiates between what flows in from heaven or from the Lord and what flows in from hell or from our own sense of self-importance, and at the same time it says that divine providence is at work in the smallest details of our thoughts and desires to the point that we cannot think or intend anything on our own. Since I am saying that we can think and intend from hell, or from our sense of self-importance, there does seem to be a contradiction. However, there is none, as we shall see below [§294], once a few points are prefaced that will shed some light on the matter.

288

All of heaven's angels admit that no one can originate a thought, that all thinking comes from the Lord, while all the spirits of hell claim that thought cannot originate in anyone but themselves. Actually, these spirits have been shown any number of times that none of them are originating their own thoughts, that they cannot, and that it is all flowing in, but to no effect—they are unwilling to accept it.

However, experience will teach first of all that even for spirits in hell, every bit of thought and feeling is flowing in from heaven. The problem is that the inflowing good is being turned into evil in hell, and the truth is being turned into falsity. Everything becomes its opposite. This is how it was shown to me. Something true from the Word was let down from heaven and taken hold of by people in the upper levels of hell. They sent it on down to the lower hells all the way to the lowest. Step by step along this path the truth turned into falsity, finally into a falsity absolutely opposite to the truth. The people who were changing it thought they themselves were thinking up this falsity. That was all they knew, and yet the falsity was that truth flowing down from heaven on its way to the lowest hell, that truth falsified and distorted. Three or four times I have heard of this happening. The same thing happens to what is good. When this flows down from heaven it is turned step by step into the evil that is opposite to it.

This has enabled me to see that when what is true and good emanates from the Lord and is taken up by people who are devoted to what is false and evil, it is changed. It takes on another form so completely that its original form can no longer be seen. That is just what is going on with all who are evil, because in spirit they are in hell.

I have often been shown that no one in hell originates a thought. They all depend on others around them, who again are not originating their thoughts but depend on still others. Thoughts and desires move from community to community in a pattern without people realizing that they are not thinking autonomously.

289

Some individuals who believed that they thought and intended autonomously were assigned to a particular community. They were cut off from communication with those neighbors to whom their thoughts usually spread and were held where they were. Then they were told to think differently from the way the spirits of that community were thinking, to force themselves to think along contradictory lines; but they admitted that it was impossible for them. [2] This has happened to any number of people, including Leibniz.²⁷⁶ Even he was convinced that no one thinks independently, only from others, who in turn are not thinking independently. We are all thinking as a result of an inflow from heaven, and heaven depends on an inflow from the Lord.

Some people who have thought deeply about this have declared that it is so stunning that hardly anyone could be compelled to believe it, it is so contrary to the way things seem. However, they could not deny it, because it had been fully demonstrated. Still, in their wonderment they claimed that it meant that they were not to blame for thinking evil and that it seemed as though evil came from the Lord. They did not understand how the Lord alone could work things out so that we all think differently, either. These three issues need to be unfolded next.²⁷⁷

I need to add the following to the experiences already cited. When the Lord first allowed me to talk with spirits and angels, this secret was immediately made known to me. I was told from heaven that, like others, I believed that I was thinking and intending on my own, when in fact nothing was coming from me. If it was good, it was coming from the Lord, and if it was bad, it was coming from hell. I was shown this at first hand by having various thoughts and desires imposed on me so that eventually I could feel and sense it.²⁷⁸ So later, as soon as anything evil impinged on my volition or anything false on my thoughts, I asked where it was coming from and was shown. I was also allowed to talk with the people it came from, to rebut them, and to make them go away. This meant that they took their evil and falsity back and kept it to themselves, no longer instilling anything of the sort into my thoughts. This has happened thousands of times; and I have been in this state now for a number of years and still am to the present time.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, I

290

seem to myself to be thinking and intending on my own just like everyone else, with no difference at all. It seems like this to everyone because of the Lord's divine providence, as explained at the appropriate point above.²⁸⁰

Some newly arrived spirits were bewildered by my state. It looked to them exactly as though I was not thinking or intending anything on my own, and that I was therefore like something empty. However, I explained the mystery to them. I added that I was thinking more deeply and sensing what was flowing into my more outward thinking, seeing whether it was coming from heaven or from hell, rejecting the one and accepting the other. It still seemed to me as though I was thinking and intending on my own, just like them.

291

It is not entirely unknown in this world that everything good comes from heaven and everything evil from hell. Everyone in the church knows it. Is there anyone who has been ordained into the ministry who does not teach that everything good comes from God and that we cannot gain anything that is not given us from heaven?²⁸¹ Ministers teach also that the devil puts evils into our thoughts and leads us astray by prompting us to do them. So the ministers who believe they are preaching with holy zeal pray that the Holy Spirit will teach them and guide their thoughts and their speech. Some of them say they have a sense of being led. When their sermons are praised they answer devoutly that they have not been speaking from their own resources but from God.

So too, when they see people speaking and behaving well they describe them as led to it by God, and conversely when they see people speaking and behaving badly, they describe them as led to it by the devil. Everyone knows that this is how people talk in the church, but who really believes it?

292

Everything we think and intend and therefore everything we say and do flows in from the only fount of life; and yet that one fount of life, the Lord, is not the cause of our thinking things that are evil and false.

There are enlightening parallels in the physical world. Warmth and light radiate from its sun, and these two flow into all the subjects and objects²⁸² that we see with our eyes, not only good subjects and beautiful objects, but also bad subjects and ugly objects; and they bring forth different effects in each. They flow not only into trees that bear good fruit but into trees that bear bad fruit, flowing into the actual fruit itself and helping it to develop. They flow into the good seed and into the weeds,²⁸³ into useful, healthful shrubs and into harmful, toxic shrubs. Yet it is the

same warmth and the same light; and there is no cause of evil in it, only in the subjects and objects that receive it.

[2] The same can be said of the warmth that hatches the eggs of owls²⁸⁴ or vipers and the eggs of doves, beautiful birds, and swans. Putting both kinds of egg under a hen and her warmth, which in and of itself is harmless, will hatch them. What does this warmth have in common with these evil and noxious creatures?

The same applies to the warmth that flows into swamps, manure, decay, and decomposition and into things that are winelike, fragrant, sparkling, and alive. Can anyone fail to see that the cause is not in the warmth but in the receptive subject?

The very same light, too, makes beautiful colors when it flows into one object and unpleasant colors when it flows into another. Actually, it is displaying itself and glowing in bright objects and dimming itself as objects become blacker, darkening itself.

[3] The same thing happens in the spiritual world. There are also warmth and light there from its sun, which is the Lord, flowing from him into their subjects and objects. The subjects and objects there are angels and spirits, specifically their processes of volition and discernment. The warmth there is the radiating divine love and the light there is the radiating divine wisdom. They are not responsible for the fact that different people receive them differently, for the Lord says, “He makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). In its highest spiritual meaning the sun means divine love and the rain means divine wisdom.

I may add what angels think about volition and intelligence. It is their opinion that none of us has even a grain of volition or prudence that is actually ours. If there were such a grain in anyone, neither heaven nor hell could stand and the whole human race would perish. The reason they give is that heaven and hell are made up of millions of people, all the people who have been born since the creation of the world. Heaven and hell are arranged from top to bottom in a design that makes each a unity, heaven a beautiful person and hell a grotesque person. If there were a single grain of volition or intelligence that belonged to anyone, that unity would not be possible. It would be torn apart, and with it would go the divine form that can stand and endure only when the Lord is absolutely everything, and everything else is absolutely nothing.

Another reason they give is that thinking and intending autonomously is divinity itself, while thinking and intending from God is humanity itself. Divinity itself cannot be claimed by any of us: that

would mean that we would be God. Remember this; and if you want to, you will find it corroborated by angels when you arrive in the spiritual world after you die.

294

I mentioned in §289 above that when some people were shown convincingly that we do not think on our own but receive thoughts from others, all of whom in turn are not thinking on their own but from an inflow from the Lord, in their wonderment they claimed that it meant that they were not to blame for doing evil²⁸⁵ and that it seemed as though evil came from the Lord. They did not understand how the Lord alone could work things out so that we all think differently, either.

Since these three thoughts are bound to occur to people who think about effects as coming solely from effects and not from causes, I need to pick these up and look at them in terms of causes.

[2] *First, it meant that they were not to blame for doing evil.* If everything we think is flowing in from others, it does seem as though the blame rests on those others as the source. However, the real blame rests on us who accept what is flowing in, since we accept it as our own. That is all we know and all we want to know. We all want to be our own people and find our own way. Particularly, we want to think our own thoughts and make our own decisions. This is the essence of that freedom we enjoy that seems to be our very own. If we knew, then, that what we are thinking and intending was flowing in from someone else, we would feel caught and caged, no longer under our own control, and all the joy would go out of our lives. Eventually, our very humanity would go, too.

[3] I have often seen this demonstrated. When some individuals were allowed to feel and sense that they were being led by others, their rage blazed up so that they could no longer think straight. They said that they would rather be chained and imprisoned in hell than not be allowed to think what they wanted to think and intend what they were thinking. They called this restriction having their life itself bound, which was harsher and more intolerable than being bound physically. They did not say the same about being restrained from saying and doing what they were thinking and intending, because what held them in check was the pleasure of civil and moral life, and this made the restraint easier to bear.

[4] Since we do not want to know that others are leading us to think what we think, then, but want to think on our own and believe that we do, it necessarily follows that we ourselves are to blame and cannot avoid that blame as long as we are in love with our own thinking. If we are not in love with our own thinking, though, we extricate ourselves from our engagement with these others. This happens when we realize that

something is evil and want therefore to abstain and refrain from it. Then the Lord rescues us from the community that is focused on this evil and moves us to a community that is not. However, if we recognize that something is evil and do not abstain from it, then we are held responsible for it and become guilty of that evil.

Whatever we believe we are doing autonomously, then, is said to come from us and not from the Lord.

[5] *Second, it therefore seemed as though evil came from the Lord.* This can seem as though it follows from what I said in §288, namely, that in hell, the goodness that flows in from the Lord is turned into evil and the truth into falsity. Surely, though, anyone can see that the evil and falsity do not come from what is good and true and therefore from the Lord. They come from the receiving subject or object that is focused on what is evil and false and that distorts and inverts what it is receiving, as has been amply demonstrated in §292. I have already explained several times [§§15, 204, 286] how the evil and falsity in us originate.

There have been experiments in the spiritual world with people who believed that the Lord could take the evils out of evil people and replace them with good qualities, thereby taking all hell into heaven and saving everyone. You may see that this is impossible, though, at the end of this book [§§331–340] where I deal with instant salvation and direct mercy.

[6] *Third, they did not understand how the Lord alone could work things out so that we all think so differently.* The Lord's divine love is infinite, and his divine wisdom is infinite, and infinite forms of love and infinite forms of wisdom radiate from the Lord and flow into everyone in heaven and everyone in hell. From heaven and hell they flow into everyone in the world. This means that none of us can lack the ability to think and intend, since infinite forms are everything infinitely.

The infinite things that radiate from the Lord flow in not only in a general way but in full detail, since divinity is all-inclusive because of those smallest details, and the divine smallest details are what we call "the totality," as already explained [§202]. Further, every divine detail is also infinite.

We can tell from this that it is the Lord alone who makes each one of us think and intend in keeping with our own natures and in keeping with the laws of his providence. I have explained in §§46–69 and in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 17–22 that everything that is in the Lord and that radiates from the Lord is infinite.

2. *Evil people are constantly leading themselves into evils, and the Lord is constantly leading them away from evils.* It is easier to understand how

divine providence works with good people than to understand how it works with evil people. Since this latter is our present concern, I shall proceed in the following sequence. (a) There are countless elements in every evil. (b) Evil people are constantly and intentionally leading themselves deeper into their evils. (c) For evil people, divine providence is a constant permission of evil with the ultimate goal of constantly leading them out. (d) The Lord does this leading out of evil in a thousand ways, some of them quite mysterious.

296

For a clear sense and grasp of the way divine providence works with evil people, I need to explain these statements in the order in which they are listed.

(a) *There are countless elements in every evil.* Every evil looks to us like a simple unit. That is how we see hatred and vengefulness, theft and fraud, adultery and promiscuity, pride and arrogance, and the like. We do not realize that there are countless elements in every evil, more than there are fibers and vessels in the human body. An evil person is a miniature form of hell, and hell is made up of millions of individuals, each one in a form that is human even though it is grotesque. All the fibers and all the vessels in that person are inverted. Essentially, a spirit is an evil that looks to itself like a single entity, but there are as many elements in it as there are compulsions that arise from it. We are all our own good or our own evil from our heads to the soles of our feet. So if evil people are like this, we can see that each one is an evil made up of countless different things that are distinct varieties of evil, things we refer to as the compulsions of that evil.

It then follows that if we are to be reformed, the Lord has to repair and turn around all these elements in the sequence in which they occur, and that this cannot be accomplished except by the Lord's divine providence working step by step from the beginning of our lives to the end.

[2] In hell, every compulsion to evil looks like a vicious animal when it is made visible, like a dragon, for example, or some kind of poisonous snake, or some kind of owl,²⁸⁶ and so on. This is what the compulsions of our own evil look like when angels see them. All these forms of compulsion have to be turned around one at a time. The task is to take people who in spirit look like gargoyles or devils and turn them around to look like beautiful angels, and each single compulsion has to be turned around so that it looks like a lamb, a sheep, a dove, or a turtledove. This is what the desires for good of angels in heaven look like when they are made visible. Changing a dragon into a lamb or a serpent into a sheep or

an owl into a dove can only happen gradually, by uprooting the very seed of the evil and planting good seed in its place.

This has to be done in the way a scion is grafted onto a tree that is nothing but some roots and a trunk. Even so, the branch that has been grafted gets some sap from the old root and turns it into good, juicy fruit. The scion that is to be grafted has to be taken from the Lord, who is the tree of life. This is the intent of the Lord's words in John 15:1–7.²⁸⁷

[3] (b) *Evil people are constantly and intentionally leading themselves deeper into their evils.* We say they are doing this intentionally because everything evil comes from us. We turn the goodness that comes from the Lord into evil, as already noted [§294]. The basic reason evil people lead themselves deeper into evil is that they are making their way farther and farther into hellish communities, getting in deeper and deeper as they intend and do what is evil. This increases their pleasure in evil as well, and it takes possession of their thoughts to the point that nothing feels more gratifying. Furthermore, when we have made our way farther and deeper into hellish communities, we are wrapped up in chains, so to speak, though as long as we are living in this world, we do not feel them as chains. They feel like soft linen or slender threads of silk that we like because they caress us. After death, though, the softness of the chains turns hard, and the caresses start to chafe.

[4] If we consider theft, robbery, plunder, vengeance, domineering, profiteering, and the like, we can recognize this growth of the pleasure we find in evil. Do not the people who are committing these evils feel surges of pleasure as things go well and as obstacles to their efforts vanish? It is well known that thieves get such pleasure from theft that they cannot stop stealing; and strange as it sounds, they love one stolen coin more than ten coins freely given. It would be the same for adulterers if things were not so arranged that the power to commit this evil decreases as it is abused. Still, though, for many people the pleasure of thinking and talking about it is still there, and if nothing else, there is the insistent urge to touch.

[5] What people do not realize is that this is happening because they are making their way farther and farther, deeper and deeper, into hellish communities as they commit these evils intentionally and consciously. If the evils occur in our thoughts only and not in our volition, we are not with the evil in some hellish community yet. We enter such a community when the evils are in our volition as well. If at that time we are also conscious that this evil is against the laws of the Ten Commandments, and if we regard these laws as divine, and still deliberately do it, this

sends us down so deep that the only way we can be rescued is by active repentance.

[6] We need to realize that all of us, in spirit, are in some community in the spiritual world, in a hellish one if we are evil, and a heavenly one if we are good. Sometimes we are even visible there when we are deep in meditation.²⁸⁸ Further, just as sound and speech spread through the air in the physical world, desire and thought spread out in the communities in the spiritual world. There is a correspondential relationship here because desire answers to sound and thought to speech.

[7] (c) *For evil people, divine providence is a constant permission of evil with the ultimate goal of constantly leading them out.* The reason divine providence is a constant permission for evil people is that nothing can come out of their life except evil. Whether we are devoted to good or evil, we cannot be devoted to both at the same time, or even alternately, unless we are lukewarm.²⁸⁹ It is not the Lord who lets evil living into our volition and from there into our thought, it is we ourselves; and this is called permission.

