



## “To Heal the Brokenhearted”

*The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, because Jehovah has anointed Me to bring good tidings to the meek; He has sent Me to bind up the broken of heart; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and to the bound, the opening of the prison; to proclaim the year of good*

*pleasure for Jehovah, and the day of vengeance for our God; to comfort all who mourn; to set for the mourners of Zion; to give them a headdress instead of ashes; the oil of joy instead of mourning; the cloak of praise instead of a dim spirit; that they may be called the oaks of justice, the planting of Jehovah, to give Me splendor. (Isaiah 61:1-3)*

These things (in Isaiah) are said of the Lord. "the poor" to whom Jehovah hath anointed Him to preach good tidings signify those who are in few truths, and yet desire truths that their soul may be sustained by them; "the broken in heart" signify those who in consequence are in grief; (*Apocalypse Explained* 811.18; Cf. Luke 4:16-21)

Many of the ancient and after them some modern writers have assigned the affections to the heart, and have made the heart their dwelling-place. From this have come into common language such expressions as a stout heart, a timid heart, a joyful heart, a sad heart, a soft heart, a hard heart, a great heart, a weak heart, a whole heart, a broken heart, a heart of flesh, a heart of stone; likewise being gross, or soft, or tender in heart; giving the heart to a thing, giving a single heart, giving a new heart, laying up in the heart, receiving in the heart, not reaching the heart, hardening one's heart, a friend at heart; also the terms concord, discord, folly, and other similar terms expressive of love and its affections. There are like expressions in the Word, because the Word was written by correspondences. (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 378)

## “And the Word Was God”

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in a tabernacle among us, and we observed His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1,3,4,14)*

The Word in the letter is like a casket, where precious stones, pearls, and diadems lie in order. The thoughts of a man's mind, who regards the Word as holy, and who reads it for the sake of the uses of life, may be compared to one holding such a casket in his hand, and throwing it toward heaven; and the casket opening in its ascent, the precious things in it are disclosed to the angels, who are deeply delighted in seeing and examining them. (*True Christian Religion* 238)

Without the Word no one would possess spiritual intelligence, which consists in having knowledge of a God, of heaven and hell, and of a life after death; nor would know anything whatever about the Lord, about faith in him and love to him, nor anything about redemption, by means of which nevertheless comes salvation. Yea, without the Word ... there would be no conjunction with the Lord. (SS 114, *De Verbo* 14)

Innocence consists in being led by the Lord and not by self... those who are in the inmost or third heaven are ...more than all others they love to be led by the Lord as little children by their father; and for the same reason the Divine truth that they hear immediately from the Lord or mediately through the Word and preaching they take directly into their will and do it, thus committing it to life. ...These angels of the inmost heaven, being such are nearest to the Lord from whom they receive innocence, and are so separated from what is their own that they live as it were in the Lord. ... they know that they have nothing of wisdom from themselves, ... acknowledging, and perceiving this is the first step towards wisdom. (*Heaven and Hell* 280)

### “Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh”

*And when they had opened their treasures, they offered to Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)*

That a "present" signifies initiation, is because it was given to gain good will and favor; for in old times ... they gave presents to kings and priests on approaching them ... This was a holy ritual, signifying initiation, so too the wise men from the east also, who came to Jesus just after His birth, brought presents. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4262.2-3)

External gifts signify internal or spiritual gifts, namely, such as go forth from the heart, and thence are of the affection and faith; and as by these conjunction is effected, in the spiritual sense "gifts" in reference to God signify conjunction, and in reference to men conjunction. (*Apocalypse Explained* 661)

The gifts that were offered to Jehovah signified such things as are offered by man from the heart unto the Lord, and are accepted by the Lord. Gifts are like all man's deeds, which in themselves are nothing but gestures, and regarded apart from the will are merely movements that are fashioned in various ways, and as it were jointed, not unlike the motions of a machine, and thus devoid of life. But man's deeds regarded along with his will are not such motions, but are forms of the will shown before the eyes; for deeds are nothing else than testifications of such things as belong to the will; and they also have their soul or life from the will. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.1)

### “They Were Both Righteous before God”

*There was in the days of Herod the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the daily ministry of Abijah; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both just in the sight of God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:5-6)*

