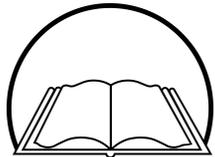


(Special Thanks to the Glenview New Church
for Collecting these Readings)

The New Church



Christmas Readings
2018

Walk in the Light December 1

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; they who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, on them has the light given brightness. (Isaiah 9:2)

"seeing a great light" signifies receiving and believing the truths which are of faith. On those who are in faith heavenly light is said to "shine," for the light which is in heaven is Divine truth from Divine good. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3863)

Jesus said, I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (8:12). "I am the light of the world" signifies that He is the Divine truth itself; "he that followeth Me" signifies he that acknowledges His Divine and does His commandments; "shall not walk in darkness" signifies that he shall not be in falsities; "but shall have the light of life" signifies that he shall be in Divine truths, which teach man eternal life and lead to heaven. Here evidently "to follow the Lord" does not mean to follow Him, but to acknowledge His Divine and obey Him. (*Apocalypse Explained* 864.3)

"Thou hast delivered my feet from impulsion, that I may walk before God in the light of the living" (Ps. 56:13), here to "walk before God" is to walk in the truth of faith, which is the "light of the living." In like manner in Isaiah: "The people that walk in darkness see a great light." (*Arcana Coelestia* 519.2)

And hast not failed, signifies so far as they could. This is evident from the signification of "not failing," in reference to those who are eager for the knowledges of truth and good, as being so far as they could; for in what now follows, a life according to these knowledges is treated of. Those who are in a life according to these go forward and do not fail; but those who are as yet in knowledges alone, go forward as far as they can, but do not yet have the light of life, from which is vigor. (*Apocalypse Explained* 103)

Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little time is the Light with you; walk while you have the Light, lest darkness seize you; and he who walks in darkness knows not whither he goes. (John 12:35)

Instruct me, O Jehovah, as to Thy way; I will walk in Thy truth; Unite my heart to fear Thy name. (Psalm 86:11)

A Vision for Your Future December 26

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

This was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him, and without Him was not one thing made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

And the Light appears in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not....

.He was the true Light, which enlightens every man who comes into the world.

...But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of 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 1:1-5,9,12-14)

Let us consider what the Divine mercy is. The divine mercy is pure mercy towards the whole human race, to save it; and it is also unceasing towards every man, and is never withdrawn from any one; so that everyone is saved who can be saved. And yet no one can be saved except by Divine means, which means the Lord reveals in the Word. The Divine means are what are called Divine truths, which teach how man must live in order to be saved. By these truths the Lord leads man to heaven, and by them He implants in man the life of heaven. (*Heaven and Hell* 522)

All instruction concerning the truths and goods of faith and of love which make the church and enter into worship, is from [the external of the Word] source, and because to inquire of the Lord is to consult the Word; for in the Word the Lord is present. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10548.2)

Fall Down December 25

And coming into the house, they found the little Child with Mary His mother; and falling down they worshiped Him; and opening their treasures, they offered to Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (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)

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 [what is his own], which in itself is wholly evil; when this is removed, the Divine fills him and raises him up. (*Apocalypse Explained* 77)

And the Angel of Jehovah said to her, Return to thy mistress, and afflict thyself under her hands. (Gen. 16:9). "To humble oneself" is expressed in the original tongue by a word which signifies "to afflict." That "to afflict oneself" is, in the internal sense, to compel oneself, may be seen from very many passages in the Word, and will be treated of in what follows. That man ought to compel himself to do what is good, to obey the things commanded by the Lord, and to speak truths, which is to "humble himself under" the Lord's hands, or to submit himself to the sovereign power of the Divine good and truth...The arcanum herein contained is that a man is thus gifted by the Lord with a heavenly Own. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1937.1,3,6)

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. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.1)

Walk Blameless December 2

There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, 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)