[8] Now since everything evil people intend and think is a matter of permission, the question arises as to what divine providence is in this situation, the providence that we say is at work in the smallest details within all of us, evil and good alike. Divine providence consists of the fact that it is constantly allowing things to happen for a purpose and is permitting only things that serve that purpose, nothing else. It is constantly examining the evils that are allowed to emerge, separating them, purifying them, banishing the ones that do not suit its purpose, and lifting them away in ways we cannot see. This is going on primarily in our deeper volition and secondarily in our deeper thought. Divine providence is also constantly at work to see that we do not welcome back into our volition the things that have been banished and lifted from us, because everything we accept into our volition becomes part of us. Things we have accepted in thought but not in volition, though, are separated and sent away.

This is the constant effort of the Lord's providence for evil people—as just noted, a constant permission with a view to constant rescue.

[9] We know very little about this because we do not feel it. The main reason we do not feel it is that our evils are inherent in the cravings of our life's love, and we do not feel these as evil but as pleasant. No one pays them any heed. Do we pay any attention to the pleasures of our love? Our thoughts drift along in them like a little boat in the current of a river. We sense them like a breath of fragrant air that we breathe in

deeply. All we can do is sense a little of them in our outer thought, but we still take no notice of them there unless we have a clear knowledge of what evil is. There will be more on this later, though [§298].

[10] (d) *The Lord does this leading out of evil in a thousand ways, some of them quite mysterious.* I have been shown only a few of these, and only some of the commonest ones at that. What happens is that pleasures of our compulsions, of which we are utterly unaware, are emitted in close-knit groups into the inner thought processes of our spirit and from there into its outer thought processes. There they take on the guise of a kind of feeling that something is gratifying or pleasing or desirable. These inner pleasures mingle there with our lower and sensory pleasures. In this arena there are means of separation and purification and routes of dismissal and relief. The means are primarily the pleasure we find in contemplation, thought, and reflection for various purposes that are constructive; and there are as many purposes that are constructive as there are elements and details of our various jobs and offices. There are also just as many constructive purposes as there are attractive thoughts about how we can seem to be civic-minded and moral individuals and spiritual individuals—as well as some unattractive ones that intrude themselves. Because these pleasures are effects of our love in our outer self, they serve as means by which the pleasures of the compulsions to evil of our inner self can be separated, purified, excreted, and withdrawn.

[11] For example, take dishonest judges, who see money or cronyism as the goals or functions of their office. Inwardly, they are constantly focused on these goals, but this comes out in an effort to act competently and fairly. They find a constant pleasure in pondering, thinking, reflecting, and intending ways to bend, turn, adapt, and finagle the legal system so that their decisions seem to conform to the laws and to mimic justice. They are not aware that this inner pleasure is made up of plots, pretences, deceit, undercover theft, and much more of the same kind, and that a pleasure comprising all these pleasures of obsessions with evil is the controlling element in everything that goes on in their outward thinking where they find pleasure in seeming to be fair and honest.

The inner pleasures are allowed to come down into the outer ones and mingle there the way food is churned in the stomach. That is where they are separated, purified, and withdrawn. This applies, though, only to the more serious pleasures of our compulsions to evil. [12] For evil people, only this separation, purification, and withdrawal of the more serious pleasures from the less serious ones is possible. For good people, however, there can be a separation, purification, and withdrawal of the

less serious evils as well as the more serious ones. This is accomplished by means of the pleasures of our attraction to what is good and true, what is fair and honest, pleasures that we experience to the extent that we see our evils as sins and therefore abstain from them and turn away from them, and even more if we actively fight against them. These are the means the Lord uses to purify everyone who is being saved. He also purifies our evils by outward means that have to do with our reputation and respect and sometimes our finances. Even so, the Lord is planting in these means the pleasures of desires for what is good and true that guide and adapt them so that they become pleasures of a love for our neighbor.

[13] If we were to see the pleasures of our compulsions to evil in some kind of visible form or feel them clearly with any other sense, we would see and sense that there are so many that they cannot be delimited. Hell in its totality is nothing but a form of all our compulsions to evil; and in hell there is no single compulsion to evil that is exactly like any other. There cannot be one exactly like another to eternity. We know almost nothing about these countless elements, let alone how they are connected; and yet in his divine providence the Lord is constantly letting them come forth so that they can be withdrawn, doing this in a perfect pattern and sequence. An evil person is a miniature hell, and a good person is a miniature heaven.

[14] There is no better way to see and be assured that the Lord accomplishes this withdrawal from evils in a thousand ways, some most mysterious, than to look at the mysterious workings of the soul in the body. Here are some that we know about.

We know that when we are going to eat something we look at it, smell it, want it, taste it, break it up with our teeth, and use our tongues to send it down the esophagus into the stomach. However, there are mysterious workings of the soul of which we are totally unaware because we do not feel them. The stomach churns the food it has received, breaks it down and sorts it out with its secretions—that is, digests it—and assigns the elements to the appropriate open pores and veins that take them in, carrying some elements off into the blood, some into the lymphatic vessels, and some into the lacteal vessels of the mesentery, while some are sent down into the intestines. Then the chyle that comes from its reservoir in the mesentery is brought down through the thoracic duct into the vena cava and from there into the heart, and from the heart into the lungs. From there it passes through the left ventricle of the heart into the aorta, and from there through the whole branching system into the organs of the whole body. Material is also brought to the

kidneys, in both of which there take place separation, purification, and withdrawal from the blood of elements that are not suitable. Allow me to leave out how the heart sends the blood that has been purified in the lungs up to the brain, which it does through the carotid arteries, and how the brain sends energized blood back into the vena cava just above the place where the thoracic duct injects the chyle, and from there back to the heart.

[15] These are some of the mysterious workings of the soul in the body, and there are many others. Most people are unaware of them, and people who are not trained in anatomy know nothing about them. Yet things like this are going on in the deeper reaches of our own minds, since nothing can happen in the body unless it comes from the mind. The mind is our spirit, and the spirit is just as much a person as we are. The only difference is that the things that happen in the body happen on the physical level and the things that happen in the mind happen on the spiritual level. There is a perfect parallelism.

We can see from this that divine providence works in a thousand ways, some most mysterious, in each of us, and that its constant effort is to purify us. This is because it is focused on the goal of saving us; and all that is required of us is that we set aside the evils in our outer self. The Lord takes care of the rest, if we ask.

3. *The Lord cannot fully lead evil people away from their evils and guide them in what is good as long as they believe that their own intelligence is everything and that divine providence is nothing.* It seems as though we can lead ourselves away from evil if we only think that it is against the common good, impractical, and against national and international law. Evil people can do this just as well as good people if by birth or by training they are the kind of people who can think to themselves with analytic and rational clarity. However, we still cannot lead ourselves away from evil.

This is because while the Lord gives the ability to understand and appreciate things abstractly to everyone, evil and good alike (as already noted any number of times [§§86, 96, 99, 223, 285]), such understanding still does not enable us to lead ourselves away from evil. Evil is a matter of our volition, and our discernment does not flow into our volition except to give it light, to illuminate it, and to instruct it. If the warmth of our volition (that is, our life's love) is hot because of obsessions with evil, it is cold toward any desire for what is good. This means that it does not accept the light, but reflects it back, or stifles it, or turns it into evil by inventing some distortion. Winter sunlight, which is just as bright as summer sunlight, does the same thing when it flows into frozen trees.

However, it will be easier to see this in the following sequence. (a) When our volition is devoted to evil, our own intelligence sees nothing but falsity. It neither wants to see anything else nor is able to. (b) If our own intelligence does see anything true at such times, it either turns away or falsifies it. (c) Divine providence is constantly making sure we see what is true and giving us a desire to both appreciate it and accept it. (d) In this way we are led away from evil not by ourselves but by the Lord.

298

These items need to be explained in sequence, though, so that whether rational people are evil or good, whether their light is winter sunlight or summer sunlight, they will see them in the same colors.

(a) *When our volition is devoted to evil, our own intelligence sees nothing but falsity. It neither wants to nor is able to see anything else.* I have often been shown this in the spiritual world. When we become spirits, which happens after death, all of us take off our physical bodies and put on spiritual ones. We are then led alternately into our two basic states of life, the outer one and the inner one. When we are in the outer state we talk and act rationally and wisely just like any rational and wise individual in this world. We can tell others a tremendous number of things about moral and civic living. If we were ministers, we can teach about spiritual living as well. However, when we leave that outer state and come into the inner one, when the outer one becomes dormant and the inner one is awakened, then if we are evil people it is a different scene. We become sense-centered instead of rational, and insane instead of wise. Our thinking is prompted by the evil of our volition and its pleasure, which means that we are thinking with our own intelligence. We cannot see anything except what is false or do anything except what is evil. We believe that malice is wisdom and that craft is prudence. Our own intelligence convinces us that we are demigods, and our whole mind is thirsty for appalling skills.

[2] I have seen this kind of insanity any number of times. I have also seen people shift back and forth between these two states two or three times in a single hour, which enabled them to see and recognize their insanity; but they still did not want to stay in their rational and moral state. Of their own accord they turned back to their inner sensory and insane state. They loved it more than the other because that was where they found the pleasure of their life's love.

Who would think that evil people are like this under the surface and that they experience such a metamorphosis when they go within? This

experience alone shows what our own intelligence is like when its evil intent is in control of our thinking and actions.

It is different for good people. When they shift from their outer to their inner state, they become even wiser and more decent.

[3] (b) *If our own intelligence does see anything true at such times, it either turns away or falsifies it.* We have both an emotional and a cognitive sense of identity.²⁹⁰ Our emotional sense of identity is evil and our cognitive sense of identity is the falsity that it prompts. The first is what is meant by “the will of man” and the second by “the will of the flesh” in John 1:13.²⁹¹

Essentially, our voluntary side is a love for ourselves and our cognitive side is a pride born of that love. They are like two married partners, and their marriage is called the marriage of what is evil and what is false. Every evil spirit is consigned to this marriage before entering hell; and once people are there they do not know what is good, since they call their evil good and experience it as pleasant. They turn away from truth as well and do not want to see it. This is because they see the falsity that agrees with their evil the way the eye sees beauty, and they hear it the way the ear hears harmony.

[4] (c) *Divine providence is constantly making sure we see what is true and giving us a desire to both appreciate it and accept it.* This happens because divine providence is acting from the inside and flowing through to the outside, from the spiritual level into things in our lower self. Then it enlightens our discernment with heaven’s light and gives life to our volition with heaven’s warmth. Essentially, heaven’s light is divine wisdom and heaven’s warmth is divine love; and nothing can flow in from divine wisdom except what is true, and nothing can flow in from divine love except what is good. This is how the Lord gives our discernment a desire to see what is true and to appreciate and accept it; and this is how we become human not only as to our outer face but as to our inner one as well.

Is there anyone who does not want to seem like a rational and spiritual individual? Is anyone not aware of the desire to be regarded by others as truly human? If we are rational and spiritual only in outward form, then, and not inwardly as well, are we human? Are we anything but an actor on the stage or an ape with an almost human face? Does this not show that we are human only when we are inwardly as human as we seem to others? If we recognize the one kind of humanity, we must recognize the other.

The only thing our own intelligence can do is adopt a human form outwardly, but divine providence can adopt one inwardly and give us an outward form through the inner. When this is done, then we not only look human, we are human.

[5] (d) *In this way we are led away from evil not by ourselves but by the Lord.* The reason we can be led away from evil when divine providence enables us to see what is true and gives us a desire for it as well is that truth points out and indicates things. When our volition does these things, it unites with truth and transforms it to something good within itself. It becomes a matter of its love, and whatever is a matter of love is good. All our reformation is accomplished by means of truth and not apart from it, since in the absence of truth our volition stays dedicated to evil. If it does look to our discernment it is not taught anything. Instead, its evil is justified by falsities.

[6] As for our intelligence, it seems to be ours, really to belong to us, whether we are good or evil. Good people are kept in a state of acting from their intelligence as though it belonged to them, just as evil people are. If we believe in divine providence, though, we are kept from evil; but if we do not believe, we are not kept from it. When we recognize that an evil is a sin and want to be kept from it, we believe; when we do not recognize and want this, we do not believe. The difference between the two kinds of intelligence is like the difference between something we believe to be inherently real and something we believe is not inherently real but which still seems to be. It is like an outer surface that does not have an inner substance consistent with it, and an outer surface that does have such an inner substance. So it is like the speech and actions of mimes and actors who play the parts of royal and noble persons on the one hand, and the royals and nobles themselves on the other. The latter are the same inwardly as they are outwardly. The others have only the outward guise, and when they lay that aside we call them comics, actors, and impersonators.

4. *The Lord controls the hells by means of opposites. As for evil people who are still in this world, he controls them in hell as to their deeper natures, but not as to their more outward natures.* People who do not know what heaven and hell are like have no way whatever of knowing what the human mind is like. Our mind is our spirit, the spirit that lives after death. This is because the whole form of our mind or spirit is like the form of heaven or hell. There is no difference whatever except that the one is immense and the other minute, or that the one is the model and the other the impression. As far as our minds or spirits are concerned, then, we are

either a miniature heaven or a miniature hell, a heaven if we are being led by the Lord and a hell if we are leading ourselves.

Since I have been allowed to know what heaven is like and what hell is like, and since it is important that we know our nature as to mind or spirit, I want to offer a brief description of each.

All the people who are in heaven are simply desires for what is good and the consequent recognition of what is true; and all the people who are in hell are simply obsessions with evil and the consequent illusions of falsity. These are arranged on each side so that the obsessions with evil and illusions of falsity in hell are exactly opposite to the desires for what is good and recognition of what is true in heaven. So hell is under heaven and diametrically opposed to it, as diametrically opposed as two people lying in opposite directions or stationed foot to foot, one upside down, and both united at the soles of their feet, heel against heel. Sometimes hell can be seen in this kind of location or direction relative to heaven.

The reason is that for people in hell, obsessions with evil constitute the head, and desires for what is good constitute the feet, while for people in heaven desires for what is good constitute the head, and obsessions with evil constitute the soles of the feet. This means that they are opposites of each other.

To say that there are desires for what is good and therefore recognition of truth in heaven, and that there are obsessions with evil and therefore illusions of falsity in hell, is actually to say that there are spirits and angels of this quality, because we are all our own desire or our own obsession. Heaven's angels are their own desires and hell's spirits are their own obsessions.

The reason heaven's angels are desires for what is good and a consequent recognition of truth is that they are receptive of divine love and wisdom from the Lord, and all desires for what is good come from divine love, and all recognition of truth comes from divine wisdom. On the other hand, the reason all spirits of hell are obsessions with evil and consequent illusions of falsity is that they are wrapped up in their self-love and in their own intelligence, and all obsessions with evil come from self-love, and all illusions of falsity come from our own intelligence.

The arrangement of desires in heaven and of obsessions in hell is astonishing: only the Lord knows it. In each case, they are differentiated into genera and species and so coordinated that they act as a unit. Since they are differentiated into genera and species, they are divided into larger and smaller communities; and since they are coordinated so as to act as a unit, they are coordinated the way everything in a person is. As a

300

301

302

result, heaven in its form is like a beautiful person whose soul is divine love and wisdom, or the Lord. Hell in its form is like a grotesque person whose soul is self-love and self-intelligence, or the devil. There is actually no “Devil” who is the sole lord in hell; that is a name for self-love.

303

For a better understanding of what heaven and hell are like, substitute “pleasures in what is good” for “desires for what is good” and “pleasures in evil” for “obsessions with evil.” After all, there is no desire or obsession that does not have its pleasures: in each case, it is the pleasures that provide the life. They are differentiated and united just the way desires for what is good and obsessions with evil are differentiated and united, as already described [§302]. Every angel in heaven is filled with and surrounded by the pleasure of his or her particular desire. So too, a shared desire fills and surrounds every community in heaven, and the pleasure shared by all, the most pervasive pleasure, fills and surrounds heaven as a whole. In the same way, every spirit in hell is filled with and surrounded by the pleasure of her or his particular obsession, a shared pleasure fills and surrounds every community in hell, and the shared pleasure of all, the most pervasive pleasure, surrounds hell as a whole.

Since heaven’s desires and hell’s obsessions are diametrically opposed to each other, as already noted [§300], we can see that heaven’s pleasure is so painful in hell that people there cannot bear it, and conversely that hell’s pleasure is so painful in heaven that people there cannot bear it. This gives rise to hostility, repulsion, and separation.

304

Since these pleasures constitute the life of each individual and of everyone in general, they are not sensed by the people who have them;²⁹² but the opposite ones are sensed when they come near. This happens especially when they are turned into odors. Every pleasure has a corresponding odor, and in the spiritual world it can be turned into its odor. When this happens in heaven, a shared pleasure smells like a garden, varying depending on the scents of the particular flowers and fruits it contains. A shared pleasure in hell smells like stagnant water into which different kinds of sewage have been discharged, varying depending on the particular stench of the decaying and putrid matter in it.