Innocence consists in acknowledging that all truths and goods are from the Lord, and nothing from man's own; thus it consists in being willing to be led by the Lord, and not by self. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10210)

Those who are in a state of innocence attribute nothing of good to themselves, but regard all things as received and ascribe them to the Lord; that they wish to be led by Him and not by themselves; that they love everything that is good and find delight in everything that is true, because they know and perceive that loving what is good, that is, willing and doing it, is loving the Lord, and loving truth is loving the neighbor; that they live contented with their own, whether it be little or much, because they know that they receive just as much as is good for them—those receiving little for whom a little is useful, and those receiving much for whom much is useful; also that they do not themselves know what is good for them, the Lord alone knowing this, who looks in all things that He provides to what is eternal. As they love nothing so much as to be led of the Lord, attributing all things they receive to Him, they are kept apart from what is their own; and to the extent that they are kept apart from what is their own the Lord flows into them; and in consequence of this whatever they hear from the Lord, whether through the Word or by means of preaching, they do not store up in the memory, but instantly obey it, that is, will it and do it, their will being itself their memory. These for the most part outwardly appear simple, but inwardly they are wise and prudent. (*Heaven and Hell* 278)

### “Do Not be Afraid”

*But it came to pass that while he exercised the priest's office before God in the order of his daily ministry, And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was disturbed at the sight, and fear fell upon him. And the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall give birth to a son for thee, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. (Luke 1:8,11-14)*

The case with the order in heaven, and from this in the world; is that when angels are about to come, a spirit is sent before to prepare the way, and that he excites fear, and gives admonition to receive the angels courteously; and that he interrupts; also that at first he does not understand what the angels speak, but afterward when he has been reduced to a better state he understands; in a word, that he is continually at hand, and prepares the lower mind, and endeavors to avert things unworthy. In regard to this there occurred to me a thought about John the Baptist, that it was according to the order of heaven for him to be sent before and announce the coming of the Lord, and that he should prepare the way that He might be worthily received, according to what is written in Matt. 3:3; Luke 1:17; 3:4; John 1:23. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8028)

Speaking generally, "fear" is of two kinds—fear in what is not sacred, and fear in what is sacred; fear in what is not sacred is the fear in which are the wicked; but fear in what is sacred is the fear in which are the good. This latter fear (in which are the good) is called reverential or sacred fear, and is the result of our wonder at and longing for what is Divine, and also of our love. ... The fear of love is a fear of injuring the Lord in any way, or of injuring the neighbor in any way, thus of injuring what is good and true in any way, and consequently of injuring the sacred things of love and faith and the consequent worship. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3718)

### “Fell Down and Worshiped Him”

*And when they had come into the house, they found the little Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him; (Matthew 2:11)*

In genuine humiliation a man divests himself of all ability to think and do anything from himself, and wholly leaves himself to the Divine, and thus draws near to the Divine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6866)

There is also a correspondence of the thoughts and affections with the actions and gestures of the body; as is well known in regard to those which are of a voluntary as well as those which are of an involuntary character. For humiliation of heart produces kneeling, which is an external gesture of the body; humiliation still greater and more internal produces prostration to the earth. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4215.2, see also 5323)

Humiliation before a man produces a bowing down, according to the estimation of him; but in presence of the Divine it produces total prostration, especially when man thinks that the Divine in respect to power and wisdom is everything, and man in comparison is nothing, or that from the Divine is all good and from man nothing but evil. When man is in this acknowledgment from the heart he comes as it were out of himself, and thence falls upon his face, and when he is thus out of himself he also is removed from the proprium, which in itself is wholly evil; when this is removed, the Divine fills him and raises him up. (*Apocalypse Explained* 77)

### “When They Saw the Star”

*And when they had heard the king they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the little Child was. And having seen the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. (Matthew 2:9-10)*

The Divine is not in any affection of glory, for what glory has the Divine from man? But He wills humiliation and submission, not for His own, but for man's sake. For when man is in humiliation he feels aversion for the evil and falsity in him (n. 2327, 2423, 3994), and thus removes them, and on their removal the Divine can flow in with good and truth. ... This is the genuine reason for man's humiliation before the Divine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4348.2)

So far as man detests elation of mind, so far humility before God [enters in]. (*Apocalypse Explained* 803.2)