But "perfect" signifies the truth which is from charity, for there is truth from many another origin; but that which is from the good of charity from the Lord is called "perfect" and a "perfect man" as in David: Who shall sojourn in Thy tent, who shall dwell in the mountain of Thy holiness? He that walketh perfect, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart (Ps. 15:1-2). The "perfect" [or "complete"] man is here described. Again: With the holy Thou wilt show Thyself holy; with the perfect man Thou wilt show Thyself perfect (Ps. 18:25), where the "perfect man" is one who is so from holiness, or the good of charity. And again: Jehovah will withhold no good from them that walk in perfectness [integritate] (Ps. 84:11). That a "perfect man" is one who is true from good, or who speaks and does truth from charity, is evident from the words "walk" and "way" being often applied to what is perfect, that is, to wholeness or entirety, and also the words "upright" or "uprightness" which words pertain to truth. As in David: I will teach the perfect in the way how far he shall come unto me. I will walk within my house in the perfectness of my heart (Ps. 101:2); and in the sixth verse: He that walketh in the way of the perfect, he shall minister unto me (Ps. 101:6). Again: Blessed are the perfect in the way, who walk in the law of Jehovah (Ps. 119:1). And again: Perfectness and uprightness shall guard me (Ps. 25:21). And in another place: Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace (Ps. 37:37) (*Arcana Coelestia* 612.2-3)

If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments and do them, I will give peace in the land, so that ye may lie down securely, and none shall make afraid; and I will cause the evil wild beast to cease out of the land, and the sword shall not pass through the land (Lev. 26:3, 6). This describes the source of peace, that is, of heaven and heavenly joy. Peace viewed in itself is not heaven and heavenly joy, but these are in peace and from peace; for peace is like the dawn or like spring-time in the world, which dispose human minds to receive in the heart delights and pleasures from the objects that appear before the eyes, for that is what makes them delightful and pleasant; and because all things of heaven and of heavenly joy are in like manner from Divine peace, these also are meant by "peace." Since man has heaven from living according to the commandments, for thence he has conjunction with the Lord, therefore it is said, "If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them, I will give peace in the land;" that then they would not be infested by evils and falsities is meant by "they would lie down securely, and none make afraid." (*Apocalypse Explained* 365.14)

3

Do Not Be Afraid December 3

And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And seeing him, Zacharias was disturbed, and fear fell on 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 re-

joice at his birth. (Luke 1:11-14)

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 (to wit that 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)

In many passages in the Word the expression "to fear Jehovah God" is used, and this means to worship Him; therefore it shall be told in a few words what worship in particular is meant by "fearing God." All worship of Jehovah God must be from the good of love by means of truths. Worship that is from the good of love alone is not worship, neither is worship that is from truths alone, without the good of love, worship; there must be both, since the good of love is the essential of worship, but good has its existence and form by means of truths, therefore all worship must be from good by means of truths. For this reason, in many passages in the Word where the expression "to fear Jehovah God" is used it is added, "to keep and to do His words and commandments." (*Apocalypse Explained* 696.6)

The fear of God and affections of good and truth, [are the] means by which the Lord leads all who will follow Him to heaven and in heaven. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1189.4)

Leave What is Harmful Behind December 24

24

And when they had heard the king they went out; and behold, 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 life of heaven is to be led of the Lord by means of good. In order that a man may come to that life, good must be implanted by means of truth; that is, charity by means of faith. So long as this is being done, the man is in the way to heaven, but is not yet in heaven. And in order that at that time the truths which are of faith may be confirmed, and may also be conjoined with good, the man is let into temptations, for these are the means of the conjunction of good and truth. When therefore the man is in good, that is, in the affection of doing good for the sake of good, thus for the sake of the neighbor, he is uplifted into heaven, for he is in the order of heaven, and is led of the Lord by means of good. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8559)

When evils have been removed, which is done when a man shuns them because they are infernal; then the Lord enters with truths and goods from heaven, and leads him. ... from which it follows that a man's love or affection is reformed only by a spiritual shunning of evils and turning away from them, which is shunning them and turning away from them because they are infernal. From all this it can now be seen what it is "to follow the Lord whithersoever He goeth." (*Apocalypse Explained* 864.6)

Spirits suppose that they could have been led differently, and so become better than they are, thus be kept from actual evils, and many things. The evil throw the blame on the Lord, but they were told that it is their fault. I perceived in spiritual idea, that they can never be led better than they are: so that there are necessities every moment of their lives, ...and it was provided from eternity, and so provided that each and all things tend to our ultimate end, to be parts in the Grand Man, that is, in the Lord's kingdom. (*Spiritual Diary* 3114)