I have been shown how people feel the pleasure of each particular desire for what is good in heaven and the pleasure of each obsession with evil in hell, but it would take too long to present that now.

305

I have heard any number of newcomers from our world complain that they did not know that their lot in life would depend on the desires of their love. They said they had not thought about them in this

world, let alone about the pleasures associated with them. They had loved whatever gave them pleasure and had simply believed that our lot depended on what we thought intellectually, especially what we thought in matters of devotion and therefore of faith.

However, they were told that if they had wanted to, they might have known that an evil life is unwelcome in heaven and displeasing to God, but welcome in hell and pleasing to the devil. By the same token, a good life is welcome in heaven and pleasing to God, but unwelcome in hell and displeasing to the devil. By the same token, evil is inherently foul smelling and good is inherently fragrant. Since they could have known this if they had wanted to, why had they not abstained from evils as hellish and demonic, and why had they approved of them simply because they felt good? Since they now knew that the pleasures of evil had such an acrid smell, they could also know that they could not come into heaven smelling like that.

When they had been given this answer, they made their way to people who were devoted to the same kinds of pleasure, because that was the only place where they could breathe.

Given this picture of heaven and hell, the nature of the human mind is clear. As already stated [§§296, 299], our mind or spirit is either a miniature heaven or a miniature hell. Its contents are simply desires and the thoughts that they prompt, differentiated into genera and species the way heaven is differentiated into larger and smaller communities and united so that they act as a unity. The Lord oversees our desires and thoughts in the same way that he oversees heaven and hell.

On the human being as either a miniature heaven or a miniature hell, see *Heaven and Hell* 51–87 [51–86] (published in London in 1758).

We may turn now to the basic proposition that the Lord controls the hells by means of opposites, and that with evil people who are still in this world, he controls them in hell as to their deeper natures, but not as to their more outward natures.

As to the first, that *the Lord controls the hells by means of opposites*, I explained in §§288–289 that heaven's angels do not get their love and wisdom, or desire for what is good and resultant thought about what is true, from themselves, but from the Lord. I noted that the goodness and truth flow from heaven into hell, and that the goodness there is turned into evil and the truth into falsity because the inner reaches of people's minds there are turned in the opposite direction. Since everything in hell is the opposite of everything in heaven, it follows that the Lord is controlling the hells by means of these opposites.

306

307

[2] Second, the reason that *with evil people who are still in this world, the Lord controls them in hell* is that as to our spirits we are in the spiritual world, each in some community. We are in a hellish community if we are evil, and in a heavenly community if we are good. Since our minds are inherently spiritual, they can be with spiritual people only, people we will join after death. I have also mentioned and explained this above [§§298, 299].

We are not located there the way spirits are who have been enrolled in a community, though. We are in a constant state of reforming, so depending on our life and the way it changes, the Lord moves us from one community in hell to another if we are evil, while if we are allowing ourselves to be reformed, he leads us out of hell and up into heaven. There too, we are moved from one community to another. This goes on until we die, at which point we are no longer transferred from community to community, because we are no longer in a state of reforming. Instead, we settle in the one where our life places us; so when we die, we are enrolled in our own location.

[3] Third,²⁹³ *the Lord controls evil people in this world one way as to their inner natures and another way as to their outer natures*. The Lord controls the inner levels of the mind as just described, but he controls the outer levels in the world of spirits that is halfway between heaven and hell. This is because most of us are not the same outwardly as we are inwardly. Outwardly we can impersonate angels of light even though inwardly we may be spirits of darkness. As a result, our outer and inner natures are controlled differently; the outer are controlled in the world of spirits and the inner are controlled either in heaven or in hell as long as we are in this world. Consequently, when we die we arrive first in the world of spirits and are conscious in our outer nature. We lay that nature aside in the world of spirits, and once we have done so we are taken to the place where we are enrolled.

On the world of spirits and its nature, see *Heaven and Hell* 421–535 (published in London in 1758).

Divine Providence Does Not Charge Us with
Anything Evil or Credit Us with Anything Good;
Rather, Our Own Prudence Claims Both

ALMOST everyone believes that we think and intend autonomously and therefore talk and act autonomously. Can we on our own believe anything else when the appearance is so convincing that it scarcely differs at all from really thinking, intending, speaking, and acting autonomously? Yet this is impossible.

308

In *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom*, I explained that there is only one life and that we are life-receivers.²⁹⁴ I also explained that our volition is a receiver of love and our discernment is a receiver of wisdom, and that these and nothing else are the life that we receive.²⁹⁵ Further, I explained that by creation, and under divine providence constantly since then, life seems to be within us exactly as though it belonged to us, as though it were ours, but that this is only the way it seems in order that we may be receivers.²⁹⁶ In §§288–294 above I have explained that the source of our thinking is not in ourselves but in others, whose source is again not in themselves. It all comes from the Lord, whether we are evil or good. Further, this is recognized in the Christian world, especially by people who not only say but even believe that everything good and true comes from the Lord, which includes all wisdom and therefore faith and charity. They also believe that everything evil comes from the devil or from hell.

[2] The only conclusion we can draw from all this is that everything we think and intend is flowing into us, and since all speech flows from thought like an effect from its cause, and all action similarly flows from volition, everything we say and do is flowing in as well, albeit secondarily or indirectly. No one can deny that everything we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel is flowing in. What about the things we think and intend, then? Can there be any difference except that what flows in from the physical world flows in through our outer or physical sensory organs, while what flows in from the spiritual world flows in through the organic substances of our inner senses or our minds? In other words, just as the organs of our outer or physical senses are attuned to material objects, the organic substances of our inner senses or our minds are receptive of spiritual objects.

Since this is our actual state, what is our “self”? Our “self” is not really one or another kind of receiver, since it is nothing but the quality of its own receptivity. It is not some aspect of life that is actually ours. When we say “the self,” no one hears anything but a being that lives on its own and therefore thinks and intends on its own. Yet it follows from what has just been said that there is no such self in us and that there cannot be.

309

Allow me, though, to pass on something I have heard from people in the spiritual world. These were people who believed that their own prudence was everything and that divine providence was nothing. I told them that nothing is really ours unless we want to call “ours” the fact that we are one kind of subject or another, or one kind of organ or another, or one kind of form or another—that no one has any “self” as people usually understand the word “self.” It is only a kind of attribute. No one actually has the kind of self that is usually meant by the term. These people who credited everything to their own prudence (we could even call them overly invested in their own image)²⁹⁷ flared up so violently that fire came from their nostrils. “You’re talking paradoxes and madness,” they said. “Surely this would reduce us to nothing, to emptiness. We would be some idea or hallucination, or some sculpture or statue.”

[2] All I could say in response was that the real paradox and madness was believing that we are the source of our own life and that wisdom and prudence do not flow into us from God but are within us, believing that this is true of the good that comes from caring and the truth that comes from faith. Any wise person would call this claim madness, and it leads into a paradox as well. Further, this is like people who are living in someone else’s house, with someone else’s possessions, and convincing themselves that they own them as long as they are living there. Or they are like trustees and stewards who claim as their own everything that actually belongs to their superior, or like the servants to whom the Lord gave greater or lesser sums²⁹⁸ for business but who claimed them as their own instead of rendering an account of them and therefore acted like thieves [Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 19:12–27]. [3] These are the people we could describe as out of their minds, as nothing and empty. We could also describe them as strict idealists,²⁹⁹ because they do not have within themselves that goodness from the Lord that is the actual substance of life, so they have no truth either. They could also be called dead, then, and nothing, and empty (Isaiah 40:17, 23, and elsewhere).³⁰⁰ They are makers of idols, sculptures, and statues.

There is more on this below, though, which will be presented in the following sequence.

1. What our own prudence is and what the prudence is that is not our own.
2. On the basis of our own prudence, we adopt and justify the conviction that we are the source and the locus of everything that is good and true as well as of everything that is evil and false.
3. Everything we adopt and justify becomes virtually a permanent part of us.
4. If we believed that—as is truly the case—everything good and true comes from the Lord and everything evil and false comes from hell, then we would not claim the goodness as our own and make it self-serving or claim the evil as our own and make ourselves guilty of it.

1. *What our own prudence is and what the prudence is that is not our own.* People are devoted to their own prudence when they convince themselves that the way things seem is the way they really are, and particularly when they accept as truth the appearance that their own prudence is everything and that divine providence is nothing but a generality; though as already explained [§201], no such generality could exist without being made up of specifics. They are then caught up in illusions as well, since any appearance that we take to be truth becomes an illusion. Further, to the extent that they justify themselves with illusions, they become materialists to the point that eventually they believe only what they can apprehend with one of their physical senses. They rely primarily on sight because it especially interacts with our thinking. Ultimately they become sense-centered; and if they come down decisively in favor of the material world and against God, they close off the inner levels of their minds and put a kind of veil in the way. From then on, they think underneath this veil, as though nothing above it existed. The ancients called sense-centered people like this “serpents of the tree of knowledge.” In the spiritual world they say that as they become fixed in their opinions, people like this close the deeper levels of their minds all the way to the nose. The nose means our sense of what is true, and that sense is lacking.

Now I need to describe what these people are like. [2] They are exceptionally adroit and shrewd, ingenious debaters. They call their ingenuity and shrewdness intelligence and wisdom and see no evidence to the

contrary. They look on people who differ from them as simple and stupid, especially if those people revere God and acknowledge divine providence. In the deeper principles of their minds—which they themselves know very little about—they are like the people called Machiavelians, people who trivialize murder, adultery, theft, and perjury as such.³⁰¹ If they do argue against such crimes, it is only to be careful that their actual nature does not become obvious.

[3] As far as our life in this world is concerned, the thought that it might be different from that of animals never crosses their minds. They think of our life after death as a kind of living mist that rises up out of the corpse or the tomb and then sinks back down and dies. This insanity leads to the belief that spirits and angels are made of air. Any of these materialists who are obliged to believe in eternal life believe that this is what our souls are like. This means that our souls do not see, hear, or speak, that they are blind, deaf, and mute. All they do is think in their own bit of air. “How could the soul be anything more?” materialists ask. “Aren’t the outer senses dead along with the body? We won’t get them back until our souls are reunited with our bodies.” They cling to these conclusions because they can think about the state of the soul after death only in physical terms, not in spiritual terms. Without their physical concepts they would have lost their belief in eternal life.

They particularly justify their own self-love, calling it the fire of life and the spur to the various useful activities in the state. This makes them their own idols; and their thoughts, being illusions based on illusions, are false images. Since they approve of the pleasures of their obsessions, they are satans and devils. We call them satans because they inwardly justify their obsessions with evil, and devils because they act them out.

[4] I have also been shown what the shrewdest sense-centered people are like. Their hell is deep down at the back, and they want to be unnoticed. So it looks as though they are flying around like ghosts (which are their hallucinations). They are called demons. Once some of them were let out of hell so that I could find out what they are like. They promptly attached themselves to my neck just below the base of my skull and from there moved into my feelings. They did not want to enter my thoughts, and adroitly evaded them. They altered my feelings one at a time, shifting my mood imperceptibly to its opposite, into obsessions with evil; and since they were not touching my thoughts at all, they would have distorted and inverted them without my noticing it if the Lord had not prevented it.

[5] That is what becomes of people who in this world do not believe there is any divine providence, and who pay close attention to others only to find out what their urges and desires are and in this way influence them until they have complete control over them. Since they do this so subtly and shrewdly that others are not aware of it, and since they keep the same nature after death, as soon as they arrive in the spiritual world they are dismissed into this hell. In heaven's light they seem to have no noses, and strange as it may seem, even though they are so shrewd, they are still more sense-centered and superficial than anyone else.

It is because the ancients called sense-centered people "serpents" and because people like this are more deft, shrewd, and clever at debating than others that it says, "The serpent was made shrewd beyond every beast of the field" (Genesis 3:1) and, "The Lord said, 'Be prudent as serpents and simple as doves'" (Matthew 10:16). So too the dragon, who is also called the old serpent, the devil, and satan [Revelation 20:2], is described as "having seven heads and ten crowns, and on the heads seven diadems" (Revelation 12:3, 9). The seven heads mean shrewdness, the ten horns the power of persuasion by distortions, and the seven diadems the holy values of the Word and the Church profaned.

Given this description of our own prudence and of people who believe in it, we can see the nature of the prudence that is not our own and of the people who believe in it. That is, the prudence that is not our own is the prudence people have who do not convince themselves that they are the source of their intelligence and wisdom. They say, "How can people be the source of their own wisdom? How can they do what is good with their own strength?" and when they say it they see within themselves that it is true. Inwardly, they think and believe that other people share this belief, especially educated people, because they do not see how anyone can only think more superficially.

[2] Since they are not subject to illusions because of any rationalizations of appearances, they both know and feel that murder, adultery, theft, and perjury are sins, and they therefore abstain from them. They know and feel that malice is not wisdom and that shrewdness is not intelligence. When they hear clever arguments based on illusions, they shake their heads and laugh to themselves. This is because there is no veil between their inner and outer processes, or between the spiritual and the earthly levels of their minds, the way there is in sense-centered people. As a result, they are open to an inflow from heaven that enables them to see things like this more deeply.

[3] They talk more simply and candidly than others and see wisdom as a matter of life rather than of conversation. They are relatively like lambs and doves, while people devoted to their own prudence are like wolves and foxes. Or again, they are like people who live in a house and see the sky through their windows, while people devoted to their own prudence are like people who live in a basement and see nothing through their windows but what is underground. Or again, they are like people standing on a mountain watching people devoted to their own prudence wandering around in the valleys and in the forests.

[4] This shows that a prudence that is not our own is a prudence that comes from the Lord. Outwardly, it looks like our own prudence, but it is totally different inwardly. Inwardly, the prudence that is not our own looks human in the spiritual world, while our own prudence looks like a statue that seems to be alive, solely because people with this prudence still have rationality and freedom, or the ability to discern and to intend and therefore to talk and act. These abilities enable them to pretend to be human. The reason they are statues like this is that what is evil and false is not alive. Only what is good and true is alive; and since they know this rationally—otherwise they would not put on the pretense—they have some lifelike humanity in their statues.

[5] Can anyone fail to realize that our real quality is our inner quality, and that therefore a real person is one whose inner quality is what he or she wants people to see outwardly, and that a statue is someone who is human only outwardly and not inwardly? Think the way you talk—in favor of God, in favor of religion, in favor of justice and honesty—and you will be human. Then divine providence will be your prudence, and you will see in others that their own prudence is insanity.

312

2. *On the basis of our own prudence, we adopt and justify the conviction that we are the source and the locus of everything that is good and true as well as of everything that is evil and false.* Let us try an argument by analogy, an analogy between what is good and true on the physical level and what is good and true on the spiritual level. We begin by asking what is true and good to our eyesight. To our eyes, is not something true when we call it beautiful, and good when we call it pleasing? We do feel pleasure at beautiful sights. What is true and good to our hearing? Is not something true when we call it harmonious and good when we call it sweet? We feel soothed by harmonious sounds; and it is much the same with our other senses. This shows what truth and goodness are on the physical level.

Now think about what is true and good on the spiritual level. Is spiritual truth anything but what is beautiful and harmonious in spiritual

events and objects? Is spiritual good anything but what is pleasing and sweet in our sense of that beauty and harmony?

[2] Let us see, then, whether we can say anything about one that we cannot say about the other, anything about the spiritual that we cannot say about the physical. We say of what is physical that the beauty and pleasure in the eye are flowing in from the objects of vision, and that the harmony and sweetness in the ear are flowing in from the instruments. What else is true of the organic substances of our minds? We say that things are happening within these mental substances but that things are flowing into our physical organs; but if we ask, "Why are we saying that things are flowing in?" the only answer is that there seems to be a distance involved. Then if we ask, "Why are we saying that things are happening inside?" the only answer is that there is no perceptible distance involved. That is, it is the appearance of distance that inclines us to believe one thing about what we think and feel, and something else about what we see and hear.

All this collapses, though, when we realize that spirit is not involved in distance the way the material world is. Think of the sun and the moon or of Rome and Constantinople. Is there any distance between them in your thought? There is none as long as the thought is not tied to the experiences we have through sight and hearing. Then why do you convince yourself that what is good and true and what is evil and false are within you, not flowing in, simply because there is no perceptible distance involved in your thinking?

[3] I may add here an experience that is quite common in the spiritual world. One spirit can instill her or his own thoughts and desires into another spirit, and the other spirit is totally unaware that the thought and desire are not arising spontaneously. In the spiritual world they call this thinking in someone else or thinking from someone else. I have seen this a thousand times, and even in the hundreds of times I have done it the appearance of distance was clearly evident. However, as soon as people realized that someone else was instilling these thoughts and feelings, they became resentful and turned away, recognizing still that the distance would not have been perceptible in their inner sight or thought unless it had been unveiled to their inner sight or eye, so to speak. This enabled them to recognize that it was flowing in.

