



Refuge

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Ps. 46:1)

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REFUGE is an electronic magazine published occasionally by *Words for the New Church*. Go to www.wordsforthenewchurch.org to subscribe or unsubscribe.

At a time and in an age where thought from the world so often dominates, our purpose is to publish material that encourages people to think from the Lord's Word and according to the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church.

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OUR FIRST ISSUE

Words for the New Church has been providing periodic daily reading programs for some time. We now begin, in addition to these reading programs, the publication of a occasional magazine.

In this inaugural issue we publish a recent sermon entitled [*I AM*](#) by the Rev. Robert S. Junge on the subject of the Being or *Esse* of the Lord. Never forget that God *is*.

Following this is an article by the Rev. Fred Elphick on the subject of the Second Advent, entitled [*The Lord in a White Cloud*](#).

For those who would like to read an entire chapter, we have published [*the first chapter*](#) of *The Nature of Spirit and of Man as a Spiritual*

Being by the Rev. Chauncey Giles. Never forget that the spiritual world is *real*.

Concluding this issue is an article entitled [*What Shall I Render*](#) by Martin E. Klein in which he speaks cogently of our need to proclaim clearly the Lord's own truth.

I AM

A Sermon by Rev Robert S. Junge

2009

"Then said the Jews unto Him. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Amen, Amen, I say unto you Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:57-58).

At the burning bush Moses said, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, 'What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am Who I am, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I AM' hath sent me unto you" (Ex 3:14).

The name "I AM" simply means the One Who is – philosophically the *esse* – theologically the DIVINE *Esse*. It reminds us of the familiar words, "Who is, and Who was, and Who is to

come” (Rev 1:8). One of the first things a religious person needs to acknowledge is that God is. There is a Divine Being. When we are in spiritual trouble and need help, we need to hold fast to the fact that God really is. But when we turn to our God we think of far more than simply that He is a Divine Being. We think of His love and His Mercy, His wisdom, and His Providential care. We think of Him in human terms. We think of Someone who not only has the Divine power to help, but also is right with us to help.

The men of old time “saw God as a man, but nevertheless adored Him as the God of the universe, calling Him the God of heaven and earth, and Jehovah” (HH 84). Thinking of God in human terms has been true throughout human history. “Adam heard the voice of Jehovah walking in the garden; and Moses spoke with Jehovah mouth to mouth; . . . Jehovah also appeared as a man to Hagar, to Gideon, to Joshua, to Daniel . . .” (AE 1116:2; Ath. Cr 81)

So the Writings teach that the infinite itself, which is above all the heavens, and is over the inmost things with us, cannot be made manifest, except through the Divine Human. “No communication of the Infinite with those who are finite is possible from any other source . . .” (AC 1990:2)

What the ancients actually saw was an angel who represented the Lord but it was sufficient to lead them to think of their God in Human form!

Thinking of the Lord in human terms is more concrete for us today, because the Lord actually took on a human body in this world. It is therefore relatively easy to think in human terms of Jesus. He lived and walked on earth. People saw Him. People heard His voice. Some even touched Him.

But human qualities by themselves are not enough. In fact thinking of the Lord ONLY in human terms is not to think of the Divine at all. Only the Divine has the power to help ALL of us, wherever we are. The Divine is, was, and always will be. When Jehovah called Himself

the “I AM” at the burning bush He was declaring His EVERLASTING Divinity. He made this clear by adding, “This is my name FOR EVER, and this is my memorial UNTO ALL GENERATIONS ” (Ex 3:15).

When Jesus said then, “Before Abraham was, I AM,” He was taking on the same name, “I AM” which was given to Moses. In doing so He was declaring His Divinity forever and unto all generations. The literal Greek can be used for emphasis but also substantively as a name. It literally reads, “I, I AM.” The association with the Moses story is confirmed by Jesus saying, “Before Abraham was, I, I AM.”

The Writings simply assert, “Be it known that the Lord had power over all things in the heavens and on earth BEFORE HE CAME INTO THE WORLD; for He was God from eternity and Jehovah” (AC 1607:2). He made this clear, “Father, glorify Me with Thine own self WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS.” (John 17:5) And He asked His disciples, “What if you behold the Son of Man ascending up WHERE HE WAS BEFORE?” (John 6:62) That after His resurrection He says all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth, as if it were then His for the first time, is because before He was glorified and His Human united to His Divine this was not yet true (AC 1607:2) Because the human was not fully united to the Divine until after His resurrection we often say in the New Church that we worship the RISEN Lord as the One God of heaven and earth.

