

# Readings from the Word of God

## 21 February 2021

### **John 16:12-13 (Kempton Project Translation)**

<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> However, when it shall come, the spirit of Truth, it will guide you into all truth; for it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak; and it shall tell you things to come.”

### **John 16:25 (Kempton Project Translation, modified)**

<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you in parables; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in parables, but I will tell you openly about the Father.”

### ***Secrets of Heaven §447***

One new spirit who was talking with me heard that I was speaking about the spirit, and he asked, “What is a spirit?” He thought that he was still living on earth.

“Everyone has a spirit inside,” I said. “The living part of us is a spirit, and the body only serves to makes it possible for us to live on earth. The body—the flesh and bones—has never possessed life or engaged in thought.”

He looked doubtful, so I asked, “Have you ever heard of the soul?”

“What is the soul?” he said. “I don’t know what the soul is.”

“You yourself are now a soul or spirit,” I was allowed to say. “You can tell, because you’re above my head, not standing on the ground. Don’t you realize that?”

He fled in terror shouting, “I’m a spirit! I’m a spirit!”

## ***Married Love §1***

I anticipate that many who read the following... accounts... will believe they are figments of my imagination. I swear in truth, however, that they are not inventions, but actual occurrences to which I was witness. Nor were they witnessed in any condition of unconsciousness but in a state of full wakefulness. For it has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me and send me to teach the doctrines that will be doctrines of the New Church, the church meant by the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. To this end He has opened the inner faculties of my mind and spirit. As a result, it has been made possible for me to be in the spiritual world with angels and at the same time in the natural world with men, and this now for twenty-five years.

## ***Married Love §39***

...these points I have so far endeavoured to establish by the sort of arguments that appeal to the intellect and are called rational. But from early childhood people have acquired the belief... that a person will not live as a person after death until after the day of the Last Judgment.... Because of this, and because many people have placed this question among matters to be accepted on faith and not with the understanding, it has become necessary that these same points be attested also by the affidavits of an eyewitness.

## ***True Christianity §570***

On one occasion I had a conversation with a recently arrived spirit. While in the world, he had meditated a great deal on heaven and hell. ....

As soon as he came into the spiritual world he resumed meditating on heaven and hell. When he thought about heaven he felt happy; when he thought about hell he felt sad.

When he realized that he was actually in the spiritual world, he immediately asked, “Where is heaven and where is hell? What is heaven, what is hell, and how are they experienced?”

“Heaven is above your head,” [the spirits] replied, “and hell is under your feet. You are now in the world of spirits, which is midway between heaven and hell. What heaven is, what hell is, and how they are experienced, however, is not something we can describe in a few words.”

Because he had a burning desire to know, he threw himself to his knees and prayed devoutly to God to be taught.

An angel immediately appeared at his right hand. The angel lifted him up and said, “You have prayed to be taught about heaven and hell. *Investigate and find out what delight is, and you will know.*” Upon saying this, the angel was raised up out of sight.

The recently arrived spirit then said to himself, “What is this? ‘Investigate and find out what delight is, and you will know what heaven is, what hell is, and how they are experienced’?”

Soon he left there and traveled around. When he encountered people he asked them, “Tell me, if you would, please, what delight is.”

Some said, “What kind of question is that? Who doesn’t know what delight is? It is joy and happiness. Delight is delight....”

Others said, “Delight is the laughter of the mind. When our mind is laughing, our face is cheerful, our speech is full of jokes, our gestures are playful, and our whole self embodies delight.”

Others said, “I’ll tell you what delight is! It is dining and eating delicacies, drinking and getting drunk on vintage wine, and then chatting about various topics, especially [love and sex]”

Annoyed at this the new spirit said to himself, “These answers are crude and unsophisticated. The delights these spirits mentioned are not heaven and are not hell either. I wish I could meet some people with wisdom.”

He left the people he was with and asked around to learn where he might find people with wisdom.

An angelic spirit noticed him and said, “I can sense your burning desire to know what the universal attribute of heaven is and what the universal attribute of hell is. Since the answer is *delight*, I will take you up onto the hill. There is a meeting every day there between spirits who conduct research on results, spirits who survey means, and spirits who investigate purposes. The spirits who conduct research on results are called spirits of the academic disciplines, or abstractly, Knowledges. The spirits who survey means are called spirits of intelligence, or abstractly, Intelligences. The spirits who investigate purposes are called spirits of wisdom, or abstractly, Wisdoms. Directly above them in heaven there are angels who see means in terms of the purposes behind them, and see results in terms of the means that lead to them. From these angels the three groups receive their enlightenment.”

The angelic spirit then took the newly arrived spirit by the hand and led him up the hill to the group of spirits who investigate purposes; they are called Wisdoms.