[4] I may append to this experience something that happens to me every day. Evil spirits are often inserting evil and false elements into my thoughts, things that seem to me to be within and from myself, as though I myself were thinking them. However, since I have realized that they were evil and false, I have asked who was inserting them. They have

been unmasked and driven away, and they were at a considerable distance from me.

This shows that everything evil is flowing in with its falsity from hell, and that everything good is flowing in with its truth from the Lord, and that both seem to be within us.

313

As for the nature of people who are devoted to their own prudence and the nature of the people who have a prudence not their own and are therefore conscious of divine providence, this is described in the Word by Adam and his wife Eve in the garden of Eden where there were the two trees, one of life and the other of the knowledge of good and evil, and by their eating from this latter tree. You may see in §241 above that in the inner or spiritual meaning Adam and his wife Eve serve to denote and describe the earliest church of the Lord on our planet, one that was finer and more heavenly than the ones that followed it. As for the meaning of other elements of the story, [2] the garden of Eden means the wisdom of the people of that church; the tree of life means the Lord in particular respect to divine providence; and the tree of knowledge means humanity, particularly in respect to our own prudence. The serpent means our sensory level and sense of autonomy, which is essentially our self-love and our pride in our own intelligence, and therefore the devil and Satan. Eating from the tree of knowledge means claiming what is good and true as our own, believing that they do not come from the Lord and therefore belong to the Lord, but come from us and therefore belong to us. Since what is good and what is true are elements of Divinity within us, goodness means everything that has to do with love, and truth means everything that has to do with wisdom. So if we claim these as our own, we cannot help but believe that we are like God. That is why the serpent said, “On the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). This is what people do who are in hell because of their self-love and consequent pride in their own intelligence.

[3] The curse imposed on the serpent means the curse of any love and intelligence we claim as our own; the curse imposed on Eve means the curse of our emotional sense of identity; and the curse imposed on Adam means the curse of our cognitive sense of identity.³⁰² The thorns and thistles that the earth would sprout mean what is wholly false and evil; the expulsion from the garden means the loss of wisdom; the guarding of the way to the tree of life means the Lord’s protection of the holy values of the Word and the church from any violation; the fig leaves that covered their nakedness mean moral truths that concealed the activities of their

own love and pride; and the leather garments in which they were later clothed mean the appearances of truth that were all they had.³⁰³

This is what these items mean on the spiritual level; but anyone who wants to do so may stay with the literal meaning. Just be aware that this is what it means in heaven.

We can tell what people who are deceived by their own intelligence are like if we look at what they imagine when deeper judgment is called for, what they imagine about inflow, for example, about thought, and about life.

When it comes to *inflow*, they think backwards.³⁰⁴ They think that our eyesight flows into the inner sight of our minds, our discernment, and that the hearing of our ears flows into our inner hearing, which is also our discernment. They do not see that our discernment is flowing from our volition into our eyes and ears and is not only making them sensitive but is using them as its instruments in the physical world. Since this is not the way things seem, they do not see it. Even if you tell them that the physical does not flow into the spiritual but the spiritual does flow into the physical, they will still think, “What is the spiritual except a purer form of the physical? If the eye sees something beautiful and the ear hears something harmonious, doesn’t it seem as though the mind—which is discernment and volition—is pleased?” They do not realize that eyes do not see on their own, tongues do not taste on their own, noses do not smell on their own, and skins do not feel on their own. It is our mind or spirit that is sensing in those organs and is being affected by them according to its own nature; and even so, our mind or spirit is not sensing these things on its own, but from the Lord. Any other notion is based on appearances, and if they are accepted as true, it is based on illusions.

[2] As for *thought*, they say that it is some change effected in the air, varied according to the objects we perceive, and reinforced by habit. This means that the concepts of our thoughts are likenesses that we see in the air like phenomena in the sky, and that our memory is the slate on which they are recorded.³⁰⁵ They do not realize that our thoughts take place in substances that are intricately organized, just as our sight and hearing take place in their organs. They should look at the brain, and they would see a wealth of substances like this. Injure them and you go out of your mind; destroy them and you die. On the nature of thought and memory, see the end of §279 above.

[3] Their only concept of *life* is that it is something that nature does, something that makes itself felt in various ways, just as a living body

moves itself organically. If you say that this means nature is alive, they deny it and say that nature only makes things live.³⁰⁶ If you ask them whether this means that life vanishes when the body dies, they answer that life remains in that bit of air called the soul. If you ask what God is in this case, whether he is life itself, they have no reply and do not want to express what they are actually thinking. If you ask whether they will agree that divine love and wisdom are life itself, they answer, “What is love? What is wisdom?” This is because they cannot see in their illusions what love and wisdom are or what God is.

I include this to show how we are deceived by our own prudence, since we base all our conclusions on appearances and therefore on illusions.

316

307

The reason our own prudence convinces and assures us that everything good and true comes from us and is within us is that our own prudence is simply our cognitive sense of identity, flowing from our self-love, which is our emotional sense of identity.³⁰⁸ Our sense of autonomy inevitably lays claim to everything. It cannot rise above this. Whenever we are being led by the Lord’s divine providence, though, we are lifted out of our sense of autonomy and see that everything good and true comes from the Lord. We even see as well that whatever is in us from the Lord always belongs to the Lord and is never ours.

If we believe anything else, we are like people who have been given responsibility for an owner’s assets and insist that they belong to us or claim them as our own. This makes us thieves rather than stewards. Further, since our sense of self is nothing but evil, we plunge the owner’s assets into our own evil, where they are devoured the way pearls are when they are thrown into a manure pile or into acid.

317

3. *Everything we adopt and justify becomes virtually a permanent part of us.* Many people think that we cannot see any truth except as we can support it with data, but this is not so. We cannot see what is right and useful in civic and economic matters of the country and the state unless we know a host of regulations and protocols; we cannot do the same in legal affairs unless we know the laws, and in material subjects such as physics, chemistry, anatomy, engineering, and the like unless we are skilled scientists. However, in matters that are purely rational, moral, and spiritual, truths can be seen simply in their own light provided a decent education has made us rational, moral, and spiritual individuals. This is because as far as our spirits are concerned—and it is our spirit that thinks—we are in the spiritual world. We are among people there who are in a spiritual light that enlightens the deeper levels of our own discernment and, so to

speak, gives direction, since in its essence spiritual light is the divine truth of the Lord's divine wisdom. It is the reason we can think analytically, decide what is fair and proper in legal matters, and see what is honorable in moral matters and good in spiritual matters. We can also see a great deal that is true that lapses into darkness only because of distortions that have been accepted as truths. We see this truth very much the way we see people's moods in their faces and sense their feelings from their tones of voice, using only the knowledge we are born with. Given the way the inflow happens, why should we not be able to see at least to some extent the deeper processes of our lives, which are spiritual and moral, when there is not a single animal that does not know from its inflow what it needs to know, its physical needs? Birds know how to build nests, lay eggs, hatch their chicks, and recognize their own foods, and there are other wonders that we call "instincts."

Now, though, I need to say how our state changes as a result of our justifications and the convictions that they yield, in the following sequence. (a) There is nothing that we cannot rationalize, and we can rationalize falsity more easily than truth. (b) Once we have justified what is false, we cannot see what is true; but once we have justified what is true, we can see what is false. (c) Our ability to justify whatever we please is not intelligence. It is only cleverness, which even the worst of us may have. (d) There is a kind of intellectual justification that is not volitional as well, but all our volitional justification is intellectual as well. (e) Our justification of what is evil, both volitionally and intellectually, is what makes us believe that our own prudence is everything and that divine providence is nothing. Intellectual justification alone does not do this, however. (f) Anything that we have justified both volitionally and intellectually lasts forever, but not what we have justified only intellectually.

[2] (a) As to the first point, that *there is nothing that we cannot rationalize, and we can rationalize falsity more easily than truth*, is there anything that we cannot justify? Especially when atheists can "prove" that God is not the creator of the universe, but that Nature is her own creator; that religion is nothing but chains for simple people and commoners; that we are animals and die the way they do? And especially when they can prove that there is nothing wrong with adultery or with surreptitious theft, fraud, and deceptive plots, and that shrewdness is intelligence and malice is wisdom? We all justify our own heresies. Are there not volumes full of proofs of the two primary heresies in Christendom?³⁰⁹ Make up ten heresies, as obscure as you like, ask clever people to prove them, and they will prove them all. If you then look at them solely

on the basis of their proofs, will you not be seeing false things as true? Given the fact that anything false may shine in our earthly self because of its superficialities and illusions, while truth shines only in our spiritual self, we can see that what is false is easier to prove than what is true.

[3] Let me offer an example to show that anything false and anything evil can be justified to the point that what is false seems to be true and what is evil seems to be good. Let us prove that light is darkness and that darkness is light. Can we not ask what light really is? Is it anything but what we see in our eyes because of their state? What is light to a closed eye? Do not bats and owls have eyes, and do they not see light as darkness and darkness as light? I have heard that some people have sight like this, and they say that hellish people see each other even though they are living in darkness. Do we ourselves not have light in our dreams at midnight? Does this not mean that darkness is light and that light is darkness?

We can answer, though, “What are you talking about? Light is light the way truth is truth, and darkness is darkness the way falsity is falsity.”

[4] For another example, let us prove that crows are white. Can we not say that a crow’s blackness is simply shadow that is not its real being? Its feathers are white inside, and so is its body. These are the substances that it is actually made of. Since its blackness is a shadow, it becomes white when it gets old. I have seen crows like this. What is blackness, essentially, if not whiteness? Grind up black glass and you will see that the powder is white. This means that if you call a crow black, you are talking about its shadow and not about its real self. We can answer, though, “What are you talking about? This would mean that all birds are white.”³¹⁰

I offer these examples, even though they are irrational, to show that we can “prove” the falsity that is opposite to what is true and the evil that is opposite to what is good.

[5] (b) *Once we have justified what is false, we cannot see what is true; but once we have justified what is true, we can see what is false.* Everything false is in darkness and everything true is in the light. We cannot see anything in darkness, so we do not know what anything is unless we feel it. It is different in the light. That is why falsities are called “darkness” in the Word, and why it describes people who believe falsities as walking in darkness and the shadow of death [Psalms 23:4; Isaiah 9:2; 50:10; 59:9; John 12:35]. By the same token, truths are called “light” in the Word, so it describes people who believe truths as walking in the light [Isaiah 2:5; John 11:9; Revelation 21:24] and as “children of light” [John 12:36].

[6] There are many indications that once we have justified what is false, we cannot see what is true; but once we have justified what is true, we can see what is false. Can anyone see anything that is spiritually true without being taught by the Word? Would there not be nothing but darkness that can be dispelled only by light from the Word, and then only for people who are willing to be enlightened? Are there any heretics who can see their errors unless they are open to real truth from the church? Until they are, they cannot. I have talked with people who had convinced themselves of faith separate from charity, asking whether they had seen how much it says in the Word about love and caring, about works and deeds, and about keeping the Commandments, to the effect that people who kept them were blessed and wise and that people who did not were stupid. They have told me that when they read such things, all they could see was that they were about faith, so they skipped over them as though their eyes were closed.

[7] People who have convinced themselves of falsities are like people who see streaks on a wall, and when they do so in the evening shadows, they see the streaks in their imagination as a rider or some other human figure, an optical illusion that disappears when daylight shines in. Can anyone feel how spiritually filthy adultery is who does not feel the spiritual purity of chastity? Can anyone feel the cruelty of vengeance who is not engaged in doing good out of love for his or her neighbor? Is there an adulterer or anyone eager for vengeance who does not ridicule the people who call these pleasures hellish—the people who say that the pleasures of marriage love and love for their neighbor are heavenly? The list could go on.

[8] (c) *Our ability to justify whatever we please is not intelligence. It is only cleverness, which even the worst of us may have.* There are people who are brilliant at justifying things who do not know anything true. They can still justify both truth and falsity. Some of them say, “What is truth? Is there any such thing? Anything is true if I make it true.” In this world, these people are considered intelligent, but they are nothing but white-washers.³¹¹ The only people who are intelligent are the people who can tell that a truth is true and who corroborate this by a constant awareness of truths. It is hard to tell the two kinds of person apart because it is hard to tell the difference between the light of rationalization and the light of a genuine sense of truth. It can seem as though the things we see in the light of rationalization are being presented in the light of a genuine sense of truth; and yet the difference is like the difference between a deceptive light³¹² and real light. In the spiritual world, that deceptive light turns

into darkness when real light shines in. It is the light that many people in hell live in; and when they are let out into real light, they cannot see a thing. We can see from this that the ability to justify whatever we please is only cleverness, which even the worst of us may have.

[9] (d) *There is a kind of intellectual justification that is not volitional as well, but all our volitional justification is intellectual as well.* Some examples may serve to illustrate this. There are people who firmly believe in faith separated from charity but who live caring lives. In general, there are people who firmly believe in a false theology but do not live by these false beliefs. They are people who engage in intellectual justification but not volitional justification along with it. However, people who justify a false theology and live by it are engaged in both volitional and intellectual justification. This is because our discernment does not flow into our volition, but our volition does flow into our discernment.

This enables us to see what malicious distortion is and what distortion is that is not malicious, to see that nonmalicious distortion can be united to what is good, but that malicious distortion cannot. This is because nonmalicious distortion is distortion in our discernment but not in our volition, while malicious distortion is distortion in our discernment because of malice in our volition.

[10] (e) *Our justification of what is evil, both volitionally and intellectually, is what makes us believe that our own prudence is everything and that divine providence is nothing. Intellectual justification alone, however, does not do this.* There are many people who inwardly are convinced of their own prudence because of the way things seem in this world but who still do not deny divine providence. Their conviction is intellectual only. If they also deny divine providence, though, they are engaged in volitional justification as well. This attitude and bias are found primarily among people who deify the material world and themselves.

[11] (f) *Anything that we have justified both volitionally and intellectually lasts forever, but not what we have justified only intellectually.* Anything that is only in our discernment is not within us but outside us. It is only in our thought, and nothing really comes into us and becomes part of us except what is welcomed by our volition. This becomes part of our life's love. The next section will explain that this stays with us forever.

The reason that everything we have justified in both our volition and our discernment stays with us forever is that we are our own love, and love is the substance of our volition. Or it is because we are our own

good or our own evil, since everything good in us is a matter of love, and the same is true of everything evil.

Since we are our own love, we are also the forms of our own love and can be called organs of our life's love. I explained in §279 above that our feelings and consequent thoughts are changes and variations of the state and form of the organic substances of our minds. Now I need to explain the nature and quality of those changes and variations.

We can get a relative concept of them from our heart and lungs. Their changes are alternating expansions and compressions, or dilations and contractions. In the heart we call them systole and diastole, in the lungs they are our breathing, the alternating stretching and restraining, or the parting and squeezing, of their lobes. These are the changes and variations of the states of our heart and lungs. Similar things happen in the other organs of our bodies, and quite similar things in their parts, the parts through which our blood and life fluid³³ is accepted and circulated.

[2] Much the same happens in the organic forms of the mind, which as already noted [§279] are the subjects of our feelings and thoughts. The difference is that their expansions and compressions, their alternating motions, are relatively so much more perfect that there is no way to describe them in the words of ordinary language. Only the words of spiritual language are adequate, and these necessarily sound like whirlpools spiraling in and out like endless twisted coils joined together in forms that are wonderfully receptive of life.

[3] Now, though, I need to state what these purely organic substances and forms are like in evil people and in good people. In good people, the spirals face forward and in evil people they face backward. When they spiral forward they are turned toward the Lord and are open to the inflow from him. When they spiral backward they are turned toward hell and are open to its inflow. It is important to realize that to the extent that they are turned backward they are open behind and closed in front, and that conversely, to the extent that they are turned forward they are open in front and closed behind.

[4] This shows what kind of form or what kind of organ an evil person is and what kind of form or organ a good person is—they are turned in opposite directions. Further, since once a direction is established it cannot be twisted back the other way, we can see that we keep forever the orientation we have when we die. It is our volition's love that determines this direction, or that turns us forward or backward; for as just noted, each of us is her or his love. That is why after death we all follow the path

of our love—to heaven if we have loved what is good and to hell if we have loved what is evil. We find no rest until we arrive in the community where our own dominant love is; and strange as it may sound, we all know the way. It is as though we were following a scent.