One way of seeing the Divinity and Humanity together is to think of the “I AM” not just as Divinity, but also as life itself. “There cannot be more than one Life, from which is the life of all . . .” (AC 290) Life itself is indivisible. And remember in the Word, the Lord alone is called “Living” (ibid). One life! One God! We speak as if we have life, but the reality is that we receive life from He who is life itself – from He who says, “I, I AM.” The Lord lets us feel life AS IF it were our own, but our souls are simply vessels receptive of life from the Lord – limited vessels which make our internal man. We RECEIVE life, but we can never say, “I, I AM.”

"But the Lord's internal was Jehovah Himself, because He was conceived from Jehovah, who cannot be divided and become another's . . . for the Divine is not divisible . . . but is and remains one and the same" (AC 1999:5). "The Lord's internal was Jehovah, it was not a form recipient of life, like the internal of man, but was life itself" (ibid). Unlike us, Jesus could say, "I, I AM."

Through the Glorification all the Human qualities He took on by being born into the world were united to life itself. Divinity and Humanity became one in the risen Lord. The words were fulfilled, "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has also given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John 5:26) But life itself is indivisible. It is Divine.

From the very beginning the Lord's soul was Divine life itself, never separated from Jehovah. It is true that "Insofar as the Lord was in the human which he received by inheritance from the mother, so far did He APPEAR distinct from Jehovah and adore Jehovah as one different from Himself. But insofar as the Lord put off this human He was not distinct from Jehovah but was one with Him" (AC 1999:5).

But when He was not struggling to put off the limitations from Mary He could say, "I, I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by Me. If ye had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him, and have seen Him. Philip says to Him, Lord show us the Father and it is sufficient for us. Jesus says to Him, Have I been so much time with you and hast thou not known Me, Phillip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" (John 14:6-11)

But what of those times when we are in temptation? Temptations come to us in very different ways. But the answer to our struggles whatever form they take is always Divine. No human frailty is ever overcome without the acknowledged help from the Divine. For example, when love grows cold in our lives and we are starving for affection, the Lord says, "I,

I AM the Bread of Life" (John 6:47-8) But we must not forget that Jesus, present right there with his disciples, spoke those reassuring words, marvelously and humanly accommodated to their needs. The Divine in HUMAN form can nourish us with every good even as He fed the multitudes.

Or take another example: when sadness grips us at the death of one we love, Jesus says, "I, I AM the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. (John 11:25-26) There can be no doubt that the Lord overcame His own death through His own Divine power. Nor can there be any doubt that He understands human death and provides eternal life through His Divine Life.

Or consider the disciples in a ship, when Jesus had not yet come to them. It was the dark of night with a great wind blowing - - a beautiful picture of the storms we face. They had rowed. We too must do our part. But then, "They behold Jesus walking on the sea and coming near to the ship; and they were afraid. But He says to them, I, I AM; be not afraid" (John 6:17-20). Jesus, the one who they knew well, the one who understood them and loved them, came to them. But He removed their fears by declaring His Divinity, "I, I AM; be not afraid" (John 6:20)

When we cry out for help on our journey of life, we need to know the Lord as someone who understands and loves us. We need a visible God who can come to us in our darkest hours. We need Jesus and all that He stands for, coming near to our ship of life. But only when He declares His Divinity are our fears removed. Only when the Divine and the Human come together in our thought and affection, only then is our temptation answered. At that time we see more clearly Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life. And we receive Him in His Divine Humanity as He truly is; and we find the land to which we are going.

We are tested or tempted many times during our lives. Each time we are tested if we turn to

the Lord, He will be there. Though in the beginning of the trial we may feel lonely and helpless, condemned by our sight of truth, with sincere effort on our part and prayer to Him, He will come. As He answers we will see the warmth of His love within the demands of His truth. In that time of peace and consolation we will be close to the One Divinely Human God of heaven and earth – close to Jesus who says, I, I AM. In this sense, Jesus step by step becomes more and more glorified in our eyes and in our hearts. There He can perform miracles because He understands every human need, AND He can respond with Divine love and life. Jesus becomes truly our Savior and Redeemer when in our response to Him Divinity and Humanity come together.

Lessons: Ex 3:1-15
John 8:31-59

THE LORD IN A WHITE CLOUD

by the Rev. Fred Elphick

One of the beautiful sights in the other world, the Writings say, is of shining white clouds. On earth too, the sight of fleecy clouds in a blue sky gives a feeling of peace and contentment. Heavy, overcast skies, by contrast, can have a depressing effect. There are deeper reasons for this than we might imagine.

Clouds, composed of tiny water droplets, stand for the literal meaning of the Word. They reflect light and it can pass through them. In fact, when angels see truth from the Lord it often appears like a white cloud. This is why the Lord's second advent was said to be a coming 'in the clouds of heaven'. In some way He would be seen in the literal truths of the Word.