Through Temptations the concupiscences which are of the loves of self and of the world are subdued, and the man becomes humble. Thus he is rendered fit to receive the life of heaven from the Lord, which life is the new life, such as belongs to the regenerated man. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8966)

A "star" signifies the knowledges of internal good and truth, which are from the Lord...in the highest sense [it signifies] the knowledge respecting the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.3, *Apocalypse Explained* 422.20)

### “Your Prayer is Heard”

*And the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard. (Luke 1:13)*

The angel said to Zechariah also, “Fear not” and that by it is meant resuscitation, and then adoration from the deepest humility. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 56)

It is common in all Divine worship, that man should first will, desire, and pray, and the Lord then answer, inform, and do; otherwise man does not receive anything Divine. ...We frequently read in the Word, that the Lord answers when they call and cry;... also, that He gives when they ask... But yet the Lord gives them to ask, and what to ask; therefore the Lord knows it beforehand; but still the Lord wills that man should ask first, to the end that he may do it as from himself, and thus that it should be appropriated to him; otherwise, if the petition itself were not from the Lord, it would not be said in those places, that "they should receive whatsoever they asked." (*Apocalypse Revealed* 376)

When man is in a life of charity he is constantly praying, if not with the mouth yet with the heart; for that which is of the love is constantly in the thought, even when man is unconscious of it. (*Apocalypse Explained* 325.12)

Those who are in a life of love and charity it is given from the Lord what they are to ask; therefore they ask nothing but what is good, and that is done for them. (*Apocalypse Explained* 325.8)

In prayer from the Divine it is always thought and believed that the Lord alone knows whether it is profitable or not; and therefore the suppliant submits the hearing to the Lord, and immediately after prays that the will of the Lord may be done, and not his own. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8179.3)

### “How Shall I Know This?”

*And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am old, and my wife is far advanced in her days. And the angel answering said to him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the sight of God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to announce to thee these*

*good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be silent, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believe not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time. And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marveled that he delayed so long in the temple. But when he came out he could not speak to them, and they knew that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he beckoned to them, and remained dumb. (Luke 1:18-22)*

A man may know that in which he is, but cannot know that in which he is not. If from description or from thinking about it a man knows something in which he is not, he nevertheless knows of it merely as of something in the dark, and there remains some doubt about it, so that no one sees anything in the light and free from doubt until he is actually in it. (*Doctrine of Life* 76)

Temptations are attended with doubt in regard to the Lord's presence and mercy, and also in regard to salvation. The evil spirits who are then with the man and induce the temptation strongly inspire negation, but the good spirits and angels from the Lord in every possible way dispel this state of doubt, and keep the man in a state of hope, and at last confirm him in what is affirmative. After the temptation there remain from it many states of truth and good to which their thoughts may afterwards be bent by the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2338, 2334.1)

### “Bring Back Word to Me”

*But having heard, Herod the king was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. Then Herod, privately calling the Magi, precisely inquired of them at what time the star appeared. And sending them to Bethlehem, he said, Go and search earnestly for the little Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I also may come and worship Him. (Matthew 2:3,7-8)*

The Lord flows with power into those who are humble; but not into those who are puffed up, because they reject it. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9039:3)

That which stands in the way of the reception of these is principally the love of self, in which there is contempt for others in comparison with one's self; hatred and revenge if self is not treated with honor; and also unmercifulness and cruelty; thus the worst evils of all; and into these good and truth can in no wise be introduced, for they are opposites. . (*Arcana Coelestia* 2327.3)

He who is of elated mind is in the love of self, and not only sets himself above others, but also cares nothing for the Divine. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4347.2)

The Divine of the Lord cannot flow into a proud heart, that is, into a heart full of the love of self, for such a heart is hard; and is called in the Word a "heart of stone." (*Arcana Coelestia* 9377.1)

He who loves himself cannot possibly humble himself from the heart. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5929.2)

### “In the Days of Herod the King”

*And Jesus being born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came Magi from the east into Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him. (Matthew*

*2:1-2)*

heavenly delight is not the delight of greatness and preeminence, but is the delight of humiliation and of the affection of serving others; thus of desiring to be least, and not greatest; as the Lord teaches in Luke 9:48: “Whosoever is least among you all, the same shall be great.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3417.2)