Walk on the Path to Heaven

December 23

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 ^Δ you have found Him, report to me, so that I also may come and worship Him. (Matthew 2:7-8)

The Lord by His Divine Providence continually leads man in freedom, and the freedom appears to him to be none other than his own; and to lead man in freedom in opposition to himself is like lifting up a heavy and resisting weight from the ground by means of screws, through the power of which the weight and the resistance are not felt; or it is like what happens to a man in the company of an enemy who intends to kill him, an intention he is not aware of; and a friend leads him away by unknown paths and afterwards discloses to him his enemy's intention. (*Divine Providence* 211)

Conjunction with the Lord is a reciprocal conjunction, that is, that the Lord is in man and man in the Lord... and because it is reciprocal it necessarily follows, that man ought to conjoin himself to the Lord, in order that the Lord may conjoin himself to man... n order that such reciprocal conjunction may exist, there is granted to man freedom of choice, giving him the ability to walk in the way to heaven or in the way to hell. From this freedom that is given to man flows his ability to reciprocate, which enables him to conjoin himself with the Lord. (*True Christian Religion* 371)

Who, except a stupid person, cannot see that without freedom of choice in spiritual things man cannot be regenerated? Can he without this approach the Lord, acknowledge Him as the Redeemer and Savior and the God of heaven and earth, as He himself teaches (Matt. 28:18)? Without that freedom of choice who can believe in the Lord, that is, from faith look to Him and worship Him, and adapt himself to receiving the means and benefits of salvation from Him, and from Him cooperate in the reception of them? Who without freedom of choice can do any good to the neighbor, can practice charity, or take into his thought and will other things pertaining to faith and charity, bring them forth, and put them into acts? Otherwise, what is regeneration but a mere word dropped from the lips of the Lord (John 3), which either remains in the ear, or having dropped upon the lips from the thought nearest to speech, becomes merely an articulated sound of twelve letters, which sound cannot by any meaning be raised into any higher region of the mind, but falls upon the air and is dissipated? (*True Christian Religion* 615)

Doubt is Part of the Process.

December 4

And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am elderly, 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 believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time. And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived.... (Luke 1:18-20, 24)

As regards this doubt, the case is this. Within the affection of truth, there is an affection for good within this affection, but so obscurely that they do not perceive, thus do not know, what the affection of good is, and what genuine charity is.... Nevertheless they do the goods of charity, not in order to merit anything thereby, but from obedience.... In their affection of apparent truth there lies in obscurity the affection of good, by which the Lord leads them to such action, they are at the same time in good as to their interiors, and in this good the angels are present with them. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2425.2)

In the Word it is here and there said of angels and of the men of the church that "they stand before God," also that "they walk before Him," and in the spiritual sense "to stand before God" signifies being from Him, and "to walk before God" signifies to live according to being [esse] from Him. for all the being [esse] of heaven and the world proceeds from the Lord; for it is the Divine proceeding that has created and formed all things of heaven and the world. (*Apocalypse Explained* 639.2)

In the Grand Man the womb corresponds to this love; and as conjugal love has its origin from the love of good and truth which belongs to the heavenly marriage, and as this marriage is heaven itself, or the Lord's kingdom, and as the Lord's kingdom on earth is the church, therefore the church also is signified by the "womb;" for the church is where the marriage of good and truth is. For this reason it is that "opening the womb" denotes the derivative doctrines of churches, and also the capacity to receive the truths and goods of the church; and that "coming forth from the womb" denotes to be reborn or regenerated. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4918)

In the spiritual sense conceptions and births are receptions of truth from good, and the consequent acknowledgments. The signification of "opening the womb," or of conceiving and bringing forth, is being to become a church; and because this is effected by means of doctrinal things, therefore by "opening the womb" are signified the doctrines of churches. Spiritual conceptions and births, such as occur when man is born anew. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3919, 3856)

5

What's in a Name? December 5

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent out 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 at his word, and reasoned within herself what manner of a greeting this should be. 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)