“Forgive me,” the newly arrived spirit said to them, “for coming up to join you. .... An angel appeared beside me and said, ‘Investigate and find out what delight is and you will know [what heaven is, what hell is, and how they are experienced]’ I did investigate, but have learned nothing. I ask you then, if you would, please, to teach me what delight is.”

“To all individuals in heaven,” the Wisdoms replied, “delight is the most important thing in their lives; and to all individuals in hell, delight is the most important thing in their lives. Those in heaven take delight in what is good and what is true. Those in hell take delight in what is evil and what is false. Delight is always related to love, and love is the underlying reality of our lives. How human we are depends on what kind of love we have. Therefore how human we are also depends on what kind of delight we feel. When our love is active, it causes us to feel delight. A heavenly love becomes active with the help of wisdom; a hellish love becomes active with the help of insanity. In either case the activity causes the person to experience delight. The heavens and the hells have delights that are opposite to each other, however. The heavens love what is good and therefore take delight in benefiting others. The hells love what is evil and therefore take delight in harming others. If you know what delight is, you will indeed know what heaven is, what hell is, and how they are experienced. But investigate and find out more about delight from the spirits who survey means; they are called Intelligences. As you go out, they are on your right.”

So he left there and came to the next group. He stated the reason he had come and asked them to teach him what delight is. They greatly enjoyed being asked, and said, "... [E]verything that happens in the soul and mind of angels, spirits, and human beings is set in motion by the Lord through an inflow that comes from Him—an inflow of love and wisdom. This inflow is the movement that causes the whole experience of delight, which at its point of origin is called blessedness, good fortune, and happiness; and in its derivation is called delightful, pleasant, and pleasurable. In a universal sense it is what is known as *good*. The spirits of hell, however, turn all things upside down within themselves. They turn what is good into what is evil and what is true into what is false. The only thing they retain is the sense of delight, because if delight did not continue, they would have no will and no sensation, and therefore no life. This should clarify the nature, experience, and origin of the delight felt in hell, and the nature, experience, and origin of the delight felt in heaven."

Upon hearing that, the newly arrived spirit was brought to the third group, the spirits who conduct research on results; they are called Knowledges. They said, "Go down into the lower earth and go up into the higher realm. In them you will perceive and sense the delights of heaven and of hell."

At that point, however, the ground suddenly yawned wide at some distance from them. Up through the chasm came three devils, who were visibly lit up by the delight that comes from what they love. The angels who were accompanying the newly arrived spirit perceived that it was not by coincidence that the three devils had come up just then. The angels called out to the devils, "Don't come any closer, but from where you are, tell us something about what delights you."

“It is important to know,” they replied, “that all people, whether labeled good or evil, have their own delight. The so-called good people have theirs and the so-called evil people have theirs.”

“What do you take delight in?” the angels asked.

“What is delightful to us,” they replied, “is whoring, taking revenge, cheating, and speaking blasphemy.”

“What are those delights like for you, exactly?” the angels asked.

The devils replied that their delights were sensed by others as resembling the stench of excrement, the reek of dead bodies, and the smell of stagnant urine.

“Are those things actually delightful to you?” the angels asked.

“Most delightful,” the devils replied.

“Then you are like the filthy little creatures that live in those substances,” said the angels.

“If we are, we are,” the devils said, “but those things give our noses intense pleasure.”

“Do you have anything further to add?” the angels asked.

“Yes,” they replied. “Everyone is allowed to have their own delight, even if it is of the ‘most unclean’ kind, as others call it, provided they do not attack good spirits and angels; but because our delight makes it absolutely impossible to resist attacking them, we are thrown into workhouses where we suffer many hard

things. Being restrained and withdrawn from our delights causes the so-called torment of hell, which is profound inner pain.”

“Why do you attack people who are good?” the angels asked.

“We can’t help it,” the devils said. “A kind of rage comes over us every time we see any angel and sense the Lord’s divine sphere around that angel.”

“Then you are also like animals,” we said.

Soon afterward, when they noticed the newly arrived spirit with the angels, a diabolical rage came over them, which looked like a burning fire of hate. Therefore to prevent their doing any harm, they were thrown back into hell.

After that, other angels appeared in a shining white light. They were... the angels in the heaven directly above the three groups. That shining light rolled downward through spiralling turns, carrying a ring of flowers and placing it gently on the head of the newly arrived spirit. Then a voice came to him from above: “This wreath of honour is given to you because you have meditated on heaven and hell since you were young.”

## Psalm 84:1-5, 10-12 (NKJV)

- 1 How lovely is Your tabernacle,  
O Lord of hosts!
- 2 My soul longs, yes, even faints  
For the courts of the LORD;  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
- 3 Even the sparrow has found a home,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young—  
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
My King and my God.
- 4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;  
They will still be praising You. *Selah*
- 5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You,  
Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.  
....
- 10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
The LORD will give grace and glory;  
No good thing will He withhold  
From those who walk uprightly.
- 12 O LORD of hosts,  
Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

## Additional Reading

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