But many people take the Lord's coming in the clouds literally. They base this idea on what is said in the *Acts of the Apostles*, quoted in the Writings thus:

'While they watched, Jesus was taken up into heaven, and a cloud received Him from their

sight; and two men in white raiment said, This Jesus, who is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him going into heaven.' (Acts 1:9, 11)

A cloud received Him from their sight! Surely then, the Lord would appear again in the same way. That's what the angels said. But the Writings explain that it was *because* the Lord would come in the 'clouds' of the literal Word that the apostles saw Him disappear in this way as He was taken up to heaven (*Apocalypse Revealed* 642).

It's another example of a principle we see in the Lord's parables – that words are used that will put the spiritual meaning on hold, so to speak, until the person is ready to think on a higher level. Still, there is the fear that once you've started to let go of the literal meaning you're adrift in a sea of uncertainty. If things mean what they say, we know where we stand. But if they mean something else, then who is to say what that something is?

Our point then, is that everything from the Lord *does* mean what it says – but that He can open up that meaning to reveal hidden truths – the glory within – ultimately the Lord Himself. Indeed, the 'glory and power' in which the Lord was to come, actually mean the spiritual sense of the Word for it is on that level that the Lord – His love and wisdom – really becomes visible (See *Matthew 24:30*; *True Christian Religion* 776). It's like a bright fleecy-white cloud compared to a heavy threatening rain cloud.

And we can see that there are *levels* of thought simply by the fact that we can look down on what we're thinking (See AR 947) – as we do when we tell ourselves not to worry, or chide ourselves for making some silly mistake.

So if there are levels of *thought*, it's not too big a step to see that the Lord can speak to us – come to us – on different levels as well. And this is part of what is involved in His second coming – to reveal that there is a spiritual sense in the Word and something of what it is.

It is the spiritual sense that gives life to the literal sense. It doesn't do away with it. And so

the Lord still comes to us 'in the clouds' of the literal meaning of His Word (AE 36).

Once, when Emanuel Swedenborg was meditating on the Lord's second coming he saw the whole heaven above him full of light. Interestingly though, the celebration and glorifying of the Lord were not on some ineffable level beyond human understanding, but *taken from the Word*. There were selections of passages from the Prophets, the gospel of Matthew and the Book of Revelation, all speaking of the Lord's coming.

We conclude then that in heaven, the parts of the Word where the spiritual sense shines through the letter, are essentially the same, except written in spiritual text.

As this celebration in the other world came to a close, Emanuel says: 'On hearing and understanding this my heart leaped for joy and I went home rejoicing; and there I came back from the state of the spirit into that of the body, in which state I wrote down these things I had seen and heard.' (*True Christian Religion* 625)

May we too receive the Lord with joy as He appears once more 'in the clouds of heaven.'

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth... be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (Isaiah 65:17,18)

THE NATURE OF SPIRIT, AND OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

by the Rev. Chauncey Giles

If you knew that you must sooner or later remove to some remote country, to spend the remainder of your life there, and that you might be called upon at any moment to go, you could not remain indifferent to the nature of the country, and to your own situation when you arrived there. You would lose no opportunity for personal inquiry; you would read every book you could procure that treated upon the subject; you would exhaust all the means in your power to learn where you were going, and

what your condition would be when you had reached your new home. How, then, can any one who believes in the existence of a spiritual world, and who sees one after another of those whom they know and love - beings as dear to them as their own life - passing away, and who knows that he or she must soon follow them; - how can a rational being, with such a belief, be indifferent to the nature of that world, and to the condition of its inhabitants? It is impossible to account for this general unconcern upon any other supposition than the prevalent opinion that nothing definite and certain can be known about it.

I propose to give the answer of the New Church to the following questions:

1. What is Spirit?
2. What is the Spiritual World?
3. Where is it?
4. What are its relations to this world?

1. *What is Spirit?* I use the term spirit in the same sense I would use the corresponding term matter in the question, What is matter? This is a primary and important question, and upon its correct answer depends all distinct and true knowledge concerning the spiritual world.

Our doctrines teach us clearly and explicitly that spirit is a *substance* and must necessarily have a form. There are material substances and spiritual substances, entirely distinct from each other. Matter is not spirit, and spirit is not matter; but both are real substances. As this is a most important point, and one that is contrary to common opinion, it is worthy of as clear statement and elucidation as possible. And, first, let us get a clear idea of what we mean by *substance*. I do not use the term in any metaphysical sense. I use it in the common meaning as that out of which, or from which, any being, existence, or entity is formed. Every material thing is made out of some material substance. The potter makes his vessels of the substance we call clay. The carpenter builds houses, and forms various material objects, out of the substance we call wood. Ice is formed from the substance we call water, and water from the substance we call gas. The earth itself is probably formed of a gaseous

substance. The material body is organized of material substances of various kinds.