320

4. *If we believed that—as is truly the case—everything good and true comes from the Lord and everything evil and false comes from hell, then we would not claim the goodness as our own and make it self-serving or claim the evil as our own and make ourselves guilty of it.*³¹⁴ However, this contradicts the belief of people who have convinced themselves of the appearance that wisdom and prudence come from themselves and do not flow in according to the way their minds are structured (see §319 above). For this reason, it needs to be explained; and to do that clearly, I shall use the following sequence. (a) If we convince ourselves of the appearance that wisdom and prudence come from ourselves and are therefore within us as our own possessions, it necessarily seems to us that if this were not the case we would not be human at all, only animals or statues; and yet the truth is just the opposite. (b) It seems as though it would be impossible to believe and think in accord with the truth that everything good and true comes from the Lord and everything evil and false from hell, when in fact to do so is truly human and angelic. (c) Believing and thinking like this is impossible for people who do not acknowledge the Lord's divine nature and who do not acknowledge that evils are sins; but it is possible for people who acknowledge these two facts. (d) If we make these two acknowledgments, we simply reflect on the evils within ourselves and, to the extent that we abstain and turn from them as sins, throw them back into the hell they came from. (e) This means that divine providence does not charge anyone with evil or credit anyone with good. Rather, our own prudence makes each of these claims.

321

But these need to be explained in the order just given.

(a) *If we convince ourselves of the appearance that wisdom and prudence come from ourselves and are therefore within us as our own possessions, it necessarily seems to us that if this were not the case we would not be human at all, only animals or statues; and yet the truth is just the opposite.* A law of divine providence says that we are to think in apparent autonomy and act prudently in apparent autonomy but are to recognize that this comes from the Lord. It follows that if we do in fact think and act in apparent autonomy and also recognize that it is coming from the Lord we are human, but that we are not human if we convince ourselves that everything we think and do comes from ourselves. Nor are we human if we simply wait for something to flow in because we know that wisdom and

prudence come from God. In this case, we are like statues, while in the former case we are like animals.

Clearly, if we wait for something to flow in, we are like statues. If all we can do is stand or sit motionless, hands hanging down, eyes either closed or open without blinking, neither thinking nor breathing—how much life do we have then?

[2] We can also see that if we believe that everything we think and do comes from ourselves, we are not all that different from animals. After all, we are then thinking solely with our earthly mind, the mind that we have in common with animals, and not with our spiritual rational mind, which is our truly human mind. It is this latter mind that realizes that only God thinks autonomously and that we think from God. Then too, the only difference our earthly mind can see between us and animals is that we talk and animals make noises. It believes that death is the same for both.

[3] Something more needs to be said about people who wait for something to flow in. The only people of this kind who actually receive anything are the few who deeply long for it. They occasionally receive a kind of answer through a vivid impression or a subtle voice in their thinking, but rarely through anything obvious. In any case, what they receive leaves them to think and act the way they want to and the way they can. If they act wisely they become wise, and if they act stupidly they become stupid. They are never told what to believe or what to do; otherwise their human rationality and freedom would be destroyed. That is, things are managed so that they act freely and rationally, and to all appearances, autonomously.

If some inflow tells us what to believe or what to do, it is not the Lord or any angel of heaven who is telling us but some fanatical spirit, perhaps Quaker or Moravian,³¹⁵ and we are being led astray. Everything that flows in from the Lord flows in by an enlightenment of our understanding and by a desire for what is true, actually through the desire into the enlightenment.

[4] (b) *It seems as though it would be impossible to believe and think in accord with the truth that everything good and true comes from the Lord and everything evil and false from hell, when in fact to do so is truly human and truly angelic.* It seems possible to think and believe that everything good and true comes from the Lord as long as we say no more than that. This is because it is in accord with the official faith,³¹⁶ and we are not allowed to think to the contrary. However, it seems impossible to think and believe that everything evil and false comes from hell, because if we

believed this we would not be able to think at all. Still, we seem to think for ourselves even if it is coming from hell, because the Lord provides that no matter where our thinking is coming from it seems to be happening within us and to be ours. Otherwise, we would not live like humans. We could not be led out of hell and led into heaven—that is, reformed, as I have explained so often already [§§96, 114, 174, 210]. [5] So too, the Lord provides that we realize and therefore think we are in hell if we are bent on evil and that our thoughts are coming from hell if they come from evil. He also enables us to think of ways that we can get out of hell and not accept thoughts from hell but instead come into heaven and there think from him. He also gives us a freedom to choose. We can therefore see that we can think what is evil and false in apparent autonomy; and we can also think in apparent autonomy that one thing or another is evil and false. We can think that this autonomy is only the way things seem, and that otherwise we would not be human.

It is essentially human and therefore angelic to base our thoughts on the truth; and the truth is that we do not think on our own but that the Lord enables us to think, to all appearances autonomously.

[6] (c) *Believing and thinking like this is impossible for people who do not acknowledge the Lord's divine nature and who do not acknowledge that evils are sins; but it is possible for people who acknowledge these two facts.* The reason it is impossible for people who do not acknowledge the Lord's divine nature is that it is only the Lord who enables us to think and to intend, and if we do not acknowledge the Lord's divine nature, in isolation from him we believe that we are thinking on our own. The reason it is also impossible for people who do not acknowledge that evils are sins is that their thoughts are coming from hell, and all the people there believe that they are doing their own thinking.

We can tell from the abundance of material presented in §§288–294 above that this is possible for people who acknowledge these two facts.

[7] (d) *If we make these two acknowledgments, we simply reflect on the evils within ourselves and, to the extent that we abstain and turn from them as sins, throw them back into the hell they came from.* Is there anyone who does not know—or who cannot know—that what is evil comes from hell and what is good comes from heaven? Can anyone, then, fail to see that we abstain from hell and turn away from it to the extent that we abstain and turn away from evil? On this basis, can anyone fail to see that we intend and love what is good to the extent that we abstain and turn away from evil, and that in fact the Lord releases us from hell to that same

extent and leads us to heaven? All rational people can see this provided they know that hell and heaven exist and know where evil and good come from. If, then, we reflect on the evils in ourselves, which is the same as self-examination, and abstain from them, then we extricate ourselves from hell, turn our backs on it, and make our way into heaven where we see the Lord face to face. We may say that *we* are doing this, but we are doing it in apparent autonomy, and therefore from the Lord.

When we acknowledge this truth from a good heart and a devout faith, then it is subtly present from then on in everything we seem to ourselves to be thinking and doing, the way fertility is present in a seed at every step until the formation of a new seed, or the way there is pleasure in our appetite for the food that we realize is good for us. In a word, it is like the heart and soul of everything we think and do.

[8] (e) *This means that divine providence is not charging anyone with evil or crediting anyone with good. Rather, our own prudence is making each of these claims.* This follows from everything that has just been said. The goal of divine providence is goodness. That is what it is aiming at in everything it does; so it does not credit anyone with goodness, because that would make our goodness self-serving; and it does not charge anyone with evil, because that would make us guilty of evil. We make both of these claims out of our own sense of independence, because this sense of ours is nothing but evil. The claim to independence of our volition is self-love, and the claim to independence of our discernment is pride in our own intelligence; and that is where our own prudence comes from.

Everyone Can Be Reformed, and There Is No Such Thing as Predestination

SOUND reason tells us that everyone is predestined to heaven and no one to hell. We are all born human, which means that we have the image of God within us. The image of God within us is our ability to discern what is true and to do what is good. Our ability to discern what is

true comes from divine wisdom and our ability to do what is good comes from divine love. This ability is the image of God; it is enduring with everyone who is whole and is never erased. It is why we can become civic, moral individuals; and if we can become civic and moral individuals, we can become spiritual individuals, since civic and moral life is receptive of spiritual life. We are called civic individuals if we know and abide by the laws of the country we are living in.³¹⁷ We are called moral individuals if we make habits and virtues of these laws and live by them for rational reasons.

[2] Next I need to say how civic and moral living is receptive of spiritual living. Live by these laws not only as civic and moral laws but also as divine laws and you will be a spiritual person.

There is hardly a nation so barbaric that it does not have laws forbidding murder, promiscuity with other people's spouses, theft, perjury, and violation of the rights of others. Civic and moral individuals keep these laws in order to be or to seem to be good citizens; but if they do not regard them as divine laws as well, they are civic and moral individuals only on the earthly level. On the other hand, if they do regard them as divine laws, they become civic and moral spiritual individuals.

The difference is that in the latter instance they are not just good citizens of their earthly kingdom, they are good citizens of the kingdom of heaven as well; in the former instance they are good citizens of their earthly kingdom but not of the kingdom of heaven. It is the good they do that makes the difference. The good that worldly civic and moral individuals do is not intrinsically good because they themselves and the world are at its heart. The good that civic and moral spiritual individuals do is intrinsically good because the Lord and heaven are at its heart.

[3] This shows that since we are all born capable of becoming civic and moral individuals on the earthly level, we are also born capable of becoming civic and moral individuals on the spiritual level. All we have to do is acknowledge God and not do evils because they are against God, and do what is good because that is for God. Doing this enables the spirit to enter into our civic and moral acts, and they come to life. Otherwise there is no spirit in our acts, and they are not alive. This is why worldly people are called "dead" no matter how civic and moral their behavior is, while spiritual people are called "living."

[4] Under the Lord's divine providence, every nation has a religion, and the first principle of every religion is a recognition of the existence of God. Otherwise we cannot call it a religion. Every nation that lives by its religion—that is, that does not do evil because it is against its God—is given a spiritual element within its worldly life.

Imagine hearing non-Christians say that they do not want to do some evil thing because it is against their God. Is there anyone who would not say inwardly that these people are saved? Nothing else seems possible; that is what sound reason tells us. Conversely, suppose some Christian says, “One evil or another does not matter to me. What is this business about saying that it’s against God?” Is there anyone who would not say inwardly that this person is not saved? It seems impossible; that is what sound reason tells us. [5] If this individual says, “I was born Christian, I was baptized, I have confessed the Lord, read the Word, and taken the Holy Supper,” does all this matter if this individual has a craving for murder and revenge, for adultery, surreptitious theft, perjury, lies, and all kinds of violence, and does not regard them as sins? Are people like this thinking about God or about some eternal life? Do they think that they exist? Surely sound reason tells us that people like this cannot be saved.

I make these statements about Christians because non-Christians pay more attention to God than Christians do, because their religion is in their life.

I need now to say more about this, though, in the following sequence.

1. The ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race.
2. Consequently, under divine providence everyone can be saved; and everyone is saved who believes in God and lives a good life.
3. It is our own fault if we are not saved.
4. This means that everyone is predestined to heaven and no one to hell.

1. *The ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race.* I have explained in *Heaven and Hell* (published in London in 1758)³¹⁸ and earlier in the present work [§27] that heaven is made up solely of individuals who have been born as people on earth; and since these are the only inhabitants of heaven, it follows that the ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race.

I explained in §§27–45 above that this is the purpose of creation, but this will become even clearer from the following details. (a) Everyone is created to live forever. (b) Everyone is created to live forever in a blessed state. (c) This means that everyone is created to go to heaven. (d) Divine love cannot do otherwise than intend this and divine wisdom cannot do otherwise than provide for this.

324

Since this also shows us that divine providence is a predestination only to heaven and that it cannot be changed into anything else, I need to show at this point that the ultimate purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race, and I need to do so in the order just proposed.

(a) *Everyone is created to live forever.* In parts 3 and 4 of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, I explained that we have three levels of life called earthly, spiritual, and heavenly, and that these levels are active in each one of us. I also noted that there is only one level of life in animals, a level like the lowest level in us, the one called earthly. It then follows that unlike animals, we can have our life so lifted toward the Lord that we enter a state in which we can discern things that come from divine wisdom and intend things that come from divine love, and in this way can accept something divine. If we can accept what is divine to the extent that we see and sense it within ourselves, then we must necessarily be able to be united to the Lord and to live forever because of this union.

[2] What would the Lord have been doing with all this creating of a universe if he had not made images and likenesses of himself with whom he could share his divine nature? Otherwise, it would only have been making something so that it existed and did not exist, or so that it happened and did not happen, and doing this only so that he could simply watch its permutations from far away, watch its ceaseless changes like something happening on a stage. What divine purpose would there be in all these changes unless they were serving subjects who would accept something divine more intimately, who would see and sense it? Since Divinity has inexhaustible splendor, would it simply keep it all to itself? Could it keep it all to itself? Love wants to share what it has with others, to give to others all that it can. What about divine love, then, which is infinite? Can it first give and then take back? Would this not be giving something that was bound to perish—that was intrinsically nothing, since it would become nothing when it perished? There is no real “is” involved in that. Divinity, though, gives what truly is, or what does not cease to be. This is what is eternal.

[3] To enable us to live forever, what is mortal is taken from us. That mortal part is our material body, which is taken from us by death. This lays bare what is immortal about us, which is our mind, and we then become spirits in human form. Our mind is that kind of spirit.

The sages and wise ones of old saw that our mind could not die. They asked how a spirit or a mind could die when it could be wise. Hardly anyone nowadays knows the ancients’ deeper concept of the matter, but it was a concept from heaven that resulted in their general sense

that God is wisdom itself, that we share in that wisdom, and that God is immortal or eternal.

[4] There is also something I can say from experience, because I have been allowed to talk with angels. I have talked with some who lived many centuries ago, with some from before the Flood and some from after it, with some from the time of the Lord, with one of his apostles, and with many who lived in subsequent centuries. They all looked like people in the prime of life and told me that the only thing they knew about death was that it was damnation.

When people who have lived good lives get to heaven, they all enter the young adulthood of their earthly lives and keep it forever, even though they had been old and debilitated in the world. Women, even women who had become old and frail in the world, return to the flower of youth and beauty.

[5] We can see from the Word that we live forever after death, in passages where life in heaven is called eternal life. See, for example, Matthew 19:29; 25:46; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:30; John 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24, 25, 39; 6:27, 40, 68; 12:50. Or it is simply called “life,” as in Matthew 18:8, 9; John 5:40; 20:31. The Lord told the disciples, “Because I am alive, you will also live” (John 14:19), and he said of the resurrection that God is God of the living and not God of the dead, and that they could no longer die (Luke 20:36, 38).

[6] (b) *Everyone is created to live forever in a blessed state.* This is a corollary, since the One who wants us to live forever wants us to live in a blessed state as well. Otherwise, what would eternal life be? Love always wants what is good for others. Parents’ love wants what is good for their children; a groom’s or husband’s love wants what is good for his bride or wife; our love in friendship wants what is good for our friends; so why not divine love? Further, what is goodness if it is not pleasing, and as for divine good, what is it if it is not eternal bliss? We call things good because of the pleasure or blessedness they provide. We do refer to things that we are given or own as “good,” but unless they give us pleasure, it is a barren kind of goodness that is not really good at all. We can see, then, that eternal life is eternal blessedness as well.

This state of humanity is the ultimate goal of creation, and the Lord is not to blame if only the people who get to heaven enjoy it. That is our own fault, as we shall shortly see.

[7] (c) *This means that everyone is created to go to heaven.* This is the ultimate goal of creation. The reason not everyone gets to heaven, though, is that people immerse themselves in pleasures of hell that are

contrary to the blessedness of heaven. People who do not enjoy heaven's bliss cannot enter heaven because they cannot stand the place.

When we arrive in the spiritual world, no one is forbidden to come up to heaven, but if we enjoy the pleasures of hell, then as soon as we get to heaven our hearts pound, we struggle for breath, our life starts to ebb away, we are in pain, tortured, and we writhe like snakes next to a flame. This happens because opposites actively oppose each other.

[8] Even so, since we were born human, which provides us with the ability to think and intend and therefore to talk and act, we cannot actually die. Since we are unable to live with others unless their life pleasures are like ours, we are remanded to the company of such people. This means that if we have enjoyed the pleasures of evil, we are sent off to our own kind, as we are if we have enjoyed the pleasures of what is good. In fact, we are all allowed to enjoy the pleasure of our own evil, provided only that we do not make trouble for people who enjoy the pleasure of what is good. However, since evil cannot help but make trouble for the good because of its inherent hatred for everything good, we are sent away to keep us from doing actual harm and sent down to our places in hell, where our pleasure turns into displeasure.

[9] All this does not cancel the fact that by creation and therefore by birth we have the inherent possibility of getting to heaven. All the people who die in early childhood go to heaven. They are raised and taught there the way we are in this world. They absorb wisdom because of their desire for what is good and true, and they become angels. People who are raised and taught in this world could do the same, since what is in little children is also in them. On little children in the spiritual world, see *Heaven and Hell* 329–345 (published in London in 1758).

[10] The reason it is different for so many people in the world is that they love that first level of life called “earthly.”³¹⁹ They do not want to let go of it and become spiritual—left to itself, this earthly level of life has no love for anything but ourselves and the world. It stays glued to our physical senses, which take center stage in this world. In contrast, the spiritual level of life has an inherent love for the Lord and heaven and also for ourselves and the world. God and heaven come first, though, as primary and definitive, while our selves and the world come second, as tools or servants.