In the Lord's kingdom or heaven they who are the greatest (that is, they who are inmost) are servants more than others, because they are in the greatest obedience, and in deeper humiliation than the rest; for these are they who are meant by the "least that shall be greatest," and by the "last that shall be first" (Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30). (*Arcana Coelestia* 5164.2)

There is a love of ruling arising from love of the neighbor, and a love of ruling arising from love of self. Those who are in the love of ruling from love of the neighbor seek dominion to the end that they may perform uses to the public and to individuals; and to such, therefore, dominion is entrusted in the heavens. Emperors, kings, and noblemen, who have been born and brought up to positions of authority, if they humble themselves before God...[can be in that love]. (*True Christian Religion* 405.1-2)

### “He Departed to His Own House”

*And it came to pass that when the days of his ritual were accomplished, he departed to his own house. (Luke 1:23)*

But a life of charity is to will well and do well to the neighbor; to act in every work from justice and equity, from good and truth, and also in every duty; in a word, the life of charity consists in performing uses. Divine worship consists primarily in such a life, and secondarily in a life of piety...for the life of charity is the primary thing, and such as this is, such is the life of piety. (*Apocalypse Explained* 325.4)

Worship does not consist in prayers and in external devotion, but in a life of charity; prayers are only its externals, for they proceed from the man through his mouth, consequently men's prayers are such as they themselves are in respect to life. ... In each thing that a man utters there is affection, and every man, spirit, and angel is his own affection, for their affection is their life; it is the affection itself that speaks, and not the man without it; therefore such as the affection is such is the praying. Spiritual affection is what is called charity towards the neighbor; to be in that affection is true worship; praying is what proceeds.... From this it is clear that those who place all Divine worship in oral piety, and not in practical piety, err greatly. Practical piety is to act in every work and in every duty from sincerity and right, and from justice and equity, and this because it is commanded by the Lord in the Word; for thus man in his every work looks to heaven and to the Lord, and thus is conjoined with Him. (*Apocalypse Explained* 325.3-4)

### “Thus Has the Lord Dealt with Me”

*And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus has the Lord done to me in the days wherein He looked on me to take away my reproach among men. (Luke 1:24-25)*

All true worship consists in adoration of the Lord, adoration of the Lord in humility, and humility in one's acknowledgment that in himself there is nothing living, and nothing good, but that all within him is dead, yea, cadaverous; and in the acknowledgment that everything living and everything good is from the Lord. The more a man acknowledges these things, not with the mouth, but with the heart, the more he is in humility; and consequently the more he is in adoration, that is, in true worship, and the more he is in love and charity, and the more in happiness. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1153.2)

An own that is innocent is to know, acknowledge, and believe, not with the mouth but with the heart, that nothing but evil is from one's self, and that all good is from the Lord; and therefore that what is man's own is nothing but blackness; that is to say, not only the own of his will, which is evil, but also the own of his understanding, which is falsity. When man is in this confession and belief from the heart, the Lord flows in with good and truth, and insinuates into him a heavenly own, which is white and lustrous. No one can ever be in true humility unless he is in this acknowledgment and belief from the heart. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3994.1)

Man cannot be in humility, nor consequently can he receive the Lord's mercy (for this flows in only in humility or into a humble heart), unless he acknowledges that there is nothing but evil from himself, and that all good is from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5758.2)

### “She Gave Thanks to the Lord”

*And there was Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was advanced in many days, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about eighty-four years, who stood not back from the temple, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she, at that very hour, standing by, confessed the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)*

Real confession of the heart, being from celestial love, is in the genuine sense confession. The man who is in this confession acknowledges that all good is from the Lord, and that all evil is from himself; and when he is in this acknowledgment, he is in a state of humiliation, for he then acknowledges that the Lord is everything in him, and that he himself is relatively nothing; and when confession is made from this state, it is made from celestial love. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3880.7)

Confessions, adorations, and prayers which are heard and received by the Lord; must be from the Lord Himself with man. That this is so is known to the church, for it teaches that nothing that is good proceeds from man, but that all good is from heaven, that is, from the Divine there. From this also is all the good in worship; consequently in holy worship the church prays that God may be present and lead the thoughts of the discourse. ...When a man is in genuine worship, then the Lord flows into the goods and truths which are with him, and raises them to Himself, and with them the man. This elevation does not appear to the man unless he is in the genuine affection of truth and good, and in the knowledge, acknowledgment, and faith that everything good comes from above, from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10299.2)

