

"And the sons struggled together within her; and she went to inquire of Jehovah."

We have come to see the great importance of acquiring a new natural, in which the celestial, spiritual and rational things of the Church can find their basis and ground, and yet what this new natural is remains obscure.

What is the first sign of the coming into existence of a new natural? The answer is to be found in our text. It is the awareness on the part of rational true of the struggle as to which is primary in natural life the good or the true. This struggle at first consideration seems far removed from what we would think of as coming to a new natural life and yet all depends on this, for if the good and the true of natural life do not find their true relationship through temptations there can be no ordered natural life.

We read: "In the spiritual idea, man is not a person but a use; for a spiritual idea is devoid of the idea of person..... and therefore, when one sees another in heaven, he does indeed see him as a man; but thinks of him as a use." (Div. Love XIII)

And further: "Those who think only naturally and do not at the same time think spiritually concerning love into the Lord and concerning charity towards the neighbor, do not think otherwise, because they are unable to think otherwise, than that the Lord is to be loved as to the person, and also the neighbor is to be loved as to the person; but those who think both naturally and spiritually, perceive and from perception think that both an evil man as well as a good man can love the Lord as to the person, and the neighbor likewise can be loved as to the person..... Therefore the spiritual-natural man concludes that to love the Lord is to love that which is from Him, which, in itself, is Divine, in which the Lord is; and that this is doing good to the neighbor; and that thus and in no other way can one be loved by the Lord and conjoined to Him through love." (Div. Wisdom XI)

"To love the Lord as a person and not uses, is to love Him from self, which is not to love." (Div. Love XIII)

"Think of God from essence, and, from this of His person, and not from person and from this of His essence; for to think from person about essence, is to think materially even about essence; whereas to think from essence about person, is to think spiritually even about person." (A.R.611)

"By love into the Lord is not meant to love as to person; but to love the good which is from Him,..... and to love the neighbor is not meant to love an associate as to person; but to love the true which is from the Word with him." (H. H. 15)

"It is said abstractly from person, because the Divine things which proceed from the Lord make the Church, and nothing whatever of man..... and therefore neither does the name of any person mentioned in the Word enter Heaven; but the things which is signified there by the person."
(A. C. 10282)

There is some little remains of the perception of this true in the world in regard to natural uses and functions; wherefore with some there is an honoring of a king, a priest, or an artist from his function or use in the first place. But as the perception of man's spiritual use is lost, there is scarcely any regarding of a man's person from his spiritual use. In the Word a nation or a person represents a spiritual quality or a spiritual use. We are told that even at the present day a nation is equally representative, and there is some little feeling of this remaining. It is also true that every man is born for a spiritual use and represents that use. This is of particular importance in the Church, where every one represents some particular use or thing of the Church. Before the Coming of the Lord, particularly in the Jewish Church, the representative was often entirely separated from the internal quality of the man who represented. Thus an evil man could represent Divine Qualities. We are told that in the New Church there will not be an external separated from its internal. Wherefore a man's spiritual use and his representation as a man correspond.

Until we come to see the men and women of the Church as representatives of the Divine things of the Church, or, at times, their opposites, we do not see the Church spiritually, and if we do not see the Church spiritually we can not see the Divine Human of the Lord which makes the Church.

The characteristic of the unregenerate man lies as to its essence in this, that he desires to be loved primarily as to his person, and not primarily as to his use or function in relation to the other uses and functions in the Church, and thence in society generally. He desires to make the things of his use serve his person, rather than the things of person serve the use. He is therefore upside down with his feet towards heaven, and his head towards hell. Also in relation to others, and even to the Lord, the thought of person is in the first place, and Divine use in the last place.

Observe what distresses you most, what disturbs or angers you most; a disparagement or insult to your person, or a harm to your use. What causes you the greatest happiness and joy, the delights as to your person, or the prospering of your usefulness to society in general, and your usefulness to others in particular. It may appear difficult to separate these two in your mind, because many things which harm a man as to person also harm his usefulness; while the success of ones use, brings with it personal honor, praise, and gain; but if one tries one can distinguish these two in oneself. This is a matter of the greatest importance, for all in hell place the things of person above their use to society and their use to others; while no one can enter heaven, who places the things of his person before his use to society and his usefulness to his fellow men.

There is no genuine new natural until we begin to see the uses or spiritual functions, represented by the different members of the Church, and love these uses and from this the person; thus to love and honor the uses in the first place and the person in the second place.