[11] (d) *Divine love cannot do otherwise than intend this and divine wisdom cannot do otherwise than provide for this.* In *Divine Love and Wisdom*, there is ample evidence that the divine essence is divine love and wisdom.³²⁰ I also explained in §§358–370 of that work that the Lord

forms two vessels in every human embryo, one for divine love and one for divine wisdom. The vessel for divine love is for what will be our volition, and the vessel for divine wisdom is for what will be our discernment. This means that each of us has been given the inner ability to intend what is good and to discern what is true.

[12] Since the Lord has put these two human abilities in us at birth, and since the Lord is therefore within us in those abilities as his gifts, we can see that his divine love can intend only that we come into heaven and enjoy eternal blessedness there. We can also see that divine wisdom can provide only that this happen.

However, since the Lord's divine love wants us to feel that heaven's blessedness within us is our own, and since this cannot happen unless we feel absolutely as though we are doing our own thinking and intending, talking and acting, we can be led only in ways that follow the laws of the Lord's divine providence.

2. *Consequently, under divine providence everyone can be saved; and everyone is saved who believes in God and lives a good life.* What has just been presented shows that everyone can be saved. There are people who think that the Lord's church exists only in the Christian world because only there is the Lord known and only there is the Word found. Still, there are a good many people who believe that the church of God is wider, spread out and scattered through all regions of the world, even among people who do not know about the Lord and do not have the Word. They say that it is not these people's fault and that they cannot help being ignorant. It would fly in the face of God's love and mercy if anyone were born for hell when we are all equally human.

[2] Since many Christians (though not all) have a belief that there is a wider church called "a communion," it follows that there must be some very general principles of this wider church that comprises all religions, so that they do make up one communion. We shall see that these most general principles are belief in God and living a good life, in the following sequence. (a) Belief in God brings about God's union with us and our union with God; and denial of God brings about severance. (b) Our belief in God and union with him depend on our living a good life. (c) A good life, or living rightly, is abstaining from evils because they are against our religion and therefore against God. (d) These are the general principles of all religions, through which everyone can be saved.

We need to look at these one at a time and expand on them.

(a) *Belief in God brings about God's union with us and our union with God; and denial of God brings about severance.* Some may believe that

people who do not believe in God can be saved just like people who do, provided they lead moral lives. “What does belief accomplish?” they say. “Is it anything but a thought? I could easily believe in God if I knew for certain that God actually existed. I have heard about him, but I haven’t seen him. Show me, and I’ll believe.” Many people who deny the existence of God talk like this when they are given space to argue freely with someone who does believe in God.

But I shall illustrate the fact that belief in God unites and denial of God separates by sharing what I have learned in the spiritual world. If people there think about others and want to talk with them, they are immediately present. This is taken for granted there and never fails. The reason is that there is no distance in the spiritual world the way there is in this physical world, but only an appearance of distance.

[2] Then too, just as thinking about others, together with some awareness of them, causes presence, so a feeling of love for them causes union. This is what makes people accompany each other and converse amiably along the way, live in the same houses or in the same community, meet with each other often, and work on tasks together. The opposite happens, too, if people do not love each other, and even more so if they dislike each other. They do not see each other or get together. They are as far from each other as their lack of love or their active dislike. If by any chance they do meet, that meeting triggers the dislike, and they vanish.

[3] These few examples show what makes for presence and what makes for union in the spiritual world. Specifically, presence comes from remembering others and wanting to see them, and union comes from a feeling that arises from our love.

The same holds true for everything in our minds. There are countless elements there, all arranged and united in accord with our feelings, or the way one element loves another. [4] This union is spiritual union; and it works the same in widely inclusive instances and in individual ones. The source of this spiritual union is in the union of the Lord with the spiritual world and with the physical world, again in inclusive and in individual instances. We can see, then, that to the extent that we believe in the Lord and think about him on the basis of what we understand, the Lord is present, while to the extent that we believe in him on the basis of a loving feeling, the Lord is united with us. Conversely, to the extent that we do not believe in the Lord, the Lord is absent; and to the extent that we deny him, we are separated from him.

[5] A result of union is that the Lord turns our faces toward him and then leads us; and a result of separation is that hell turns our faces toward it and leads us. So all the angels of heaven face toward the Lord as the sun, and all the spirits of hell face away from the Lord. This shows what belief in God does and what denial of God does.

Further, people who deny God in the world deny him after death. They are inwardly structured as described in §319; and the structure adopted in this world remains forever.

[6] (b) *Our belief in God and union with him depend on our living a good life.* Everyone who knows anything religious can know about God. People can talk about God from this knowledge or from memory, and some of them can even think intelligently about God. If they do not live good lives, though, this brings only a presence. They are still perfectly capable of turning away from him and turning toward hell, which they do if they live evil lives.

Heartfelt belief in God, though, is possible only for people who live good lives. Depending on those good lives, the Lord turns them away from hell and toward himself. This is because it is only they who actually love God. They love the divine values that come from him by living them. The divine values that come from God are the commandments of his law. These commandments are God, since he is the divine nature that emanates from him. This is also loving God, which is why the Lord said, “Whoever does my commandments is the one who loves me, but whoever does not do my commandments does not love me” (John 14:21–24 [14:21, 24]).

[7] This is why there are two tablets of the Ten Commandments, one for God and the other for us. God is constantly at work to enable us to accept the things that are on his tablet. However, if we do not do the things that are on our tablet, we are not open to the heartfelt acceptance of the things that are on God’s tablet; and if we are not open to them, we are not united. As a result, the two tablets are united as a single one and are called “the tablets of the covenant,” and “covenant” means “union.”

The reason our belief in God and union with him depend on our living good lives is that good lives are like the goodness that is in the Lord and that therefore comes from the Lord. So when we are engaged in living good lives, the union is accomplished. The opposite happens with people living evil lives. Then there is a rejection of the Lord.

[8] (c) *A good life, or living rightly, is abstaining from evils because they are against our religion and therefore against God.* There is ample support

for the proposition that this is a good life, or living rightly, in *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem*, from beginning to end. I would add only this, that if you do all the good you can, if you build churches and decorate and fill them with your offerings, if you devote your wealth to hospitals and hospices, if you give alms every day, if you help widows and orphans, if you faithfully attend divine worship, even if you think, talk, and preach about these things in all apparent sincerity, and still do not abstain from evils as sins against God, all these good deeds are not really good at all. They are either hypocritical or self-serving, because there is still evil within them. Our life is in absolutely everything that we do, and good deeds become good only by the removal of evil from them.

We can see from this that abstaining from evils because they are against our religion and therefore against God is leading a good life.

[9] (d) *These are the general principles of all religions, through which everyone can be saved.* Belief in God and refusal to do evil because it is against God are the two elements that make a religion a religion. If either is lacking, we cannot call it a religion, since believing in God and doing evil are mutually contradictory, as are doing what is good and not believing in God. Neither is possible apart from the other.

The Lord has provided that there should be some religion almost everywhere and that everyone who believes in God and does not do evil because it is against God should have a place in heaven. Heaven, seen in its entirety, looks like a single individual, whose life or soul is the Lord. In that heavenly person there are all the components that there are in a physical person, differing the way heavenly things differ from earthly ones.

[10] We know that there are within us not only the parts formed as organs from blood vessels and nerve fibers—the forms we call our viscera. There are also skin, membranes, tendons, cartilage, bones, nails, and teeth. They are less intensely alive than the organic forms, which they serve as ligaments, coverings, and supports. If there are to be all these elements in that heavenly person who is heaven, it cannot be made up of the people of one religion only. It needs people from many religions; so all the people who make these two universal principles of the church central to their own lives have a place in that heavenly person, that is, in heaven. They enjoy the happiness that suits their own nature. On this subject, though, there is more in §254 above.

[11] We are assured that these two principles are basic to every religion by the fact that these two principles are what the Ten Commandments teach, and they were the basis of the Word. They were given from

Mount Sinai by the very voice of Jehovah and written on two tablets of stone by the finger of God. Then they were placed in the ark named for Jehovah and constituted the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the very center of the temple in Jerusalem. Everything else was holy simply by being there. We are told a great deal more about the Ten Commandments in the ark in the Word: see the passages collected in *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem* 53–61, to which I may add the following.

We are told in the Word that the ark containing the two tablets with the commandments written on them was captured by the Philistines and set up in the shrine of Dagon in Ashdod. Dagon fell to the ground before it, after which his head and his hands were found lying apart from his body on the threshold of the shrine. Because of the ark, the people of Ashdod and Ekron by the thousands were plagued by hemorrhoids, and their land was ravaged by mice. Then, on the advice of their leaders, the Philistines made five golden hemorrhoids and five golden mice and a new cart. They put the ark on the cart with the golden hemorrhoids and mice beside it and sent the ark back to the Israelites drawn by two cows that lowed along the way, in front of the cart. The Israelites sacrificed the cows and the cart (1 Samuel 5 and 6).

[12] Now let us see what all this means. The Philistines meant people who believe in faith separated from charity. Dagon portrayed that system of belief. The hemorrhoids that afflicted them meant earthly loves, which are unclean when they are separated from spiritual loves; and the mice meant the destruction of the church by distortions of the truth. The new cart on which they sent back the ark meant a new teaching, though on the earthly level, because a chariot in the Word meant a teaching derived from spiritual truths. The cows meant good earthly feelings, the golden hemorrhoids earthly loves purified and made good, and the golden mice the destruction of the church taken away by goodness (gold in the Word means what is good). The lowing of the cows along the way pointed to the difficulty of turning the obsessions with evil of our earthly self into good desires, and the sacrifice of the cows and the cart meant that the Lord was appeased. [13] This is what this story means spiritually. Put it all together into a single meaning and see how it can be applied.

On the meaning of the Philistines as people who believe in faith separated from charity, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Faith* 49–54; and on the ark meaning the holiest values of the church because it contained the Ten Commandments, see *Teachings about Life for the New Jerusalem* 53–61.

327

3. *It is our own fault if we are not saved.* Even on first hearing it, any rational person accepts the truth that evil cannot come from what is good, and that good cannot come from what is evil, since they are opposites. This means that nothing but good comes from what is good, and nothing but evil comes from what is evil. Once we admit this truth, we also admit that good can be turned into evil, not by the goodness itself but by the evil that receives it. Every form changes what it receives into something of its own nature (see §292 above).

Since the Lord is goodness in its very essence, or goodness itself, then, we can see that evil cannot flow from the Lord or be brought forth by him, but that it can be turned into evil by a recipient subject whose form is a form of evil. In respect to our claim to autonomy, we are this kind of subject. This apparent autonomy of ours is constantly receiving good from the Lord and constantly changing it to suit the nature of its own form, which is a form of evil. It therefore follows that it is our own fault if we are not saved.

Evil does come from hell, of course, but since our insistence on autonomy accepts evil as its own and thereby incorporates it into itself, it makes no real difference whether you say that the evil is from ourselves or that it is from hell. I need to say, though, where this incorporation of evil has come from, even to the point that religion itself is dying. I will do so in the following sequence. (a) Every religion eventually wanes and comes to completion. (b) Every religion wanes and comes to completion by inverting the image of God within us. (c) This happens because of the constant increase of hereditary evil from generation to generation. (d) The Lord still provides that everyone can be saved. (e) He also provides that a new church will take the place of the earlier one that has been razed.

328

These items need now to be presented in their sequence.

(a) *Every religion eventually wanes and comes to completion.* There have been several churches³²¹ on our planet, one after the other, since wherever the human race exists there is a church. As already noted, heaven, which is the ultimate goal of creation, comes from the human race, and no one can get to heaven without the two universal principles of the church, belief in God and leading a good life (see §326 above). It follows that there have been churches on our planet from the earliest times all the way to the present day.

These churches are described in the Word, though only for the Israelite and Jewish church³²² are we given historical accounts. There were several churches before them, but these are described only by the names of some people and nations and a few facts about them.

[2] The earliest church, the very first, is described by Adam and his wife Eve. The next church, called the early church, is described by Noah, his three sons, and their descendants. This was extensive, and spread through most of the nations of the Near East:³²³ the land of Canaan on both sides of the Jordan; Syria; Assyria and Chaldea; Mesopotamia; Egypt; Arabia; and Tyre and Sidon. They had an early Word that is discussed in *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 101–103. The existence of the church in these kingdoms is witnessed by various statements about them in the prophetic books of the Word.

This church changed significantly with Eber, though, who marks the beginning of the Hebrew church. This was the point at which sacrificial worship was established. From the Hebrew church, the Israelite and Jewish church was born, formally established for the sake of the Word that would be authored in it.

[3] These four churches are meant by the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, with its head of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, and its legs and feet of iron and clay³²⁴ (see Daniel 2:32, 33). This is exactly what is meant by the Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages mentioned by ancient authors.³²⁵ It is well known that the Christian church followed after the Jewish church.

We can also see from the Word that each of these churches declined to its close, called a “consummation,” with the passage of time. The consummation of the earliest church, brought about by eating from the tree of knowledge (meaning pride in our own intelligence) is described by the Flood [Genesis 3:6; 7:10–24]. [4] The consummation of the early church is described by the destruction of the nations mentioned in the historical and prophetic books of the Word, and especially by the Israelites’ expulsion of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.³²⁶ The consummation of the Israelite and Jewish church is meant by the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, by the carrying off of the people of Israel into permanent captivity and of the nation of Judah into Babylon, and ultimately by the second destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and the scattering of the people.³²⁷ This consummation is foretold in many passages in the prophets, and in Daniel 9:24–27.³²⁸

The Lord describes the eventual total destruction of the Christian church in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, but the consummation itself is found in the Book of Revelation.

This shows that with the passage of time the church wanes and reaches its consummation, as does its religion as well.

[5] (b) *Every religion wanes and comes to completion by inverting the image of God within us.* We know that we were created in the image of

God and after the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), but what is this image and what is this likeness of God? Only God is love and wisdom. We are created to be recipients of both, so that our volition may be a recipient of divine love and our discernment a recipient of divine wisdom.

I have already explained [§324] that we have these two recipient vessels in us from birth, that they are what make us human, and that they are formed within us in the womb. Our being images of God is our being open to divine wisdom, and our being likenesses of God is our being open to divine love. This means that the vessel we call “discernment” is the image of God and the vessel we call “volition” is the likeness of God. This then means that since we have been created and formed to be vessels, it follows that we have been created and formed to have our volition accept love from God and our discernment accept wisdom from God. We do in fact accept them when we believe in God and live by his commandments. We do this to a lesser or greater extent, though, depending on what we know about God and his commandments from our religion. Specifically, our acceptance depends on what truths we know, since truths are what tell us what God is and how we are to acknowledge him, what his commandments are and how we are to live by them.

[6] God’s image and likeness in us have not been actually destroyed, but they have been virtually destroyed. They are still there, innate within those two abilities called freedom and rationality that I have already said so much about. They become virtually destroyed when we make the vessel of divine love—our volition—a vessel for self-love and make the vessel of divine wisdom—our discernment—a vessel for our own intelligence. By so doing we invert the image and likeness of God. We turn the vessels away from God and toward ourselves. This is why they are closed on top and open on the bottom, or closed in front and open behind, even though they were created open in front and closed behind. Once they are opened and closed in this inverted fashion, then the vessel of love, our volition, is open to an inflow from hell or from our own sense of self-importance, as is the vessel of wisdom, our discernment. This has led to the birth in our churches of the worship of particular people in place of the worship of God, and a worship based on teachings of falsity rather than on teachings of truth, the latter from our own intelligence and the former from our love for ourselves.

We can see from this that in the course of time a religion will wane and come to its conclusion by inverting the image of God within us.

[7] (c) *This happens because of the constant increase of hereditary evil from generation to generation.* I have already stated and explained [§277]

that we do not inherit evil from Adam and his wife Eve because they ate from the tree of knowledge; instead evil is gradually handed down and transplanted from parents to children, and so by constant increase gets worse with each generation. When this cumulative evil becomes strong enough among the majority, it spreads evil to even more people by its own momentum, since in every evil there is a compulsion to mislead, in some cases blazing with a rage against everything good, and so there is a consequent infectious evil. When this gets control of the leaders, managers, and chief representatives in the church, its religion is corrupted. Its means of healing, its truths, become defiled by distortions. This leads to an ongoing destruction of what is good and an abandonment of truth in the church until finally it is brought to its close.

[8] (d) *The Lord still provides that everyone can be saved.* The Lord provides that there will be some religion everywhere, and that in every religion there will be the two elements essential to salvation: belief in God, and not doing evil because it is against God. The other matters of intellect and thought, what we call the elements of faith, are offered to different people according to the way they live, since they are optional elements as far as living is concerned. If they are put first, we still do not receive life until we live them.