*But I will hope continually, And I will add to all Thy praise. My mouth shall recount Thy justice, Thy salvation all the day; For I know not the numbers thereof. I will come in the might of the Lord Jehovah; I will make mention of Thy justice, Thine alone. (Psalm 71:14-16)*

### “And the Holy Spirit Was Upon Him”

*And when the days of her purification were accomplished, according to the Law of Moses<sup>4</sup>, they brought Him up to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was just and circumspect, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and*

*the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents were bringing in the little Child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law, and he took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now Thou sendest Thy servant away in peace, O Lord, according to Thy saying; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; Light for revelation of the nations, and the Glory of Thy people Israel. (Luke 2:22,25-32)*

He who knows not the interior things of the Word may believe that the Lord desires and loves glory like a man in the world; and also for the reason that it is due to Him in preference to all in the universe; but the Lord does not desire glory for the sake of Himself, but for the sake of the man who glorifies Him. The man who glorifies Him does it from a holy reverence for Him in that He is the Supreme One, and from a humbling of himself as being relatively nothing; ... the man is then in a state to receive the influx of good from the Lord, thus also to receive love to Him. It is from this that the Lord desires man to glorify Him. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8263)

"Salvation unto Him," signifies that salvation is from the Lord, since He is salvation; for everything of salvation and of eternal life is from the Lord and is with man and angel; for all the good of love and all the truth of faith with man are the Lord's with him, and not the man's; for it is the Divine proceeding, ....and from the good of love and the truth of faith come salvation and eternal life...Again, this is why the Lord was called "Jesus," for Jesus means salvation. (*Apocalypse Explained* 460.2)

### “You Have Found Favor with God”

*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary. And the angel coming in to her said, Hail, thou who art graced! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. But when she saw him she was disturbed by his word, and reasoned within herself what manner of greeting this was. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:26-33)*

The virgin also, of whom He was born, signifies the church as to the affection of truth. The genuine affection of truth is willing and longs to know the veriest truths of faith for the sake of good use as the end, and for the sake of life. They who are in the genuine affection of truth... search the Scriptures and supplicate the Lord for enlightenment, and when they are enlightened they rejoice from the heart. (*God the Savior, in Posthumous Theological Works* 37; *Arcana Coelestia* 8993.3-4)

Divine truth, which is the Word, can only be with those who are in the spiritual affection of truth. The spiritual affection of truth consists in loving the truth itself, and esteeming it above every good of the world, because through it man has eternal life, and the only means by which eternal life is implanted in man are truths, consequently the Word, for through the Word the Lord teaches truths. (*Apocalypse Explained* 444.10)

## “That Holy One Will Be Called the Son of God”

*But Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man? And the angel answering said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore*

*also that which shall be born of thee Holy shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy kinswoman Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God not any saying shall be impossible. (Luke 1:34-37)*

The first principle of faith in the Lord is the acknowledgement that He is the Son of God. This ...the Lord revealed and announced when He came into the world. For unless men had first acknowledged that He was the Son of God, and thus God from God, in vain would He Himself and His Apostles after Him have preached faith in Him. (*True Christian Religion* 342)

The Lord healed [people] according to their faith, because the first and primary thing of the church then to be established was to believe that the Lord is God Almighty, for without that faith no church could have been established. ... Moreover, all the healings of diseases by the Lord, when He was in the world, signified healings of the spiritual life, thus the things that belong to salvation. (*Apocalypse Explained* 815.3; *Arcana Coelestia* 10083.5-6)

*And Jesus said to him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him who believes. And straightway the father of the little child crying out said with tears, I believe, Lord; help Thou my unbelief! And Jesus seeing that the crowd ran together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, Thou mute and deaf spirit, I order thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And crying out and convulsing him much, it came out; and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said that he was dead. But Jesus, having taken hold of him by the hand, raised him up; and he stood up. (Mark 9:23-27)*

## “And They Came with Haste”

*And it came to pass, that after the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the men, the shepherds, said one to another, Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this saying that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us. And they came in haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe laid in the manger. And when they had seen, they made known abroad the saying which was spoken to them concerning this little Child. And all who heard marveled at those things which were spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all things which they had heard and seen, as it was spoken to them. (Luke 2:15-20)*