In the same sense, we mean that spirit is a substance, and that every spiritual existence is formed from some spiritual substance. All Christians acknowledge that angels are spirits; if they are, they are formed of spiritual substances. Human beings are a spirit as to one part of their nature, and that part is formed of spiritual substances. If there is a spiritual world distinct from the material world, that world and all things in it must be formed of spiritual substances. But if we are asked what a spiritual substance is *in itself*, we cannot tell. It is just as impossible, however, to form any idea of what a material substance is in itself. Who can tell what clay, or wood, or iron, or water, or gas, is in itself? Our knowledge of everything is limited by its relations to us, by its effects upon us. We are no more called upon to define what spirit is in itself than we are to define what matter is in itself. It is impossible to do either. It is no objection, therefore, to the doctrine that there are distinct spiritual substances, that we cannot define what they are in themselves. All that we can know of any substance, material or spiritual, is the necessary conditions of existence, and the qualities that inhere in it as their subject; and we can learn these qualities only from the relation of their subjects to us. The blind man can form no true idea of the nature of light, for it has no relation to him. He has no organism to be affected by it; but if you tell him that there is no luminous body, and no substance which is the subject of light, he can come to no other just conclusion than that there is no such existence or entity as light. We can say the same of spirit, though it is not appreciable by any of the senses.

We may now advance a step further and say that no existence is possible without a form. If there is any such existence, or being, or entity, as a spirit, it must have substance and form; for there can be no substance without a form. It is impossible for the mind to conceive of anything without form. Let any one try to conceive of such a material thing and he will see how absurd it is. The very idea of conception implies form. An idea is an image;

an idea, then, is a form. Spirit as well as matter, therefore, must have substance and form for they are the two factors which are essential to any existence, or to the conception of any being or thing. Spirit is the correlative, not the negation, of matter.

Here is the point in which philosophers and Christians have made the mistake, fatal not only to all *true* knowledge, but to *all* knowledge of spirit. It has generally been assumed that the only way to arrive at a true idea of spirit was to regard it as the opposite of matter in every respect. They reason in this way. Matter has form, therefore spirit has none. Matter has substance, therefore spirit has none. In this way they deny to spirit all possible modes of existence. The Christian stops here and ends by simply affirming its existence, but denies that we can know anything more about it. But many push this destructive logic a step further and deny the existence of spirit altogether. And this is the logical result, for denial can never end in anything but negation and nothing. This is inevitable; and the Christian escapes this conclusion only by stopping before he reaches it. We must admit that there is a spiritual substance, and that this substance has form, or we must deny the existence of spirit altogether. No other conclusion is possible.

But to make the proof as strong and clear as possible, let us assume that there is a spiritual world, and that there are spiritual beings; but deny that there is a spiritual substance, and see to what absurdities it will lead us. What is a world? What is the meaning of the word, world? Has not the world form? Is it not made up of innumerable objects, all of which have form: all of which are composed of material substances? Suppose you take away from this world all its forms and substances would there be any world left? There would be nothing left. Is it not just as absurd to say that there is a spiritual world while you deny to it any substance or form? You would not hesitate a moment to pronounce a man foolish, or insane, who should deny that there could be any such material substance or form as wood, and then begin to describe a tree; or who should ridicule the possibility of the existence of water, and then proceed to expatiate on the nature and

beauties of a river, or the grandeur of the ocean. But are not all those guilty of this absurdity who talk of heaven as a real place; who think of the Lord as seated on a throne, surrounded by saints and angels, dressed in white robes, wearing golden crowns, and playing on golden harps, and making "heaven's wide arches ring" with their hallelujahs; or writhing in the torments of hell, and filling the dreary abodes of the lost with lamentation and woe? Christians delight to sing:

*"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand drest in living green,"*

and yet, according to the theory, they have no substance and no form. What kind of a field would that be which had no substance and no form? How could it be "drest in living green"? Christians often talk of meeting their friends and loved ones who have gone before. But how can two beings without form or substance, beings which are no beings, meet? How could they recognize each other? What can be more absurd than such an idea? Christians think of the Lord as seated on a throne, with the Redeemer at His right hand; and yet they declare in doctrine that "He is a being without body, parts, or passions," and think it derogatory to His nature to attribute to Him any form. But if He has no form and no substance He has no existence. Instead of gaining any worthy conception of Him by denying Him substance and form, they, doctrinally, annihilate Him. Into such difficulties, contradictions, and absurdities, the mind is led by trying to do that which is impossible. We conclude, therefore, that if spirit has any existence it must be a substance and have a form.