The Lord also provides that everyone who has led a good life and has believed in God will be taught by angels after death. Then people who have been devoted to the two essential principles of religion in the world accept the truths of the church as they are presented in the Word and recognize the Lord as God of heaven and of the church. They accept this more readily than Christians who have brought with them from the world a concept of the Lord's human nature as separated from his divine nature. The Lord has also provided that all the people who die in early childhood are saved, no matter where they were born.

[9] We are all given the means of amending our lives after death, if we can. The Lord teaches and leads us through angels, and since by then we know that we are living after death and that heaven and hell are real, we accept truths at first. However, if we have not believed in God and abstained from evils as sins in the world, before long we develop a distaste for truths and back away. If we have professed these principles orally but not at heart, we are like the foolish young women who had lamps but no oil. They begged others for oil and went off to buy some, but still they were not admitted to the wedding [Matthew 25:1–13]. The lamps mean the truths that our faith discloses and the oil means the good effects of our caring.

This shows that under divine providence everyone can be saved, and that it is our own fault if we are not saved.

[10] (e) *He also provides that a new church will take the place of the one that has been razed.* This has been going on from the earliest times: once a church has been razed, a new one succeeds the former one. The early church followed the earliest church, the Israelite or Jewish church followed the early one, and after that came the Christian church. After it there is going to be still another new church, the one foretold in the Book of Revelation. That is the meaning of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven [Revelation 21:2, 10].

For the reason the Lord provides a new church to take the place of an earlier one that has been razed, see *Teachings for the New Jerusalem on Sacred Scripture* 104–113.

329

4. *This means that everyone is predestined to heaven and no one to hell.* I have explained in *Heaven and Hell* 545–550 (published in London in 1758) that the Lord does not throw anyone into hell, but that spirits throw themselves in. That is how it is with everyone who is evil and cynical after death. It is much the same with people who are evil and irreligious in this world, except that in this world they can be reformed; they can embrace and absorb the means of salvation, which they cannot do after they leave this world.

The means of salvation boil down to these two, that we are to abstain from evils because they are against the divine laws in the Ten Commandments, and that we are to acknowledge that God exists. We can all do this, provided we do not love what is evil. The Lord is constantly flowing into our volition with the power to abstain from evils and into our discernment with the power to think that God is real. However, no one can do one of these things without doing the other as well. They are united the way the two tablets of the Ten Commandments are united, the one being for the Lord and the other for us.³²⁹ From his tablet, the Lord is enlightening and empowering everyone, but we accept that power and enlightenment only as we do what is on our tablet. Until we do that, it is as though the two tablets were lying face to face and closed with a seal; but as we do what is on our tablet, they are unsealed and opened.

[2] What are the Ten Commandments nowadays but a closed booklet or leaflet opened only by the hands of children and youths? Try telling people of mature years that they should not do something because it is against the Ten Commandments—who actually cares? Of course, if you say that they should not do something because it is against divine laws

they may listen. But the Ten Commandments *are* divine laws. I have checked this out with any number of people in the spiritual world, people who sneered when I talked about the Ten Commandments or the catechism. This is because the second tablet of the Ten Commandments, our tablet, tells us that we are to abstain from evils; and if people do not abstain from them, whether because they are irreligious or because their religion says that works³³⁰ do nothing for our salvation, only faith, they feel smug on hearing talk of the Ten Commandments or the catechism. It is like hearing about some children's book that is no longer of any use to them.

[3] I mention this to show that none of us is unfamiliar with the means by which we can be saved, or the power, if we want to be saved. It follows from this that everyone is predestined to heaven, and no one to hell.

However, since for some people a belief in predestination to nonsalvation, which is damnation, has taken over, and this belief is vicious, and since it cannot be dispelled unless reason sees its insanity and cruelty, I need to deal with the matter in the following sequence. (a) Any predestination but predestination to heaven is contrary to divine love and its infinity. (b) Any predestination but predestination to heaven is contrary to divine wisdom and its infinity. (c) It is an insane heresy to believe that only those born in the church are saved. (d) It is a cruel heresy to believe that any member of the human race is damned by predestination.

To show how vicious belief in predestination is, at least as predestination is commonly understood, I need to pick up these four propositions and support them.

(a) *Any predestination but predestination to heaven is contrary to divine love, which is infinite.* I explained in the book on *Divine Love and Wisdom* that Jehovah or the Lord is divine love and that this love is infinite and is the essential reality of all life,³³¹ as well as that we are created in the image of God after the likeness of God.³³² Since (as already noted [§328]) we are all formed by the Lord in the womb in this image after this likeness, it follows that the Lord is the heavenly Father of us all and that we are his spiritual children. "Father" is in fact what Jehovah or the Lord is called in the Word, and "children" is what we are called in the Word. So it says, "Do not call your father on earth your father, for one is your Father, the one who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9). This means that he alone is our Father in respect to our life, while our earthly fathers are fathers only as to the clothing of life, the body. This is why no one is called father in heaven but the Lord. We can also see in many passages of the

Word that we are called his children and are said to have been born from him if we have not inverted that life.³³³

[2] We can tell from this that divine love is in all of us, the evil and the good alike, and that therefore the Lord who is divine love must treat us with as much love as an earthly father treats his children—with infinitely more love, in fact, because divine love is infinite. Further, he can never withdraw from anyone, because everyone’s life comes from him. It does seem as though he withdraws from evil people, but it is the evil who are withdrawing; he is still lovingly leading them. So the Lord says, “Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. Who among you will give a stone if his son asks him for bread? If then you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:7–11); and again, “Because he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). It is also recognized in the church that the Lord intends the salvation of all and the death of none.

This enables us to see that predestination to anything but heaven is contrary to divine love.

[3] (b) *Any predestination but predestination to heaven is contrary to divine wisdom, which is infinite.* It is through its divine wisdom that divine love provides the means by which we can all be saved; so to say that there is a predestination to anywhere but heaven is to say that divine love cannot provide the means of salvation. Yet we all do have the means, as just explained, and these come from divine providence, which is infinite.

The reason some of us are not saved is that divine love wants us to feel heaven’s happiness and bliss in ourselves. Otherwise it would not be heaven for us; and this feeling cannot happen unless it seems to us that we are thinking and intending on our own. If it were not for this appearance, nothing could be given to us, and we would not be human. This is the reason for divine providence, which is the result of divine wisdom stemming from divine love.

[4] Still, this does not negate the truth that we are all predestined to heaven, and none to hell. This truth would be negated, though, if the means of salvation were lacking. However, I have already shown [§§326, 329] that we are all given the means of salvation, and that the nature of heaven is to provide a place there for all who lead good lives, no matter what their religion may be.

We are like the earth. It brings forth all kinds of fruit: this ability is what makes it the earth. The fact that it brings forth bad fruit does not

negate its ability to bring forth good fruit; though it would negate it if it could bring forth only bad fruit. We are also like an object that changes the light rays that strike it. If we offer only ugly colors, that is not the fault of the light. The light rays can also be changed into attractive colors.

[5] (c) *It is an insane heresy to believe that only those born in the church are saved.* People born outside the church are just as human as people born within it. They come from the same heavenly source. They are equally living and immortal souls. They have religions as well, religions that enable them to believe that God exists and that they should lead good lives; and all of them who do believe in God and lead good lives become spiritual on their own level and are saved, as already noted [§326].

Someone could point out that they have not been baptized. But baptism saves only people who have been spiritually washed, that is, regenerated. Baptism serves as a symbol and reminder of this. [6] Someone could point out that they do not know the Lord, and that apart from the Lord there is no salvation. But no one is saved because of knowing about the Lord. We are saved because we live by his commandments. Further, the Lord is known to everyone who believes in God because the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, as he tells us in Matthew 28:18 and elsewhere.³³⁴

Particularly, people outside the church have more of a concept of a personal God than Christians do; and people who have a concept of a personal God and lead good lives are accepted by the Lord. Unlike Christians, they believe in God as one in both person and essence. Further, they think about God as they lead their lives. They treat evils as sins against God; and people who do this are thinking about God as they lead their lives.

Christians get the commandments of their religion from the Word, but not many of them actually take any commandments of life from it. [7] Catholics do not read it,³³⁵ and Protestants who believe in faith separated from charity pay no attention to what it says about life, only to what it says about faith. Yet the whole Word is nothing but a theology of life.

Christianity is found only in Europe. Islam and other non-Christian religions are found in Asia, the Indies, Africa, and America; and there are ten times as many people in these latter parts of the world as there are in the Christian part of the world—and relatively few of these latter people make their religion a matter of their lives. What could be more insane

than to believe that these and only these individuals are saved, and that the others are damned, that heaven is ours by right of birth and not by conduct of life? That is why the Lord says, “I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west and will recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens, while the children of the kingdom will be thrown out” (Matthew 8:11, 12).

[8] (d) *It is a cruel heresy to believe that any member of the human race is damned by predestination.* It is cruel, that is, to believe that the Lord, who is love itself and mercy itself, would allow such a vast number of people to be born for hell, or that so many millions would be born damned and doomed, that is, born devils and satans. It is cruel to believe that in his divine wisdom the Lord would not make sure that people who lead good lives and believe in God would not be cast into the flames and into eternal torment. After all, the Lord is the Creator and Savior of us all. He alone is leading us, and he does not want anyone to die; so it is cruel to believe and think that such a multitude of nations and people are by predestination being handed over to the devil as prey under the Lord’s own guidance and oversight.

The Lord Cannot Act Contrary to the Laws of Divine Providence, Because to Do So Would Be to Act Contrary to His Own Divine Love and His Own Divine Wisdom, and Therefore Contrary to Himself

331

I explained in *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom* that the Lord is divine love and divine wisdom and that these two are reality itself and life itself, the source of the reality and life of everything.³³⁶ I also explained that what emanates from him is of the same nature, that, for example, the emanating divine nature is actually himself. Divine providence is first and foremost among the things that emanate from him. It is constantly focused on its goal, the purpose for which the

universe was created. The working and progress of this purpose, through its means, is what we mean by “divine providence.”

[2] Since divine providence is the Lord, then, and since it is the first and foremost thing that emanates, it follows that for the Lord to act contrary to the laws of his divine providence would be to act contrary to himself.

We can also say that the Lord is providence just as we can say that the Lord is the design, since divine providence is the divine design as it relates specifically to our salvation. Further, just as there is no design without its laws (the laws actually define it) and every law is a design because its source is the design, it follows that just as God is the design, he is also the law of his design. We must then say the same of his divine providence, that just as the Lord is his providence, he is also the law of his providence. We can see from this that the Lord cannot act contrary to the laws of his divine providence, because to do so would be to act contrary to himself.

[3] Further, there is no such thing as doing something unless it affects some subject and does so through some means. Unless a deed affects some subject and does so through some means, it does not happen. We are the subject of divine providence; its means are the divine truths that provide us with wisdom and the divine generosity³³⁷ that provides us with love. It is through these means that divine providence accomplishes its purpose, which is our salvation, since anyone who intends to accomplish a purpose intends the means as well. So when the “intender” does accomplish the purpose, it is through means.

These matters will become clearer, though, when we go through them in the following sequence.

1. The working of divine providence for our salvation starts with our birth and lasts to the end of our life and then on to eternity.
2. The working of divine providence is constantly done through means, out of pure mercy.
3. Instant salvation by direct mercy is impossible.
4. Instant salvation by direct mercy is the flying fiery serpent in the church.³³⁸

1. *The working of divine providence for our salvation starts with our birth and lasts to the end of our life and then on to eternity.* I have already explained [§323] that a heaven from the human race is the purpose of the creation of the universe and that in its working and progress this purpose

is the divine provision for our salvation. I have also explained that all the things outside us, all the things that are useful to us, are secondary purposes of creation. In summary, these are all the members of the three kingdoms: animal, plant, and mineral.³³⁹ If these all constantly function according to the laws of the divine design established at the very beginning of creation, then surely the primary purpose of creation, the salvation of the human race, must constantly function according to its laws, which are the laws of divine providence.

[2] Just look at a fruit tree. See how it is first born from a tiny seed as a delicate sprout, how this gradually develops into a trunk that sends out branches, how these are covered with leaves, and how it then produces flowers, bears fruit, and sets new seeds in the fruit that provide for its endless future. It is the same for all shrubs and all the meadow grasses. Every least thing involved in this process is constantly and wonderfully moving from its purpose to its goal according to the laws of its design. Why should the primary purpose, a heaven from the human race, be any different? Can there be anything in its process that is not going on at every instant in accord with the laws of divine providence?

[3] Since there is this relationship between our life and the growth of a tree, we may draw a parallel or comparison. Our early childhood is like the delicate sprout of the tree emerging out of the ground from its seed. Our youth and young adulthood are like that sprout growing into a trunk with slender branches. The earthly truths that we all take in at first are like the leaves that cover the branches—this is exactly what “leaves” mean in the Word. Our first steps into the marriage of what is good and what is true, the spiritual marriage, are like the flowers that a tree brings forth in spring, and the spiritual truths are the petals of the flowers. The beginnings of the spiritual marriage are the fruit in its early stages. The spiritual benefits—good deeds done from a caring spirit—are like the fruit, and are what “fruit” means in the Word. The propagation of wisdom from love is like the seeds whose fertility makes us like a garden and paradise.³⁴⁰ In the Word, we are in fact described as trees, and our wisdom, which arises from love, is described as a garden. This is exactly what the Garden of Eden means.

[4] Actually, we are bad trees right from our seed, but we are granted a scion or graft from shoots taken from the tree of life, through which the sap rising from our old roots is changed into a sap that brings forth good fruit.

I offer this comparison to show that if the process of divine providence is so unailing in the growth and reproduction of trees, it must by all means be unailing in our own reformation and regeneration. We are

far more important than trees, as the Lord said: “Are not five sparrows sold for two little coins? Yet not one of them is left forgotten in the presence of God. No, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not be afraid; you are much more important than sparrows. Then too, who of you can with care add a cubit to his or her stature? So if you cannot do the least, why are you anxious about the rest? Look at the way the lilies grow. If God so clothes the grass in the field that is there today but is thrown into the oven tomorrow, how much more [will he clothe] you, O people of little faith?” (Luke 12:6, 7, 25, 26, 27, 28).

The premise is that for our salvation, divine providence begins at our birth and continues to the end of our life. To understand this, we need to realize that the Lord knows the kind of person we are and the kind of person we want to be and therefore the kind of person we will be. Further, he cannot deprive us of the freedom of our volition if we are to be human and therefore immortal, as amply explained above;³⁴¹ so he foresees what our state will be after death and provides for it from our birth all the way to the end of our life. He does this for evil people by both allowing and constantly leading them away from their evils, and for good people by constantly leading them to what is good. So divine providence is constantly at work for our salvation; but it cannot save more of us than want to be saved. We want to be saved if we believe in God and are led by him, and we do not want to be saved if we do not believe in God and we lead ourselves. In the latter case, we are not thinking about eternal life or salvation, while in the former case we are. The Lord sees all this and still leads us, doing so under the laws of his divine providence, laws he cannot violate because that would be to violate his divine love and his divine wisdom, and therefore himself.

[2] Since he foresees everyone’s state after death and foresees our place as well—in hell for people who do not want to be saved and in heaven for people who do—it follows that, as just stated, he provides places for the evil by permitting and leading them away and for the good by leading them to their places. It follows also that if this were not being done constantly for everyone from birth to the end of life, neither heaven nor hell would endure. Without this foresight and providence, that is, there would be neither a heaven nor a hell, only confusion. (See §§202–203 above on the fact that we are all provided with places by the Lord in his foresight.)

[3] To illustrate this by a comparison, if an archer or musketeer were to aim at a target and a straight line a mile long were drawn behind the target, then if the aim were off just a hair, at the end of that mile the arrow or ball would have strayed far from the line behind the target. That

is what it would be like if the Lord did not have his eye on eternity at every moment, every least moment, in his foresight and provision for everyone's place after death. The Lord does this, though, because to him the whole future is present, and to him everything present is eternal.

On the fact that divine providence focuses on what is infinite and eternal in everything it does, see above, §§46–69 and 214 and following.

334

I have also said that the working of divine providence continues forever, because all angels grow more perfect in wisdom forever. Each of us does so, though, on whatever level of desire for what is good and true we had when we left this world. This is the level that is perfected to eternity. Anything beyond this level is outside an angel, not within, and whatever is outside cannot be developed within. This is the meaning of the good measure, pressed down, shaken, and overflowing, that would be poured into the laps of people who forgave others and were generous to them (Luke 7:37, 38 [6:37, 38]), people who are living good and caring lives.

335

2. *The working of divine providence is constantly done through means, out of pure mercy.* Divine providence has both means and ways.³⁴² The means are what serve to make us human and grow in perfection in discernment and volition. The ways are the manners in which these processes happen.