The shepherds who made known the birth of the Lord ... were able to receive and believe, and, from the good of faith, to make it known. (*Spiritual Experiences* 4734m)

Life from the Lord flows in solely into a humble and submissive heart, because such a heart has been fitted to receive. That such is the case is because when the heart is truly humble, nothing of the love of self and of the love of the world stands in the way. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8873)

When man acknowledges in heart that there is nothing of good in himself, and that he can do nothing of himself, and on the other hand, that all good is from the Lord, and that the Lord can do all things. When man is in this acknowledgment he puts aside what is his proprium, which belongs to the love of self, and opens all things of his mind, and thus gives room for the Divine to flow in with good and with power. This is why it is necessary for man to be in humiliation before the Lord, and why humiliation can be from no other source than self-acknowledgment and acknowledgment of the Lord, according to which reception is effected. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1210.1)

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## “Glory to God in the Highest”

*And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, the angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they feared with great fear. And the angel*

*said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people. For to you is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be the sign to you: you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace, good will among men. (Luke 2:8-14)*

A "shepherd," or one who feeds the flock, denotes one who teaches the good of charity and leads to it. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4713)

“Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him,” signifies influx from the Lord into heaven, and thus the unanimity of the angels, that all who are in the truths of faith and in the goods of love should worship the Lord as the only God of heaven.

...These things are said ...concerning the New Church to be established by the Lord. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 809.1)

## “Behold the Maidservant of the Lord”

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*And Mary said, Behold, the maidservant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy saying. And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38)*

Innocence is a willingness to be led by the Lord. (*Heaven and Hell* 281)

Those who trust in the Divine...notwithstanding they have care for the morrow, still have it not, because they do not think of the morrow with solicitude, still less with anxiety. Unruffled is their spirit whether they obtain the objects of their desire, or not; and they do not grieve over the loss of them, being content with their lot. If they become rich, they do not set their hearts on riches; if they are raised to honors, they do not regard themselves as more worthy than others; if they become poor, they are not made sad; if their circumstances are mean, they are not dejected. They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things advance toward a happy state to eternity, and that whatever befalls them in time is still conducive thereto. Be it known that the Divine Providence is universal, that is, in things the most minute; and that they who are in the stream of Providence are all the time carried along toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means; and that those are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478.3-4)

Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a man is in this faith, he is in peace, for he then fears nothing, and no solicitude about things to come disquiets him. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455.1)

### “He Has Exalted the Lowly”

*And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord; and my spirit has leapt for joy in God my Saviour; for He has looked upon the lowliness of His maidservant; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He who is powerful has done for me great*

*things, and Holy is His name. And His mercy is to generations of generations, to those who fear Him. He has made might by His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thought of their heart. He has taken down the powerful from thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. (Luke 1:46-53)*

Man has been so created that he can look upward, or above himself; and can also look downward, or below himself. To look above oneself is to be uplifted by the Lord; for no one can look above himself, unless he is uplifted by Him who is above. But to look below himself is of man, because then he does not suffer himself to be uplifted. (*Arcana Coelestia* 7814, 7816)

True adoration, or humility of heart, carries with it prostration to the earth upon the face before the Lord, as a gesture naturally flowing from it. For in humility of heart there is the acknowledgment of self as being nothing but filthiness, and at the same time the acknowledgment of the Lord's infinite mercy toward that which is such; and when the mind is kept in these two acknowledgments, the very mind droops in lowliness toward hell, and prostrates the body; nor does it uplift itself until it is uplifted by the Lord. This takes place in all true humility, with a perception of being uplifted by the Lord's mercy. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1999)

### “And Laid Him in a Manger”

*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This enrolling first came to pass when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was out of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed wife, being great with child. And it came to pass, that while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should bring forth; and she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)*

The signification of "conceiving and bearing," in the internal sense is to be regenerated; for the man who is being regenerated is conceived and born anew, wherefore regeneration is called a new birth, but spiritual. Man is indeed born of his parents as a man, but he does not become a man until he is reborn of the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3860)