To the merely natural man such a concept appears cold and abstract, it appears almost inhuman. And yet it is by coming into this new relationship, that a man becomes truly human and is raised above the animal. And what is wonderful, it is just to the extent that we love one another primarily as to our spiritual use, that also the personal relations become warm with the warmth of heaven and therefore peaceful and delightful, with a delight and joy that far exceeds anything which is possible when the love of person is regarded in the first place.

When person is regarded in the first place, there is always a demand for more and more love which can never be satisfied on account of its inordinateness. This leads to discontent, envy, bitterness, quarlsomness, and finally if not checked to hatred and revenge.

Where person is regarded in the first place, the love of self necessarily reigns, for then each person wishes to be the center as to their person, and regards all others from this center, and as it is not possible for each to be the center, contentions reign.

And yet we said in the commencement of this sermon, that the first sign of the new natural was the struggle or contention, represented by Esau and Jacob struggling in the womb of Rebecca. If this remains merely a natural contention nothing comes of it. If however it is seen as a spiritual contention, which is primarily on a plane above person, from this contention or struggle, if seen in the light of the Word, a new order can come into existence.

All the things, functions and uses, represented by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their wives, by Esau, by the sons of Jacob, are in the Church and, in its various states, and are represented by different persons in the Church. As to the particular representations of those in the Church we are still in the greatest obscurity. The first general light is as to the most general things.

The most general thing is the distinction between the good and the true in the natural. Thus, in a most general sense, every one of the Church has primary characteristics which causes him to represent that which in the Word is represented by Esau or Jacob that is the good or the true.

While every man who is regenerating has in him the good represented by Esau, and the True represented by Jacob, yet every man has one or other of these two as the dominant thing which gives him his characteristic quality. For a man to be able to intelligently cooperate with the Lord he must have some idea of his dominant characteristic, in a more advanced state of the Church, the Church will see these relationships in particular and even in the least singular things; now it is important to see these only in the most general things; and as we have said the most general distinction is that of the good and the true.

If we would know which of these two general classes we belong to we can start by asking ourselves certain questions.

In our conversation and in our action do we place the emphasis on the things of love? Do we fear too much doctrine and too little life? Do we place the emphasis on the practical? Do we trust the spontaneous feelings? Do we regard a holy feeling and its appropriate ritual as the essential of worship?

If so it is a sign that we, in the most general sense, represent the good signified by Esau.

Or do we in our conversation and our actions, stress the importance of the principles of life, of discipline? Do we fear the feelings which have not been disciplined by a life according to principles. Do we feel the great necessity of the theoretical as a guide to the practical? Do we trust the intellect to discipline the feelings, and are we cautious in trusting spontaneous feelings? Do we regard spiritual enlightenment and instruction as the essential of worship?

If so it is a sign that we in the most general sense represent the true signified by Jacob. There are other similar questions we can ask ourselves.

With some these distinctions are easily made, with others the distinction is made with difficulty, for there are external appearances which hide their essential internal quality. For example, Esau's hunting represented the doctrine of those who are in the good, represented by Esau, because such from their reflecting on the Word and the doctrine of the Church, attach much importance to Doctrine, they may think that they belong to the class that is represented by Jacob, and yet their ruling love may be to think out of the things of the will, and not to view things objectively with the understanding.

Others, because they are aware of strong loves, may think that they belong to the class represented by Esau, while their ruling love is to come to an understanding of the true and to the acquiring of wisdom.

Now both that which is represented by Esau and that which is represented by Jacob, is full of hereditary and actual evil to the extent that it has not been regenerated. Wherefore both Jacob and Esau can have an unfavorable as well as a favorable representation.

Those who are in the things represented by Esau, readily see the evils and falsities in the things represented by Jacob, but with great difficulty see the essential or internal evils in themselves; while those who are in the things represented by Jacob readily see the evils and falsities in those represented by Esau, but with difficulty see the essential internal evils and falsities in themselves. This is the cause of the struggle and conflict.

Both can readily see their own external faults, and may try to combat these, and therefore think they are in a state of repentance. But their internal evils appear to them as goods, and their internal falses as trues, wherefore it is with great difficulty that a man comes to the root of his evils, and if it were not for this struggle or conflict, and reflection upon it he never could come to recognize the nature of the internal evil and false. Those in the good represented by Esau are in great need of the true represented by Jacob, thus to come to a true relation to those who are in the things represented by Jacob. As we read: "And Jacob boiled potage, and Esau came from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, cause me to sup I pray of the red, this red, for I am weary. And Jacob said, Sell me as this day the birthright. And Esau said, Behold I am going to die, and for what is this birthright to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me as this day;..... and Jacob gave Esau bread and potage of lentils." (Gen 25: 29; 34)

Also Jacob would have no life if he were not in relation to his brother Esau.