"Name," when used in the Word, signifies the quality, that is, that the person is of such a quality. And as the "name" signifies the quality, the name comprehends in one complex whatever is in the man. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2009)

The virgin of whom the Lord was born symbolizes the church as to an affection for 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. (*God the Savior* 37, *Arcana Coelestia* 8993.3)

The Lord leads a truly Christian man's will, or love, and gives him the affection of good, that is, the faculty of being affected, or made glad, by reason of good; he also leads his understanding, so that he may be affected with truth, and so that, immediately he hears it, he is also gladdened, and it is implanted in his life; and, so far as he learns the truth, so far it abides in him, and, by its means, he is led by the Lord. (*Spiritual Diary* 5796)

The progress as to truth and good of the spiritual man when being regenerated, is that he first learns the doctrinal things of truth, next is affected by them (which is the good of the doctrinal things), then that by taking a mental view of these doctrinal things he is affected with the truths in them (which is the good of truth), and lastly that he wills to live according to them, which is the good of life. (Arcana Coelestia 3332.2)

Fulfill Your Purpose December 22

22

And when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, 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)

"To follow the Lord" has a similar signification as "to go or to walk after Him." That "to go or walk after the Lord," signifies to acknowledge, to obey, and to act and live from Him and with Him, may be seen above (n. 787). This is the signification of "following the Lord," because no one can follow the Lord from self, but only from the Lord Himself. For the Lord draws after Him the man who from freedom wills to follow; but He can draw no one who does not will to follow Him. For the Lord so operates with man that man may follow Him as if of himself; thus does the Lord flow into man's freedom; and this He does for the sake of the reception and implantation of truth and good with man and consequent reformation and regeneration. For unless it appeared to man that he followed the Lord as if of himself, that is, acknowledged His Divine and did His commandments as if of himself, there would be no appropriation and conjunction, and thus no reformation and regeneration. (*Apocalypse Explained* 864.1-2)

A "star" signifies the knowledges of internal good and truth, which are from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9293.3)

"Journeys," signify of as being what is progressive of spiritual life, thus the order of that life. That it denotes for receiving the life of heaven, is because that life is a gift of the Lord to man by means of the temptations that are described by the journeys of the sons of Israel in the wilderness. The life of heaven is to be led of the Lord by means of good. In order that a man may come to that life, good must be implanted by means of truth; that is, charity by means of faith. So long as this is being done, the man is in the way to heaven, but is not yet in heaven. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8559)

21

Thankful for Blessings from the Lord December 21

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^Δ God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she standing by, at the hour itself, confessed the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)

"Asher" in the original language means "blessedness;" but the name involves all that is signified by the words of his mother Leah-"in my blessedness; for the daughters will call me blessed," namely, the delight of the affections which corresponds to the happiness of eternal life.... For when a man perceives this delight or affection, he is beginning to become a church (*Arcana Coelestia* 3939.1)

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)

To redeem means to liberate from damnation, to deliver from eternal death, to rescue from hell, and to release from the hand of the devil the captive and the bound. This the Lord did by subjugating the hells and establishing a new heaven. (*True Christian Religion* 118)

There is not a nation in all the world that may not be saved if it acknowledges God and lives well; for they have all been redeemed by the Lord, and man is by birth spiritual, whereby he has an ability to receive the gift of redemption. Those who receive the Lord, that is, have faith in Him, and do not lead an evil life, are called: Sons of God, and born of God. (John 1:12-13). (*True Christian Religion* 729)

With God Nothing Will Be Impossible December 6

6

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 also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God not any saying shall be impossible. (Luke 1:34-37)

The question arises, What is the first principle of faith in Him? The answer is, "The acknowledgement that He is the Son of God." This was the first principle of faith. (*True Christian Religion* 342)

The Lord healed people it was 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. For the Lord was the God of heaven and the God of earth, with whom no conjunction is possible except by an acknowledgment of His Divinity, ...and the acknowledgment of the Lord, and that from Him is all salvation, is the first of life from the Divine with man. (*Apocalypse Explained* 815:3, *Arcana Coelestia* 10083.6)

