

"Man after death continues such as his will or ruling love is. The man who has celestial and spiritual love goes to heaven; while the man who has bodily and worldly loves and no celestial and spiritual love goes to hell." (H.H. 480, 481)

Much is said in the Word about man's ruling or dominating love. We are taught in many places that ones place in Heaven or in hell, ones place in a society of heaven or hell is according to ones ruling or dominating love, and that after death this ruling love cannot be changed to eternity. This subject is therefore of the greatest importance. Regeneration consists in the change of the ruling love; the rejection of an evil ruling love and the acquiring of a new ruling love from the Lord.

With those in external states the important thing is an obedience to the commandments; but the Lord wills those of the New Church to be internal men and women. Thus to take heed not only to what they say and do, but to take heed as to their loves.

It is often thought that man cannot know the internal of himself and of others, but carefully note the following teaching; We read:

"All the delights that a man has are the delights of his ruling love, for he feels nothing to be delightful except what he loves, thus especially what he loves above all things. These delights are various. In general, there are as many as there are ruling loves, consequently as many as there are men, spirits and angels; for no ones ruling love is in every respect like that of another.

Only from a knowledge of correspondances can it be known what spiritual delights every ones natural delights are changed into after death, and what kind of delights they are. In particular it teaches what it is that corresponds, and what kind of a thing it is. Therefore, any one that has this knowledge can ascertain and know what his own state after death will be, if he only knows what his love is and what its relation is to the universally ruling loves spoken of above, to which all loves have relation. But it is impossible for those who are in the love of self to know what their ruling love is, because they love what is their own, and call their evils goods; and the falsities that they incline to and by which they confirm their evils they call truths. And yet if they were willing they might know it from others who are wise, and who see what they themselves do not see. This, however, is impossible with those who are so enticed by the love of self that they spurn all teaching of the wise." (H.H. 487)

All spiritual charity has to do with becoming regenerate and being of assistance to the neighbor in his or her regeneration. And, as we have said; regeneration and thence salvation, consists in the changing and then the perfecting of the ruling love.

We are told that ones delights are entirely according to the ruling loves; wherefore if a man knows the nature of the delights of himself and of others, he knows the ruling love of himself and of others... But as stated in the above quotation, no one can know this unless he knows the correspondance between spiritual delights and natural delights and is wise.



All internal things are represented in external things; even in the case of hypocrites, who put on an external at variance to their internal, their internal is still represented in externals which can be recognized by the wise, no matter how deceptive they are to the simple.

To come to the wisdom spoken of in the number quoted above involves much. The wisdom spoken of is not what appears in the world as a brilliant intelligence, but is a gift of the Lord after much labor and bitter temptations.

So far the Church as little of such wisdom. But the little wisdom that it does have is of the greatest importance, for the life of the Church depends on it, and our prayer should be that this wisdom may increase. A church which has not the wisdom to know the ruling loves of those of the church and thence has the wisdom to assist in the changing and perfecting of the ruling loves of the members of the church has little use as a church.

When a man's ruling love is touched it often causes a great explosion, - violent reactions of all kinds, even among those who usually appear gentle, charitable, and kindly. Many can remember the violent reactions at the first appearance of De Hemelsche Leer.

The touching of a man's ruling love, should only be done with great prudence, and patience when the state is ripe. This requires a wisdom that must slowly grow in the Church. It requires an assistance in enabling a man to see his ruling loves freely, without compulsion.

We read: "There are three universal loves - the love of heaven, the love of the world, and the love of self."

"These three loves reside in every man from creation and therefore from birth, and when rightly subordinated they perfect him, and when not they pervert him." (T.C.R. 395)

When the ruling love is the love of heaven, man is being prepared for heaven. When this is not the ruling love, or is not becoming the ruling love, man is on the way to hell. This the Lord also taught when He said:

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)

This inscription is placed on the frontis page of all the volumes of the Arcana Coelestia, and other works, as a thing which must always be kept in mind.

The question which every one must ask himself, is: Is the love of the Lord's Kingdom the ruling love with him? Does the prayer: "Thy Kingdom come," overshadow all things of ones life. Or is this only one love among many. If this love is only one love among many, and does not rule, then man serves two masters God and mammon, and in this case finally the love of the world or the love of self will rule with him. But how can man know whether the love of seeking the Kingdom of the Lord and His justice rules or not? By examining ones delights, ones thoughts and ones actions. Is ones greatest delight to read the Word and the Doctrine of the Church in order that one may be perfected, and thus may be of use in the Kingdom of God. Or does one most easily turn to and find ones delights in other things, such as pleasures, delightful companionship with friends and family, success in ones occupation, or being praised and spoken well of.



If one desires to come to make his ruling love the coming of the Lord's Kingdom, he is immediately faced with the difficulty that his idea of the Kingdom of Heaven is so vague. The things of this world appear real and compelling. The things of the Kingdom of Heaven appear vague like spirit, like something airy or cloudy, - unsubstantial.