The mind has the power of conceiving of qualities without or abstracted from their subjects. But those qualities do not and cannot exist separate from their subjects. We can conceive of sweetness; but sweetness has no existence apart from some substance that is sweet. We can conceive of strength; but strength has no existence apart from some being or thing that exercises it. There is no abstract power. We can conceive of love,

goodness, and truth, but they are not abstractions; they have no existence but in their subjects. But, because we can conceive of them without connecting them with any subject, men have been insensibly led to regard them as distinct and independent existences. In this way the mind and spirit, and all our intellectual qualities, have come to be regarded as abstractions without form or substance, and yet as real existences. But if we apply the same process of reasoning to the body or to any material thing, we shall see its absurdity at once. Take the power of steam, for example. We can conceive of the power abstracted from the steam itself. The engineer talks and reasons about its existence, nature, quality, and application, as though it was a distinct existence; and if the steam itself was not appreciable by any of the senses we might come to regard it as a distinct thing, without any substance or form. But we know that it is impossible to abstract the power from the steam, and say here is the power, and there is the steam. The power is the force with which the steam expands. Where there is no steam there is no power. They cannot be separated in fact. The same principle applies to all qualities, mental and spiritual. There can be no thought, affection, goodness, or quality of any kind, without some subject in which these qualities reside; and those qualities cannot exist separate and distinct from their subjects. All qualities are essentially the forms, activities, and relations of their subjects. If there is no spiritual substance and form there can, therefore, be no spiritual qualities. While, therefore, we can see how the mind is led away to regard an abstraction as a reality and to conceive of it as existing without any form,

Christians often talk of meeting their friends and loved ones who have gone before. But how can two beings without form or substance, beings which are no beings, meet? How could they recognize each other?

we can see, at the same time, the utter impossibility of such an existence.

From whatever point of view we regard the subject, therefore, we come back to the conclusion that spirit must be a substance, and have a form. The doctrines of the New Church are, therefore, in harmony with analogy, necessity, and reason, in declaring that *spirit is a substance*, and has forms, qualities, modes, and established laws of existence relatively the same as matter.

2. Our second question is: *What is the Spiritual World?* Having established the truth that there must be a spiritual substance, if there is any distinct spiritual existence, everything necessary to constitute a distinct spiritual world and substantial spiritual beings follows as a necessary consequence. For if a material world can be formed out of material substances, surely it is not illogical to infer that a spiritual world, composed of objects as numerous and various in quality, can be formed out of spiritual substances. Indeed, it would be quite absurd to infer the contrary.

Consequently, our doctrines teach us that spiritual substances bear the same relations to each other that material substances do. They are solid, and fluid, and aeriform. The solids exist in every possible variety that material solids do. There are spiritual earths, rocks, and metals, as gold, silver, and iron, in every variety of quality and form. Indeed, there is a perfect mineral kingdom formed of spiritual substances. These substances are also organized into vegetable and animal forms. There is also, then, a vegetable and an animal kingdom, based upon the mineral kingdom, and bearing the same relations to it that the same kingdoms do to the mineral kingdom in this world. The spiritual earth is diversified with mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, and smaller streams, and out of this earth, grass and flowers, shrubs and trees of every kind, grow, relatively the same as in this world. Birds fly in the air, and animals walk upon the earth, and the spiritual beings who dwell there have their habitations, and gardens, and fields. They look out upon beautiful landscapes, and look up to the heavens above them. The earth is as solid

and firm to their tread as this is to ours. And the spiritual objects are hard and soft, solid and fluid, cold and hot, light and heavy, rough and smooth, transparent and opaque, and of every conceivable form and color and quality, that objects have in this world. And there are many forms and qualities besides, that cannot exist in matter, because it is so gross and dead compared with spiritual substances.

Now it may be, and sometimes is, objected to this view of the spiritual world, that it is only materializing it; attributing to it those qualities which this world possesses; and instead of a spiritual world, by this process of reasoning, it is said, we only get another material world. This might be true, if spiritual substances and objects had no other qualities than material objects. But, as we shall see hereafter, they have many qualities impossible to material objects, and they are altogether superior, and pre-eminently excellent in every respect, in their forms, origin, and relations to the inhabitants who dwell in that world.