Every man is only "flesh;" but when the life of charity and faith is breathed into him by the Lord, the flesh is made alive, and becomes spiritual and celestial, and is called a "new creature" (Mark 16:15), from having been created anew. (*Arcana Coelestia* 780)

Just as man receives from the Lord a new life, so he receives the human form and, at length, a very beautiful angelic form, which is the likeness of the Lord. Thus it is as if He had created man anew, in similar fashion and in like manner. Hence it is that to create is to regenerate, and that a regenerated man is a new creature. (*Spiritual Experiences* 4837)

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## “Then Joseph Did as the Angel Com- manded”

*And Joseph, being awakened from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had ordered him, and took to him his wife, and knew her not, until she brought forth her firstborn Son; and he called His name Jesus.*

(Matthew 1:24-25)

Compliance is the very good itself of faith and charity... everyone shall receive heaven and its joy in the measure of his affection of truth and good, and in the measure of his obedience. (*Arcana Coelestia* 7161.1; *Apocalypse Explained* 695:8)

A life of faith consists in doing the commandments from obedience and a life of charity in doing the commandments from love. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9193.3)

The Divine order is that man should set himself in order for the reception of God and prepare himself to be a receptacle and abode into which God may enter and in which, as in His temple, God may dwell. From himself man must do this, and yet must acknowledge that it is from God. This he must acknowledge because he does not feel the presence and operation of God, although God in closest presence operates all the good of love and all the truth of faith in man. Every man progresses and must progress in accordance with this order, if from being natural he is to become spiritual. (*True Christian Religion* 105)

*He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.* (John 14:21)

## “His Name is John”

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*And to Elizabeth was fulfilled the time that she should bring forth; and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the young child, and they called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said, Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her, There is no one of thy kinsfolk who is called by this name. And they beckoned to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a tablet, and wrote, saying, John is his name; and they all marveled. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were talked of in all the hill-country of Judea. And all who heard laid them up in their hearts, saying, Who then shall this little child be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.* (Luke 1:57-66)

“And a son of eight days.” This signifies any beginning of purification whatever, so “the eighth day” signified that this ought to be effected at all times, and thus always, as from a new beginning. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2044)

In order that the External Man may be reduced into order, it must be made subordinate to the Internal Man, and it is made subordinate when it obeys. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9708)

The Lord wills a total submission, in order that He may make a man blessed and happy. He wills that that man be not partly his own and partly the Lord's, for then there are two lords, which no one can serve at the same time (Matt. 6:24). (*Arcana Coelestia* 6138:2)

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## “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel”

*And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and worked redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant, as He*

*spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning, Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to do mercy with our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to Abraham our father, that He would give to us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and justice in His sight, all the days of our life. And thou, little child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give the knowledge of salvation to His people for the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, by which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to appear to them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:67-79)*

"To praise God" means to confess God and from confession of heart to worship Him. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1210)

That "to sing a song" denotes to glorify, and that thus a "song" denotes a glorification, is because in the Ancient Church and afterward in the Jewish Church the songs were prophetic and treated of the Lord, especially that He would come into the world, and would overthrow the diabolical crew, then raging more than ever, and would liberate the faithful from their assaults. And because the prophetic utterances of the songs contained such things in the internal sense, therefore by these is signified a glorification of the Lord, that is, a celebration of Him from gladness of heart; for gladness of heart is especially expressed by a song, because in a song gladness breaks forth as it were of itself into sound. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8261)

## “Being a Just Man”

*And the birth of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother Mary, being betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, was found with child<sup>1</sup> from the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being just, and "not willing to" expose her to public infamy, intended to send her away privately. And while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins. And all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was declared by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matthew 1:18-23)*

Heavenly love consists in loving what is good, honest, and just, because it is good, honest and just, and in doing this from love; and those that have this love have a life of goodness, honesty, and justice, which is the heavenly life. (Heaven and Hell 481.1)

the Lord's presence with man is in good, and therefore in what is just and equitable, and further in what is honorable and becoming (what is honorable being the complex of all the moral virtues; and what is becoming being simply its form); for these are goods which succeed in order, and are the planes in man on which conscience is founded by the Lord, and consequently intelligence and wisdom. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2915)

He who does any good whatsoever for the sake of good, and anything just for the sake of justice, loves the neighbor and exercises charity, for he acts from the love of what is good, and the love of what is just. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8123)

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