The means that serve to make us human and grow in perfection in discernment are summed up in the word “truths.” They become concepts in our thinking, and we refer to them as facts in our memory. Essentially, they are the thoughts that give rise to what we know.

All these means are spiritual in and of themselves, but since they occur in our earthly concerns, they seem to be earthly because of this covering or clothing, which is earthly and even physical. They are infinite in number and infinite in variety. There are some less simple and some more simple; some less complex and some more complex; some less imperfect and some more imperfect; and some less perfect and some more perfect. There are means for giving form and completeness to our life on the civic, earthly level, for giving form and completeness to our life on the moral, rational level, and for giving form and completeness to our life on the spiritual, heavenly level.

[2] These means occur in sequence, one kind after another, from infancy to the last stage of our life, and then on to eternity. They intensify as they follow each other, with the earlier ones being means to the later ones. All the steps become part of whatever takes shape, like intermediate causes, because every effect of them, every final result, is active

and therefore becomes a cause. So the subsequent ones are means in the sequence. Further, since this process goes on to eternity, there is no last or final step that closes the sequence. That is, just as eternity is without end, so wisdom that increases to eternity has no end. If there were an end of wisdom for the wise, that would be the end of their pleasure in wisdom, which consists of its endless increase and fertility. It would therefore be the end of the joy of their life. In its place would come a pleasure in their brilliance, and there is no heavenly life in this alone. The wise would no longer be young; they would seem to age, and eventually to become decrepit.

[3] Although the wisdom of the wise does increase forever in heaven, angelic wisdom never approaches divine wisdom closely enough to touch it. It is rather like a straight line drawn next to a hyperbola, constantly approaching but never touching; or we might think of the squaring of a circle.³⁴³

This shows what is meant by the means that divine providence uses to make us human and to bring us toward perfection in discernment, and shows that the general term for them is “truths.” There are the same number of means by which we are given form and completeness in volition, but the general term for these is “good.” It is from these latter that we have love, while the former means provide us with wisdom. The union of these two kinds of means makes us human because the nature of that union determines our own nature. This union is what we refer to as “the marriage of goodness and truth.”

As for the ways divine providence works with its means, and uses them to form us and bring us toward perfection, they are infinite in number and infinite in variety as well. There are as many of them as there are actions of divine wisdom, prompted by divine love, for our salvation; as many therefore as there are things that divine providence does in keeping with its laws, as already discussed.

I have already shown [§§164, 180, 296] that these ways are deeply hidden by comparing them with the way our souls work within our bodies, ways we know little or almost nothing about—how our eyes, ears, nostrils, tongue, and skin register sensations, for example, how our stomach digests, our mesentery produces chyle, our liver works on our blood, our pancreas and spleen purify it, our kidneys separate it from contaminating fluids, our heart gathers it in and sends it out, our lungs cleanse it, and our brain refines it and gives it new life, along with countless other processes, all subtle, whose depths our science can scarcely plumb.

We can see from this that we are even less able to plumb the depths of the subtle workings of divine providence. It is enough that we know its laws.

337³⁴⁴

The reason that everything divine providence does is done out of pure mercy is that the divine essence is pure love. This is what is working through divine wisdom, and this working is what we call divine providence.

The pure love is pure mercy (a) because it is at work with everyone in the whole world, and by our nature we are all incapable of doing anything on our own; (b) it is at work with the evil and the unjust and with the good and the just alike; (c) it is leading people who are in hell and rescuing them from it; (d) it is constantly struggling with them in hell and fighting for them against the devil, that is, against the evils of hell; (e) that is why it came into the world and underwent temptations even to the final one, the suffering on the cross; (f) it is constantly at work to make the unclean clean and the insane sane, so it is constantly laboring out of pure mercy.

338

3. *Instant salvation by direct mercy is impossible.* I have just explained that the work of divine providence for our salvation begins at our birth and continues until the end of our life and then goes on to eternity, and that this work is constantly being done out of pure mercy and through means. It follows that there is no such thing as instant salvation or direct mercy.

However, there are many people who do not think about church matters or religious matters with discernment. They believe that they are saved by direct mercy and that salvation therefore happens instantaneously; yet the opposite is true; and this is a destructive belief. For these reasons, it is important to lay the matter out in its sequence. (a) Belief in instant salvation by direct mercy is based on the state of our earthly natures. (b) This belief comes from an ignorance of our spiritual state, which is completely different from our earthly state. (c) If we look more deeply into the teaching of all the churches in the Christian world, they deny instant salvation by direct mercy; and yet nominal members of the church are sure of it.

[2] (a) *Belief in instant salvation by direct mercy is based on the state of our earthly natures.* In our earthly consciousness, all we know from our normal state is that heavenly joy is like earthly joy, that it flows in and is received in the same way. For example, it is what happens when poor people become rich and change from the depressed mood of poverty to the happy mood of wealth, or when menial individuals become respected

and move from scorn to honor; it is like people going from the sorrow of a wake to the joy of a wedding. Since these moods can change in a single day, and since people have no different concept of our state after death, we can see why they believe in instant salvation by direct mercy.

[3] In this world, there can be a large gathering in one civil community, all happy together even though they are all different in character. This happens in our earthly state because the outward face of one individual can adjust to the outward face of another no matter how different they may be inwardly. Looking at this earthly state, people conclude that salvation is simply admission to the company of angels in heaven and that admission is by direct mercy. So they believe that heaven can be granted to evil and to good people alike, and that they will then relate to each other the way they do in the world, except that everyone will be full of joy.

[4] (b) *This belief comes from an ignorance of our spiritual state, which is completely different from our earthly state.* There is a great deal of information in the preceding pages about our spiritual state, our state after death. I have explained that each of us is her or his own love and that none of us can live anywhere but with people whose loves are like ours, and that if we do visit others, we cannot breathe in our own life. This is why after death we all begin to associate with people whose loves are like ours. We recognize them as relatives and friends; and strange as it may seem, when we meet and see them it is as though we had known them from childhood. It is our spiritual likeness and friendship that causes this.

Not only that, within our own communities we can live only in our own house. We all have our house in that community, which we find ready for us as soon as we join the community. We can get together with others outside the house, but we can settle down only in our own. Beyond this even, when we are in someone else's quarters we can sit only in our own place. If we sit anywhere else it is as though our minds failed and we could not speak. Remarkably, when we enter a room, we know where we belong. The same holds true in churches and wherever people gather in groups.

[5] We can see from this that our spiritual state is totally different from our earthly state. Essentially, we cannot be anywhere but where our dominant love is. That is where the delight of our life is, and we all want to be where the delight of our life is. Our spirit cannot be anywhere else because it constitutes our life, our very breathing, and the beating of our hearts. It is different in this earthly world. Here our outward nature is

trained from early childhood to pretend with our faces, speech, and body language to pleasures that are not the ones we are feeling inwardly. As a result, we cannot draw conclusions from people's moods in this world about their state after death, since their state after death will be a spiritual one. That is, they will not be able to live anywhere except in the pleasure of the love they have acquired by the way they lived in this world.

[6] This makes it abundantly clear that none of us can be admitted to that pleasure of heaven that is commonly known as heavenly joy if we enjoy the pleasures of hell, which is the same as saying that we cannot enjoy what is good if we enjoy what is evil. This becomes even clearer when we realize that after death no one is prevented from coming up into heaven. We are shown the way and given the resources, and we are let in. However, [if we enjoy evil] when we get to heaven and breathe in its pleasure, we begin to have such chest pains, heart pangs, and dizziness that we writhe like a snake next to a fire. Then with faces turned away from heaven and toward hell, we run away headlong, finding no rest until we are in the community of our own love. This shows that no one can get to heaven by direct mercy, and particularly that it is not simply a matter of being let in, as many people in this world presume. So there is no instant salvation, because this would presuppose direct mercy.

[7] There have been people who had believed in instant salvation by direct mercy in the world and who, once they had become spirits, wanted their hellish or evil pleasure to be transformed by divine omnipotence and divine mercy into heavenly or good pleasure. Since they craved this intensely, permission was granted for angels to do it. The angels took away their hellish pleasure. However, since this was the pleasure of their life's love, since it was their life, in fact, they lay there as though they were dead, senseless and motionless. No life could be breathed into them except their own because all the elements of their minds and their bodies had been turned backwards and could not be turned around again. So they were revived by letting the pleasure of their life's love back in. Later they said that in this more inward state they had felt something profoundly threatening and terrifying, something they did not want to talk about.

So in heaven they say that it is easier to change an owl into a turtle-dove or a snake into a lamb than to change a hellish spirit into an angel of heaven.

[8] (c) *If we look into the teaching of all the churches in the Christian world, they deny instant salvation by direct mercy; and yet nominal members of the church are sure of it.* If we look deeply enough, we find that the

theologies of all our churches teach how to live. Does any church have a theology that does not tell us we should examine ourselves, see and admit our sins, confess them, repent of them, and then lead a new life? Is anyone allowed to take the Holy Supper without this warning and this command? Investigate the matter, and you will be assured.

Does any church have a theology that is not based on the Ten Commandments? The laws of the Ten Commandments are laws of life.

Is there anyone in the church who has a little of the church within who does not admit, on hearing it, that we are saved if we lead good lives and damned if we lead evil lives? That is why the Athanasian Creed (which is accepted theology throughout the Christian world) says that “the Lord will come to judge the living and the dead, and then those who have done good things will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil things into eternal fire.”

[9] We can see from this that if we look deeply enough, we find that the theologies of all our churches teach how to live; and since they teach how to live, they teach that our salvation depends on how we live. Our life is not breathed into us in an instant but is formed gradually, and is reformed as we abstain from evils as sins—specifically, as we see what is a sin, recognize it, admit it, and then do not intend it, and therefore refrain from it, and also as we know the means that relate to knowing God. By these two means our life is formed and reformed, and they cannot just be poured into us in an instant. Our inherited evil, which is essentially hellish, has to be banished first, and goodness, which is essentially heavenly, planted in its stead. Because of our inherited evil we are like owls as to our discernment and snakes as to our volition, while if we have been reformed we are like doves as to our discernment and sheep as to our volition. This means that instant reformation and consequent salvation would be like the instant transformation of an owl into a dove and a snake into a sheep. Can anyone who knows anything about human life fail to see that this could not happen unless the nature of the owl and the snake were taken away and the nature of the dove and the sheep implanted?

[10] We also know that everyone who is intelligent can become more intelligent and that everyone who is wise can become more wise. That is, our intelligence and wisdom can increase; and for some people it³⁴⁵ does increase from early childhood right to the end of life, with individuals becoming steadily more and more perfect. Why should this not be even more true of spiritual intelligence and wisdom? This rises by two levels above earthly intelligence and wisdom, and as it rises it becomes angelic

and inexpressible. I have already noted [§335] that for angels it keeps growing forever. Can anyone fail to grasp the notion that it is impossible for something that keeps becoming more perfect forever to become perfect in an instant?

339

We can now see that everyone who thinks about salvation on the basis of life has no thought of instant salvation by direct mercy. The thought is rather of the means of salvation, the means in and through which the Lord works according to the laws of his divine providence, through which we are therefore led by the Lord out of his pure mercy.

However, people who do not think about salvation on the basis of life add the “instant” component to salvation and the “direct” component to mercy. This is what people do who separate faith from charity—charity is a way of living—and make attaining faith instantaneous, an event that occurs at the last hour of dying, if not before. It is also what people do who believe that forgiveness of sins without repentance is absolution from sins and therefore salvation, and who then take the Holy Supper. This also applies to people who trust the indulgences issued by monks and their prayers for the departed and the dispensations given by a power some claim to have over human souls.

340

4. *Instant salvation by direct mercy is the flying fiery serpent in the church.* The flying fiery serpent means an evil bright with hellfire like the evil meant by the flying fiery serpent in Isaiah: “Do not be happy, all Philistia, because the rod that strikes you has been broken, for a snake will come out from the root of the serpent, whose fruit is a flying fiery serpent” (Isaiah 14:29). This kind of evil is on the wing in the church whenever it believes in instant salvation by direct mercy, because this (a) leads to the destruction of religion, (b) makes people feel safe, and (c) blames God for damnation.

[2] As to the first, (a) *that this leads to the destruction of religion*, there are two things that are essential to and omnipresent in religion: belief in God, and repentance. These two are empty for people who believe they are saved by mercy alone, no matter what kind of life they lead. For what more is needed except to say, “God, have mercy on me!” When it comes to everything else that has to do with religion, these people are in darkness and love their darkness. On the first essential of the church, belief in God, all they think is “What is God? Who has seen him?” If you say that God is real and that God is one, they say that God is one. If you say that there are three, then they say that there are three, but that the three are to be called “the One.” For them, that is belief in God.

[3] As for the second essential of the church, repentance, these people give it no thought. This means that they give no thought to any sin and eventually do not know that anything is a sin. They hear and absorb with delight the statement that the law does not condemn them because as Christians they are not under the yoke of the law.³⁴⁶ All you have to do is say, “God, have mercy on me for the sake of your Son,” and you will be saved. For them, this is a life of repentance.

But if you take repentance away, which is the same as removing life from religion, what is left but the phrase, “Have mercy on me”? That is why all they can say is that salvation happens the moment these words are spoken; if not earlier, then at the time of death. What is the Word, then, but a dim and enigmatic message from the tripod in the cave or like an unintelligible answer from some oracular idol?³⁴⁷ In short, if you take repentance away, which is the same as removing life from religion, what are we but an evil thing bright with hellfire, or a flying fiery serpent in the church? For without repentance, we are devoted to evil, and evil is hell.

[4] (b) *Belief in instant salvation from nothing but pure mercy makes us feel that our lives are safe.* The feeling that our lives are safe comes either from the belief of irreligious people that there is no life after death or from the belief of people who separate life from salvation. These latter do believe in eternal life, but they still think, “I can be saved whether I lead a good life or an evil one, because salvation is a matter of pure mercy, and God’s mercy is universal because he does not will the death of anyone.” If the thought crosses their minds that they need to ask for this mercy in the approved words of the faith, they may think that if they do not do it earlier, they can do this just before the hour of death approaches. People who live in this sense of safety all think nothing of adultery, fraud, injustice, violence, slander, and vengeance. Rather, they lose control of themselves in these actions, body and soul. They have no idea what a spiritual evil is or what obsession with it is. If they hear anything about it from the Word, it is rather like something that falls on a bony surface and bounces off, or like something that falls into a ditch and oozes away.

[5] (c) *By this kind of belief, God is blamed for damnation.* If God can save everyone out of pure mercy, is there anyone who cannot draw the conclusion that God is to blame, not we, if we are not saved? If you say that the means of salvation is faith, is there anyone who cannot be given this faith, since it is nothing but a thought that can be poured in

whenever our spirits are withdrawn from the world, and done so with confidence? People can also say, “I cannot acquire anything by myself”; so if something is not given and someone is damned, then that damned individual can only think that the Lord is to blame because he could have saved but did not want to. Would this not be calling him merciless? Not only that, in the heat of this belief the damned may say, “Why can we see so many damned in hell when the Lord could save them all in an instant out of pure mercy?” and a good deal more of the same, all of which can only be called appalling indictments of Divinity.

This now serves to show that a belief in instant salvation out of pure mercy is the flying fiery serpent in the church.



[6] Forgive me for adding the following to fill out the rest of the page.

By special permission, some spirits came up from hell and said to me, “You have written a great deal that the Lord has given you. Write something from us as well.”

I answered, “What should I write?”

They said, “Write that every spirit, whether good or evil, has his or her own delight—a delight in goodness for the good and a delight in evil for the evil.”

I asked, “What is your delight?” They said that it was a delight in adultery, theft, fraud, and lying. I went on to ask, “What are these delights like?” They said that others experienced them as stench from excrement, foul odors from corpses, and the reek of stale urine. I said, “And do you find them pleasant?” They said that they were absolutely delightful. I said, “Then you are like filthy beasts that live in substances like these.”

They said, “If we are, we are, but to our nostrils, these scents are delightful.”

I asked, “What else do you want me to write?”

They said, “Write this: that we are all allowed to live in our own delights, no matter how filthy they are, as some would say, as long as we do not harass good spirits and angels. But since we cannot help harassing them, we are driven off and cast into hell, where we suffer terribly.”

I said, “Why do you harass good people?” They answered that they could not help it, it was as though a rage came over them when they saw angels and sensed the divine aura around them. I said, “This makes you like wild animals.” When they heard this, a rage came over them that looked like blazing hatred, and to prevent them from doing any harm, they were taken back into hell.

On the way pleasures are sensed as odors and as stench in the spiritual world, see §§303–305 and 324 above.

THE END