Faith presents the Lord as present in man according to the quality of the perception of Him. Faith in Him as a man only, does not present His Divine omnipotence as present, [and does not bring salvation].(*Apocalypse Explained* 815.7-8)

The Lord inquired of those with whom He did miracles whether they had faith, and said that it was done according to their faith, in order that it might be acknowledged that He was the Son of God and had power over all things, and thus that He was God descending out of heaven. This was the first and primary thing in the conjunction of God with man. (Athanasian Creed 64)

7

Be Led by the Lord December 7

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)

I have talked much with angels about innocence, and have been told that innocence is the being [esse] of all good, and that good is therefore so far good as it has innocence in it, consequently that wisdom is so far wisdom as it partakes of innocence; and the same is true of love, charity, and faith. Innocence consists in being led by the Lord. (*Heaven and Hell* 280-281)

No union or conjunction between two persons is possible unless each in turn approached the other. In the whole heaven, and in the whole world, and in the entire man, all conjunction has its source in the reciprocal approach of one to another, each then willing in oneness with the other. From this comes homogeneity and sympathy, also unanimity and concord, in every particular of each. (*True Christian Religion* 99)

The varying states in the other life of which mention has been made just above (n. 5962), are according to the perception of good and truth with those who are there, thus according to their perception of the Lord's presence. According to this perception they have tranquillity; for they who are in the perception of the Lord's presence are in the perception that each and all things which befall them tend to their good, and that evils do not reach them; hence they are in tranquillity. Without such faith or confidence in the Lord no one can possibly come to the tranquillity of peace, thus neither to the bliss in joy, because this bliss dwells in the tranquillity of peace. (*Arcana Coelestia* 5963)

Peace I leave to you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be disturbed, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

New Life after Each Experience of Death December 20

20

And Joseph and His mother marveled at the things which were spoken concerning Him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother; Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. And also a sword shall pass through thine own soul, that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed. (Luke 2:33:35)

They who have not been instructed about man's regeneration suppose that a man can be regenerated without temptation; and some that he has been regenerated when he has undergone one temptation. But be it known that without temptation no one is regenerated, and that many temptations follow on, one after another. The reason is that regeneration takes place to the end that the life of the old man may die, and the new heavenly life be insinuated, which shows that there must needs be a fight, for the life of the old man resists, and is not willing to be extinguished, and the life of the new man cannot enter except where the life of the old man has been extinguished. Hence it is evident that there is a fight on both sides, and this fight is a fiery one, because it is for life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8403.2)

Before man can know what is true, and be affected with what is good, there must be a removal of such things as hinder and resist their admission; thus the old man must needs die, before the new man can be conceived. (*Arcana Coelestia* 18)

Man first begins to live when that perishes which in the world he believes to be the all of life; and that the life which he then receives is relatively ineffable and unlimited; and that he is altogether ignorant of this so long as he is in evil-these and similar truths can never be believed, unless the man is in good; for it is good which comprehends, because the Lord through good flows in with wisdom. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3175.4)

19

Act on Your Beliefs

December 19

And when the days of her purification were fulfilled, according to the Law of Moses³, they brought Him up to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, even as it is written in the Law of the Lord, that every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord; and to give the sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young doves. 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 a response was made to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents were bringing in the little Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he even received Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now Thou sendest Thy servant away in peace, O Lord, according to Thy saying; for my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for a revelation for the nations, and the glory of Thy people Israel.
(Luke 2:22-32)

That by "Jehovah hearing," from which Simeon was named, in the interior sense is signified obedience, and in the internal sense faith in the will from the Lord alone..."to hear the Lord" denotes to have faith in Him, and to obey His commandments; thus to have faith in the will. In John: "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25, 28); "to hear the voice of the Son of God" denotes to have faith in the words of the Lord, and to will them. They who have faith of the will, receive life; wherefore it is said, "they that hear shall live." (*Arcana Coelestia* 3869.4)

The good of truth which is with those who are of the spiritual kingdom is implanted in the intellectual part, for there is formed by the Lord in this part a new will, which is that the man wills to do according to the truth that he has drawn from the teaching of his church; and when he wills and does this truth, it becomes with him good. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8521.2)