But let us suppose that there is a spiritual world, which has nothing in common with this world, not even substance and form, and see what will be the result. We can do nothing more than affirm that there is such a world; we can have no idea of it. We cannot conceive it under any form, or mode, for by the supposition it has none. It has no mountains, hills, earth, rivers; no sun, no light, no atmosphere; nothing in common with this world. What is it, then? Nothing. It is no *world*; for the very idea of a world presupposes substance and form and objects. Thus we cannot go beyond the simple affirmation of the existence of such a world. We cannot form any idea of it; for by the supposition it has no *form*, it has nothing in common with this world; and we even deny its existence by the very conditions of our affirmation. It is this absurdity of denying to the spiritual world every possible mode and form of existence, and then trying to conceive it or think upon it, that has resulted in such doubt and practical denial of its reality, and of the possibility of spirits being really human beings, having a complete human form. There can be no middle ground between the practical denial of any substantial spiritual

world and the acknowledgment that it must be similar in general form and relations to this world. If we take any step beyond a simple affirmation of the existence of spirit under conditions of which we can know nothing, we must assert that it is a substance and form; and all that is necessary to constitute a world follows, by a logical necessity.

In affirming, therefore, that there are spiritual substances and forms, and a spiritual world similar to this in general appearance, though superior to it in every quality, we do no violence to any analogy, we contravene no law of reason. We act also in perfect accordance with revelation; for the whole Bible implies the reality and substantial nature of the spiritual world; and we come to a conclusion which we cannot possibly avoid, without violating all known laws of reason and existence.

Our answer to the Second Question, then, What is the Spiritual World? is this. *It is a real world, composed of all the forms that are necessary to constitute a world.* It is objective to the senses of those who dwell in it, and far more distinct, substantial, and real to them, than this world is to us. And yet it is not material, but is as distinct from every form of matter as the soul is from the body.

3. Having determined the possibility of a real spiritual world, our next question is, *Where is that world?* There is a common and very remarkable absurdity frequently taught upon this subject. There is the implied denial that there can be any real, spiritual world, and then an assertion that it is somewhere above us in the stars; or, it may be, in some central sun. I presume most persons think of heaven as above them, somewhere in the realms of space. But, if we should visit every planet and sun in the material universe, we should not find the spiritual world. We should be no nearer to it than we are now. If it is some central sun, it is material and not spiritual. If it is in any particular place in the realms of space, it must be material and not spiritual. Where, then, is it?

It is here; and it is everywhere around and within the material universe. We are in the spiritual world now, though we are not conscious of it. Our doctrines affirm that there

are as many spiritual worlds as there are material worlds, and that the spiritual world corresponding to each planet is around it. So that every human being in any world can say, The spiritual world *is here.*

Why, then, it may be asked, can we not see it? I answer, we have the best of evidence that multitudes have seen it. Many instances are given in the Bible of persons who saw it while they were still in this world, and they have told us what they saw. In several instances recorded in the Bible it is distinctly said that the persons were "in the spirit," or had their "eyes opened." These could not have been their natural eyes, for they were open before. They must have been their spiritual eyes. For it requires a spiritual eye to see a spiritual object.

In our ordinary state, the spiritual senses are closed, and we have no consciousness from the senses of any world but the material. And a little reflection will show us, that it is wisely ordered that it is so. It would be impossible for us to perform our duties in this world, if we had constant, open vision of the spiritual world. We should be distracted, and our natural life destroyed by it.

But that it is possible for us to be in the spiritual world, and yet not be conscious of it, is evident from many analogous examples. Our unconsciousness of anything is no proof of its non-existence. The person who has become blind by the formation of a film over their eyes, is in a world of light the same as before, but not conscious of it, and he or she cannot be until their blindness is cured. They do not need to go anywhere to get into it. If a person should visit every planet and sun in the universe, they would be no nearer the world of light. It is all around them, like the atmosphere, but they can only be introduced into it by the removal of the veil which obstructs the light. Couch his eyes and he can see. The organism of the eye is the Divine method of introducing people into the world of light. In the same way a person may be in the

We are in the spiritual world now, though we are not conscious of it.

spiritual world and not see it. The spiritual eye is veiled by the material. Its organization is too delicate to be acted upon directly by the gross forms of matter. It requires the delicate spiritual ethers to flow into its forms, and the dark veil of matter to be removed, before spiritual objects can be revealed to it.

It is the same with all the senses. In a perfectly sound sleep a person is as truly in the material world as he is in full wakefulness. But they have no consciousness of it. Change of place would give him no consciousness of the world. Place them under the open canopy of heaven, beneath all the splendor of the sun, or the magnificence and silent grandeur of the stars. Place them on a precipice, where the slightest motion would hurl him to destruction, and it is all the same. *Wake* them, and they are in the world without rising from their bed. Our spiritual senses are asleep, and we cannot see the spiritual world about us until they are awakened.