What is the Kingdom of the Lord which we pray for? The Kingdom of the Lord is the Internal sense of the Word when It has become flesh, and formed our lives. It is Nova Hierosolyma descended from God out of Heaven and finding its resting place on earth. We are frequently told that the Lord's Kingdom on earth is the Church. But the Kingdom of the Lord is not the Church as viewed only in natural light. The Lord's New Church Which Is Nova Hierosolyma is pure. It is only in those things with man which are not defiled by the proprium. Many things of the so called Church are badly defiled by the proprium of man. An evil man may love the Lord, the Word and the Lord's New Church, as to all appearance more than a good man. Particularly is this true of the clergy, but it may apply equally to the layman. If a man's greatest delight is in other things than reading and meditating on the Word, and in making his life conform to the Word and the Genuine Doctrine of the Church, he may know that he is only in external things, and that his ruling love is not the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, if a man loves to read and meditate on the Word and the Doctrine of the Church, and to strive to apply these to his life, this does not necessarily mean that the genuine love of the Lord's Kingdom rules in him.

We are told in the Word that a man may read the Word a thousand times and still not be in a single genuine truth. For, if a man reads the Word from his own intelligence, he interprets it so as to favor himself and the world, thus he falsifies its truths. A man may read the Word and Doctrine for various reasons, namely, from an abstract curiosity about spiritual things; as a means of developing his natural rational faculty; for the sake of appearing learned in spiritual things; because he can turn the Word and Doctrine to flattering his idea of being among a chosen people; because the extensive reading of the Word gives him power and authority in the Church; and for other like reasons. In such cases the reading of and meditating on the Word and the Doctrine of the Church only increases his damnation.

A man may also live according to the Word and Doctrine for similar reasons, namely, that he may be of high standing in the community, or even for his own self-satisfaction and comfort, or peace of mind.

We all think we love the Church. But if we ask ourselves the question: Would we rather see the Church with very few, and in a few genuine goods and truths, while it remained despised by men; or, would we rather see it prosperous, successful, gaining the respect of all, and yet being in less purity of Doctrine and life? In which of these would we find our greatest joy?

This and many like questions we must ask ourselves, and others if we are to know the nature of our ruling loves.

One of the indications of our love is: Whom do we feel delight in being with. One naturally feels at home with others who have a similar ruling love to our own. Those whose ruling love is politics, art, business, sport or any other subject enjoy being with others who have the similar ruling love. If our greatest delight is not to be with those who love the things of the Word, the Doctrine and the Church, we may conclude that these things are not our ruling love. In the early Academy days, much stress was laid on what was called New



Church social life. This was based on the teaching in the Word, that societies in the spiritual world are arranged according to their idea of the Lord, and in the beginnings of the Academy this idea had something living in it.

Later the tendency increased of calling all social relation in which the members of the church were engaged in together New Church social life, even when the conversation differed very little, if at all, from the social communication of the world around us. The importance of New Church social life is very great, but we must know what New Church social life is. Even if the subject matter of conversation be the Word, the Doctrine of the Church, or its life, this does not make it a thing of New Church social life, - if the spirit of it is similar to the spirit of discussion concerning other matters, that is, if the discussion is carried on in the usual spirit in which say art, or politics is usually discussed.

The Lord said where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. The genuine social life of the Lord's New Church only exists where those are gathered in the name of the Lord and where the Lord is in their midst. To be gathered in the name of the Lord, signifies to be present in the Divine qualities of the Lord, and receive these qualities from the Lord. From this it can be seen and felt that genuine New Church social life is very, very rare, and we are seldom in a state where - gathered in the name of the Lord, - the Lord is in our midst. If our desire is to come to a state in which our ruling love is the Kingdom of Heaven, the great lack of being gathered together in the name of the Lord with the Lord in the midst of us will cause us to grieve, and where such a grief is present there is hope.

The first thing the Church and the men and women of the Church should realize is that the ruling love in our natural mind is not the love of the Kingdom of the Lord and His justice. When there is a realization that this love does not rule in the natural mind, and yet there is an internal desire that it should rule, the Church is in the state that it can be led out of Egypt and commence its journey to the land of Canaan.

All would gladly go from Egypt to the land of Canaan if the way were short and easy, but it is not. We read: "God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines; because that was near; for God said; Perchance the people will repent when they see war, and return to Egypt." (Ex. 13:17)

It is as impossible to suddenly change the ruling love from a love the things of the world to a love of the things of heaven, as it is to change, in an instant, an owl into a dove. A man may quickly see a new goal, but this seeing does not miraculously alter his ruling love. To go by way of the Philistines would be to approach the new ruling love solely by means of the understanding and to expect that the new understanding would by itself give us a new ruling love. In such a case as soon as a man would enter into spiritual warfare he would flee back to Egypt.

The new will is not formed by faith alone, but by forty years in the wilderness. We read: "And God led the people about by way of the wilderness. That this signifies that under the Divine auspices they were brought to confirm the goods and trues of faith through temptations." (A.C. 8098)

These temptations consisted primarily of being deprived of food and drink, that is, of love and faith, until they murmur against the Divine True which leads them and they threaten to return to the flesh pots of Egypt, that is, the former delights of the natural mind.



All over twenty except Joshua and Caleb had to die in the wilderness during forty years of wandering, before they could come into the Holy Land. In the same way during many states of temptations all our confirmed thoughts and affections have to die, before we are prepared to come to a new ruling love. The love of the Kingdom of the Lord and His justice.

Let us pray that we are willing to make this journey, and that we may be given sufficient strength not to fail.

AMEN