A man is not in heaven until he is in the state of being led by the Lord by means of good. By "good" is meant the good of life, and the good of life is to do what is good from willing it, and to will good is from love; for that which a man loves he wills. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9832)

Instruct me, O Jehovah, in the way of Thy statutes; And I will observe it to the last. (Psalm 119:33)

Blessed by the Lord

December 8

8

And Mary stood up in those days, and went with haste into the hill-country, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and greeted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a great voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for gladness. And happy is she who has believed that there shall be a performance of those things which were spoken to her from the Lord. (Luke 1:39-45)

He who lives in good, and believes that the Lord governs the universe, and that all the good which is of love and charity, and all the truth which is of faith, are from the Lord alone; nay, that life is from Him, and thus that from Him we live, move, and have our being, is in such a state that he can be gifted with heavenly freedom, and together with it with peace; for he then trusts solely in the Lord and has no care for other things, and is certain that all things are tending to his good, his blessedness, and his happiness to eternity. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2892)

In that world when anyone thinks about another and desires to converse with him, the other is immediately present. This is general there and never fails. The reason is that in the spiritual world there is no distance as in the natural world, but only an appearance of distance. Another fact is that as thought from some knowledge of another causes his presence so love from any affection for another causes conjunction with him. Thus it comes to pass that people go about and converse in a friendly way, live together in one house or in one society, frequently meet and render mutual services. (*Divine Providence* 326.1-2)

The Lord Has Done Great Things for You December 9

*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.
He has accepted His servant Israel, to remember mercy,
as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. (Luke 1:46-55)*

Humility is the essential of all adoration and of all worship, for without Humility the Lord cannot be worshiped and adored, for the reason that 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." But the Divine of the Lord can flow into a humble heart, because this is soft, and is called in the Word a "heart of flesh." Such a heart is receptive of the influx of good from the Lord, that is, of the Lord.. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9377)

In heaven the man who knows, acknowledges, and believes from the heart-that is, from affection-that he has no power from himself, but that all the power he has is from the Lord, is said to be the least, and yet is the greatest, because he has power from the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4459)

That "God blessed" signifies the presence and grace of the Lord, is evident from the signification of "to bless." "To bless" in the Word, in the external sense signifies to enrich with every earthly and corporeal good... But in the internal sense, "to bless" is to enrich with all spiritual and celestial good, which blessing is and never can be given except by the Lord, and on this account it signifies His presence and grace, which necessarily bring with them such spiritual and celestial good. (*Arcana Coelestia* 981.1)

Spread the Word December 18

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 that they had heard and seen, as it was spoken to them. (Luke 2:17-20)

The Lord from the Divine love and thence from Divine zeal calling and calling together all who are in the spiritual affection of truth, and who think of heaven, to the New Church, and to conjunction with Himself, and thus to eternal life. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 831)

"Rejoice" signifies the salvation and consequent joy of those who become spiritual by the reception of Divine truth. (*Apocalypse Explained* 751)

And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that thirsteth come, and let him that willeth take the water of life freely, signifies that he who knows anything of the Lord's coming, and of the New Heaven and New Church, thus of the Lord's kingdom, should pray that it may come, and that he who desires truths, should pray that the Lord may come with light... (AR 956)

Evangelization is annunciation about the Lord, His coming, and the things that are from Him which belong to salvation and eternal life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9925.2)

17

What Does the Lord Want You to Do?

December 17

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 lying in the manger. (Luke 2:15-16)

Life from the Lord flows in solely into a humble and submissive heart, because such a heart has been fitted to receive. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8873)

The Lord does not compel man to receive what flows in from Himself; but leads in freedom, and so far as man allows, through freedom leads to good. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6472.2)

"Bethlehem" signifies the Word in respect to its spiritual sense; and there He chose to be born because the Lord is the Word. (*Apocalypse Explained* 700.9)

But he who is being regenerated is led by degrees from this more remote life (that is, moral life), into a life nearer to Divine doctrinal things; that is, into spiritual life. When this comes to pass the man begins to wonder why such commandments or precepts were sent down from heaven in so miraculous a manner, and written on tables by the finger of God, when yet they are known to every people, and are also written in the laws of those who have never heard anything from the Word. If when he comes into this state of thought he is among those who are capable of being regenerated, he is brought by the Lord into a still more interior state, namely, into a state of thinking that deeper things lie concealed therein, with which as yet he is unacquainted; and when he reads the Word in this state, he finds everywhere in the Prophets, and especially in the Evangelists, that each one of these precepts contains within it things still more heavenly. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3690.4)