But it is not necessary for us to see it as it is in itself, to gain a certain knowledge of its universal presence. We never see any cause or power in its most interior forms - in its source. Who ever saw attraction except in the form of its effects? No person in this world ever saw, with the natural eye, a human being. No one but the materialist believes that the material body is the man himself, yet that is all we can see in this world. We see material features, colors, motions, changes. But we do not see the real human being. That dwells within, and can only manifest itself through the veil of the body. All that you see, or can see, is the material covering of the spiritual being. You know that the person is there, within. For the body cannot move itself. It is as helpless as any other earthly object, when man leaves it. Its wonderful organization does not give it life, any more than the multiplication of wheels gives a machine power. The organs of the body are nothing but instruments constructed by Infinite Wisdom, to enable the soul to accomplish its purposes in the material world.

But the person and his or her material body act together in such perfect harmony, as one, that we say we see the person him or her self,

when we see the body. And it is proper we should, for we do see where person is and what he or she is doing. We know that the person is in the body, and that it is he or she that hears, and sees, and feels, and speaks, and acts, though we cannot see that person's real self.

In the same way the spiritual world is present in the material world, maintains it in existence, and operates all the changes in it. The planets are carried around in their orbits by a spiritual force. We very properly call it attraction, but attraction is only the name of the effect. The real force is spiritual. Matter has no power in itself either to change its form or to retain it. A piece of iron or stone is held together by attraction, we say. Remove the attraction and it becomes fluid. Remove it to a still greater degree and it becomes aeriform, and we do not know where the process would end. All the forces which keep material bodies in their form are in their last analysis spiritual and Divine.

Matter has no form of its own. Every material form is cast into the mould of a spiritual form. There is no power inherent in matter to form itself into diamonds and granite; into grass, and blossoms, and fruit, and the innumerable beautiful objects of the vegetable kingdom. There is no quality in nitrogen, carbon, and phosphorus, to combine and assume the form of bones, muscles, and flesh. The whole animal kingdom is cast into the mould of the corresponding spiritual kingdom. And the spiritual forces which create and sustain it are constantly present and active. Indeed, the material world is a perpetual creation.

Wherever you see action, change, or growth, you may infer that spiritual forces are present, with just the same certainty, that you infer that man is in a material body, when you see it moving, and performing all the functions of life in this world. It is said that the changes and motions which are continually taking place in matter, are caused by the light and heat of the sun. This is true in one sense. Heat acts on a certain plane and to some extent. But it is a spiritual substance within the heat which causes the heat, and gives it its power; and while the heat, on the material plane, softens'

and melts the hard forms of matter, and makes them pliant to finer influences, spiritual forces flow in and mould them into such forms as they are capable of assuming. The sun itself is created from the spiritual world, and its magnetic forces and ever-radiating heat are perpetually fed from it. The suns are the primary centers into which spiritual substances are gathered, and from which the material universe is created, and those substances continue to dwell within the magnetic auras and luminous ethers. Light, and heat, and magnetism are only the finer material coverings of spiritual substances, which give them all their force. They are the soft linings of grosser forms. Wherever there is matter there is spirit. Wherever there is a material world, there is a spiritual world. Wherever there is a germ, or plant, a blossom, or fruit, or any living thing, there is a rough cast of a spiritual form. It may be a very rude and imperfect outline of it, comparing with it only as the roughest sandstone with the fine organization of the living body, or the coarsest clay with the delicate petals of the blossom. But rough and coarse as it is, it was fashioned after a spiritual prototype, as the material body is molded into the form of the man who dwells within it. The elements of the earth have no more power of themselves to assume the forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, than the food we eat has to assume the human form, or than the block of marble has to roll itself from the quarry and stand erect in the graceful beauty of a Venus or Apollo.

This every one acknowledges; but Christian and natural philosophers carry the cause only a few steps from the effect, and seem unwilling to admit that there can be any substantial thing beyond the limits of their own senses. But the doctrines of the New Church, with an inflexible logic, follow all real causes out of the material world, and in doing so, they look in the direction, though far in advance, of all scientific discovery. The logic is simple, and the steps plain. One of the essential properties of matter is inertia; its purest and most subtle forms have no more power, of themselves to act, than the sod or rock. Nor can these forces reside within, as original and self-sustaining causes in the

form of laws. It is customary in common speech to attribute the power, which moves and moulds matter, to physical laws. But law has no more power in itself than matter; it is merely the order in which some real power acts. The planets are not kept in their orbits by the law of gravitation, but according to it. Strictly speaking, civil laws have no power. They are only the rule and method according to which men act. The preservation of the material universe, and all the changes and activities which take place in it, must be the effect of a cause which is not material, and that cause must be present to all the forms of matter and in them, in every particle; for a cause cannot act where it is not present. That cause cannot be material. It must of necessity, therefore, be spiritual.