This conflict, internally in the mind of each man, and externally in those men and women of the Church who are primarily in the thing represented by Esau and Jacob, continues for a long time, and in the description of it in the Word, covers several chapters; for it is not until both the qualities have been regenerated, that they can be united in love as brethren. Many states have to be passed through, as described in chapters 25 to 33 of Genesis including Jacob's temptations with Laban the acquiring of his wives, and the birth of his children, before he can be united in love with his brother Esau. Finally the state is arrived at that is represented by the words; "And Esau ran to meet (Jacob), and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept." (Gen. 33:4)

If those in the things represented by Jacob love only their own trues, and if those who are in the goods represented by Esau love only their own goods of love, they fall more and more into the love of themselves, wherefore this union represented by Esau and Jacob embracing each other must always be looked forward to as the goal.

In this sermon we have spoken much about the conjunction that is to take place between those who are in the goods and trues represented by Esau and Jacob, and little about the corresponding conjunction of the goods and trues represented by Esau and Jacob which takes place in the mind of each man and woman. And yet it appears that this is appropriate, for Esau and Jacob represent the good and true of the natural, or more particularly "Jacob represents the good which is from the true, and Esau, the good from which is the true." (A. C. 3669), and their good and trues in the natural.

If we see these goods and trues only in the individual and not in society, that is, not in relation of man to man then we skip over the natural, for the natural has in it the relation of man to man, and if this is skipped over there are no natural goods and trues. In considering the subject of conjugal love, some have held to the idea that the laws laid down in the work on Conjugal apply only to the relation of the will and understanding. Others while acknowledging that there is a general

teaching in regard to the relation of husband and wife, when they come across something which does not agree with their loves, try to escape to a purely spiritual sense, and thus skip over the natural, and its struggle.

We are taught that the rational is regenerated first, and then the natural, and this latter with greater difficulty. It is an attempt to escape the essential struggle, that is the regeneration of the natural, which causes one to wish to only see what is said in the Word in application to the individual and not its application to man in society.

We indeed must not remain in the personal, but must remember the words quoted in the early part of the sermon.

"To think from person about essence is to think materially even about essence, whereas to think from essence about person is to think spiritually even about person." (A. R. 611). To think, feel and live in relation to persons out of a spiritual essence, is to be in the new natural represented by Esau and Jacob. While as long as we think of persons from what is personal we remain in the old natural. We then also think of essence from person, which we are told is to think materially even about essence. What is more common than to think from person about essence.

Some personal thing such as personal difficulties starts us thinking. Out of our personal feelings we reflect on the things of the Word or the doctrine, and draw forth things to confirm our personal feelings, thus we start from person and think materially about essence. The true order is just the opposite namely to think from the essence of the Word and the Doctrine about persons, thus from a spiritual view of the Word apart from person, view persons spiritually that is see them as representatives of things in the Word and Doctrine.

If a man judges a person from person or from personal things his judgment is always unjust, and returns upon himself. While if a man judges out of the essence of the Word and Doctrine, seen in the light of heaven he makes the Just judgment which the Lord commanded to make, for the judgment is then not from self but from the light of heaven.

Such a judgment is never a judgment as to whether a man will go to heaven or hell. It is a judgment in regard to the state at the time, and is only made to the extent that it is useful in bringing the Church into greater order thus more fully into a genuine human form. It may be noted that any person now, like any person spoken of in the Word, may have a favorable representative, if a genuine member of the Church, but in certain states when the person is in disorder may take on the opposite representation.

We see this illustrated in the Word in regard to Peter, who, when He said to the Lord "Thou art the Christ the son of the living God, was called a rock upon which the Church would be built, but a few verses later

when he rebuked the Lord, was called Satan. A man, as a representative, can also change as he acts from the influx of heaven or hell. As a man grows older the prevailing state tends to become more stable, either favorably or unfavorably.

When internal conflicts or struggles arise in the Church or among members of the Church, the order is that this should be viewed by the rational true. This is represented by the words of Sarah, who represents such true, in our text: "If so why am I thus." And this should be followed by a prayer to the Lord for spiritual enlightenment represented in our text by the words: "And she went to inquire of Jehovah."

AMEN