While people are being regenerated, they have a desire for truth because they're intent on becoming intelligent, but once they've been regenerated they're intent on becoming wise. Put another way, in the former state they have a desire for truth out of concern for what it teaches, but in the subsequent state out of concern for life. (*Arcana Coelestia* 6247)

The Hand of the Lord is with You

December 10

10

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 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 put them in their hearts, saying, Who then shall this little child be? And the hand of the Lord was with him. (Luke 1:57-59,66)

The signification of "giving birth," is to acknowledge in faith and act. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4919)

"To bring forth" signifying to make truths fruitful by doing them, from which comes reformation. (*Apocalypse Explained* 721.17, See also *Arcana Coelestia* 3856, 3919,)

"Coming forth from the womb" denotes to be reborn or regenerated (see n. 4904), that is, to be made a church, for whoever is reborn or regenerated is made a church. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4918)

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

If at recurring seasons there is actual repentance, as often, for instance, as a man prepares for the communion of the holy supper, and if he afterward abstains from one or another sin which he then discovers in himself, this is sufficient to initiate him into the actuality [of the repentance], and when he is in that he is on the way to heaven, for he then from being natural begins to be spiritual, and to be born anew from the Lord. (*True Christian Religion* 530)

11

Serve the Lord Without Fear

December 11

*And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for He has visited and made 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 ages, 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^Δ Him without fear, in sacredness and justice in His sight, all the days of our life.
(Luke 1:67-75)*

For everyone who has any religion thinks about heaven and wishes to go there. Heaven, however, is granted to none but those who know the way to it and who walk therein. This way can in some measure be known from a knowledge of the character of those who constitute heaven, and also by knowing that no one becomes an angel, that is, comes into heaven, unless he carries with him from the world something of the angelic character; and in this there is present a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it. (*Divine Providence* 60)

Those who by repentance have removed some evils that are sins, come into a settled purpose to believe in the Lord and love the neighbor. Such are kept by the Lord in the purpose to refrain from other evils. (*True Christian Religion* 523)

There is indeed a fear within all worship, but under another appearance and another condition, and this is holy fear. But holy fear is not so much the fear of hell and of damnation, as it is of doing or thinking anything against the Lord and against the neighbor, and thus anything against the good of love and the truth of faith. It is an aversion, which is the boundary of the holy of love and the holy of faith on the one side; and as it is not a fear of hell and damnation, as before said, those have it who are in the good of faith; but those have less of it who are in the good of love, that is, who are in the Lord. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2826.13)

Be Guided by the Lord

December 16

16

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, lying 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)

Heaven consists of myriads of angelic societies, and yet the Lord leads them as one angel, or as one man. The reason of this is that among all there is mutual love from the love of the Lord. When this love is among all, and in all, then all can be disposed into a heavenly form. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9613)

Man as to his spirit is within societies in the spiritual world, and to them he is attached as it were with extended cords, which determine the space where he can walk. Through these societies man, that is, man's mind, although bound walks free; but he is led by the Lord, and he takes no step into which and from which the Lord does not lead. (*Apocalypse Explained* 1174.2)

When spirits have been prepared for heaven by instruction in the places above described, which is effected in a short time on account of their being in spiritual ideas that comprehend many particulars together, they are clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly glowing white as if made of fine linen; and they are thus brought to the way that leads upwards towards heaven, and are delivered there to angel guards, and afterwards are received by other angels and introduced into societies and into many blessednesses there. After this each one is led by the Lord into his own society, which is also effected by various ways, sometimes by winding paths. The ways by which they are led are not known to any angel, but are known to the Lord alone. When they come to their own society their interiors are opened; and as these are in conformity with the interiors of the angels who are in that society they are immediately recognized and received with joy. (*Heaven and Hell* 519)

15

Let Love, Faith, and Goodwill Flow In December 15

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out^a a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This enrolling first was made when Kurenus 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 from 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)