Here we get another proof that spirit is a substance. It is evident that there can be no abstract power. Power is the force with which something acts. That which moves and moulds the material world must be substantial. It must be able to grasp matter and wield it at will. The inconceivable and awful forces that sustain the material universe, and carry planets, and suns, and systems in their vast orbits, in such order and harmony, are spiritual, and are perpetually operating. The same forces sketch ferns in crystals of frost upon the window-pane, weave the green web of the leaf, knit the tough fiber of the oak, and mould the delicate and lovely forms of the lily and the rose. Out of the dead earth and crumbling stone; out of dews and rain-drops, and vernal airs, and sunbeams, they distil the delicious juices of innumerable delicate savors, and exhilarating wines, and present them to insect and worm; to animal and people, in the beautiful forms of the berry, the purple cups of the grape, and the golden bowls of the pear and the apple. Turn where you will, above, around, below, all the forms you see are spiritual forms, veiled in the thin

Turn where you will, above, around, below, all the forms you see are spiritual forms, veiled in the thin disguise of matter.

disguise of matter; all sounds that fall upon the ear are spiritual harmonies, muffled and made discordant often by the imperfect material instruments through which they are sent to us. We are in that world now. It surrounds us, pervades us; its pulses beat through us, and give to us and to all things, form, motion, life.

I ask every intelligent mind if this is not a rational, and the only rational view of the subject? Does not all scientific discovery point in this direction? Science is resolving all physical force into heat. The next step must be the one the New Church has already taken - the acknowledgment that all force is spiritual. Thus the two worlds are present to each other, and are most intimately blended. Our answer to the third question, therefore, is: *The spiritual world is here.*

4. The last question, *What is the relation of the spiritual world to this world?* has been substantially answered already. In principle it is the relation of cause to effect. The spiritual world is more real and substantial than the natural world. It lies nearer to the first great Cause. This world was formed from it, and there is not a material object that has not a spiritual prototype.

Such, briefly, are the doctrines of the New Church upon this most interesting subject. In many respects they reverse the opinions commonly entertained. They give us a real spiritual world to think about, and to look forward to as our eternal home. The more they are examined the clearer their truth will become. From whatever side they are regarded, whether from science, from analogy, from reason or revelation, from human or the Divine nature, they will be found consistent with themselves, with the Sacred Scriptures, and in harmony with all we know of both worlds. They will satisfy the reason and content the heart.

[From Chauncey Giles, *The Nature of Spirit and of Man as a Spiritual Being* (Philadelphia: American New-Church Tract and Publication Society, 1934)]

WHAT SHALL WE RENDER

by Martin E. Klein

The Lord knows that eventually all mankind will believe in Him in His second coming, or at least be free to choose such belief. But, because big growth numbers are slow to come, many New Church people feel that we must take radical steps to increase our numbers if, as disciples, we are to be true to our charge. The Lord is counting on *us* to grow His church on earth.

But, as I recall, the *Writings* reveal that it is the Lord who will grow the church, and our job is merely to present His teaching to all mankind, *uncurtailed*. We are to serve as the Lord's hands on earth, but by no means may we modify His directions.

This concern with growth has subtly generated a belief by some within the church that it is permissible, nay, essential, to bring outsiders into our fold by another door, the door of social affinity, external acts of charity, warm friendship, inclusion in secular uses, and a softened acceptance or tacit ignoring of actually false doctrines in the name of fellowship with God.

In His teaching, the Lord did not mince words. Nor did His servant Swedenborg mince words. If, in humility, we are to follow the model of God's *Word*, or again, of His *New Word*, should not the church try hard to exemplify those models?

But, the results of this soft-on-true-doctrine concept seem to be encouraging. Our numbers "slide" has, apparently, been reversed. Truly great things are happening! The power of the Lord is at last being made manifest. Built by our own hands, a great tower of learning arises that may yet bring all mankind into heaven!

Yet, the Lord said it plainly: Go and tell people the truth, and if they do not heed, shake off their dust and go forward. Swedenborg went to remarkable lengths to demonstrate, *in painful detail*, the falsities of the old Christian Church! How then, can we, the Lord's new

disciples, sweep those differences under a rug, saying, "Welcome! We be brothers in Christ!"

As I perceive the *Word* of the Lord, the light of truth must be presented clearly, but on a hilltop of love and charity! It must never be hammered home, but it must never be sequestered, either. Surely, we are duty bound to present the *whole* truth humbly yet clearly. Will that not best enable our infinite Lord to 'grow' His own church?

The transparent teachings of the Lord Himself, and of the Lord through Swedenborg should not be neglected by priests or laymen intent on the worldly wise view that: "If you want to sell membership in the church you must not reveal the Lord's 'hard' teachings! People will discover the *real* truth later on. If you antagonize people at the outset you will not succeed!"

The Lord did tell us to bend a reed and not break it! However, I believe He never avoided the truth.

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Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said,

"Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

John 6:60-69