Ehenever traveling, sojourning, and passing from place to place, occur in the Word, nothing else is suggested to the angels than such change of state as exists with them. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1463)

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)

When man is being regenerated, he is then becoming altogether another, and is being made new; therefore also when he has been regenerated, he is called "born again," and "created anew." Then, although he has a similar face and a similar speech, yet his mind is not similar; his mind, when he is regenerate, is open toward heaven, and there dwells therein love to the Lord and charity toward his neighbor, together with faith. It is the mind that makes a man another, and a new man. (*Arcana Coelestia* 3212)

Just as a 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 Diary* 4837)

Be Fair December 12

12

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 from the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being just, and would not expose her to public infamy, intended to send her away privately. (Matthew 1:18-19)

The Lord was a carpenter's son because "a worker in wood" symbolizes the good of life from the doctrine of truth. (*Athanasian Creed* 99)

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 . . . and are the planes in man on which conscience is founded by the Lord, and consequently intelligence and wisdom. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2915)

Heavenly love consists in loving what is good, honest, and just, because it is good, honest and just. (*Heaven and Hell* 481.1)

The good of love is heavenly, and thence mild, patient, and modest. (*Apocalypse Explained* 427.9)

Rational good never fights, however it is assailed; because it is mild and gentle, patient and yielding; for its character is that of love and mercy. Yet although it does not fight, it conquers all, nor does it ever think about combat, or glory on account of victory; and this because it is Divine, and is safe of itself. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1950.2)

The laws of [the Lord's kingdom] are eternal truths, all of which are based on the one great law that men shall love the Lord above all things and their neighbor as themselves, and now even more than themselves, for if they would be as the angels this is what they must do. In the other life all goods are immeasurably increased, and that the life in the body is such that men can go no further than loving the neighbor as themselves because they are in the things of the body, but that when these are removed, the love becomes purer, and at last angelic, which consists in loving the neighbor more than themselves. (*Arcana Coelestia* 548.1-2)

13

Be Confident in the Lord December 13

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. (Matthew 1:20-21)

To believe in the Lord is to have confidence that He will save, and as no one can have this confidence except one who lives aright, therefore this also is meant by believing in Him. (*Doctrine of Faith* 36)

By faith in the Lord is meant confidence that He will save, and they have this confidence who immediately approach Him and shun evils as sins. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 949.2)

All who are in heavenly love, have confidence that they will be saved by the Lord; for they believe that the Lord came into the world in order to give eternal life to those who believe and live according to the commandments which He taught; and that He regenerates these, and so makes them fit for heaven; and that He does this Himself alone, from pure mercy, without the aid of man. This is meant by "believing in the Lord." (*Arcana Coelestia* 9244)

Neither with men nor with angels can any love ever become pure. So also with this conjugal love. But since it is the intention which is of the will that is primarily regarded by the Lord, therefore, so far as a man is in this intention and perseveres therein, so far he is initiated into the purity and holiness of this love and successively progresses therein. (*Conjugal Love* 71.2)

Be Spiritually Awake December 14

14

And Joseph, being awakened from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had directed 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)

All that have lived a good life in the world and have acted from conscience, who are such as have acknowledged the Divine and have loved Divine truths, especially such as have applied those truths to life, seem to themselves, when let into the state of their interiors, like one aroused from sleep into full wakefulness, or like one passing from darkness into light. They then think from the light of heaven, thus from an interior wisdom, and they act from good, thus from an interior affection. Heaven flows into their thoughts and affections with an interior blessedness and delight that they had previously had no knowledge of; for they have communication with the angels of heaven. They then acknowledge the Lord and worship Him from their very life, for being in the state of their interiors they are in their proper life; and as freedom pertains to interior affection they then acknowledge and worship the Lord from freedom. Thus, too, they withdraw from external sanctity and come into that internal sanctity in which worship itself truly consists. Such is the state of those that have lived a Christian life in accordance with the commandments in the Word. (*Heaven and Hell* 506)

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. So far as this is effected, so far the External Man also is wise. This is meant by the old man with its evil affections needing to die in order that the man may become a new creature. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9708)

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)