

An Introduction To Spiritual Christianity

10. The Origin Of Reality

READINGS FROM THE TEACHINGS FOR SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY

Module 1 – The Inner Spiritual World is Causal

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 3702

every good and truth come down from the Lord and go up to Him, that is, He is the First and the Last. For the human being has been so created that Divine things that are the Lord's may come down through him even to the lowest things of the natural order, and from the lowest things of the natural order may go up to Him. Thus the human being was created to be the means through which the Divine was linked to the natural world, and the natural world was linked to the Divine, and in this way through the human being as the means linking the two together, the lowest degree of the natural order might receive life from the Divine - which would be a reality if mankind had lived in accordance with Divine order.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10057

It is well known that the discernment of things seen with the eyes and heard by the ears takes place inwardly in a person; those things pass so to speak from the world by way of the eyes or ears into thought, and so into the understanding since thought belongs to the understanding. And if they are the kinds of things the person loves they pass from there into the will, and then from the will by way of the understanding into words spoken by the mouth and also into actions performed by the body. Such is the cycle in all this, passing from the world by way of the natural man into the spiritual man, and going out from there into the world again. Yet it should be remembered that this cycle is started off by the will, which is the inmost core of a person's life, and that it begins there and is inspired by it to run its full course. The will of a person in whom good is present is governed from heaven by the Lord, though the situation appears to be other than this. Influx takes place from the spiritual world into the natural world, thus through the internal man into the external man, but not the other way round; for the internal man is in heaven, whereas the external man is in the world.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 2993

all things in the natural world derive their cause from truth which is spiritual, and their first beginning from good which is celestial. In addition I have been told that natural objects come forth in this way from truth and good according to all the variations of truth or good which exist in the Lord's kingdom, and so come forth from the Lord, the source of all goodness and truth. These matters are bound to seem strange, especially to those who refuse, or who are unable, to allow their thought to go beyond the natural order, and who do not know what is meant by that which is spiritual and do not therefore acknowledge the existence of it.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10199

'Incense of spices' means a hearing and receiving with pleasure. This is clear from the meaning of 'incense' as the Lord's hearing and receiving with pleasure everything of worship that springs from love and charity, dealt with in 10177; and from the meaning of 'spices' as things that bring pleasure. Things bringing pleasure are meant by 'spices' on account of their odour; for 'odour' means perception, and therefore a sweet odour means a perception of that which brings pleasure, while an offensive odour means that which brings no pleasure. All things perceived by a person with the sensory organs of smell, taste, sight, hearing, and touch mean spiritual realities connected with the good of love and the truths of faith. Consequently smell means the perception of interior truth springing from the good of love; taste means perception and the desire to know and become wise; sight means an understanding of the truths of faith; hearing means perception resulting from the good of faith and from obedience; and touch in general means imparting, conveying, and being received.

[2] The reason why they have these meanings is that every reception of impressions by the outward senses begins in reception by the inward senses, which belong to the understanding and will, and so begins within the person, in the truths of faith and the good of love since these constitute the understanding and will within the human mind. Yet inward sensations, which belong properly to a person's understanding and will, do not feel the same as the outward ones, though they are turned into outward sensations when they flow in. For all the perceptions that a person receives by means of his outward sensory organs flow from inward powers of mind. The path all influx takes is from inward things to outward ones, not from outward to inward, since there is no such thing as physical influx - that is, influx from the natural world into the spiritual world - only influx from the spiritual world into the natural. A person's inner powers, which belong properly to understanding and will, exist in the spiritual world, and his outward ones, which belong properly to the

bodily senses, exist in the natural world. From all this too it becomes clear what correspondence is and what the nature of it is.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 2758

Nothing exists in the whole natural order which is not in some way representative of the Lord's kingdom in general, since the natural kingdom has its entire origin in the spiritual kingdom. That which is without an origin prior to itself is nothing, for nothing exists without connection from a cause and so from an end. That which is without such connection collapses in an instant and ceases to be anything.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 4939

Once when I had been raised up to heaven it seemed to me as though my head was there, but that my body was below it, and my feet even further below. From this I had a perception of how the higher and lower things present in the human being correspond to the same in the Grand Man, and how one flows into another; that is to say, how the celestial, which is the good of love and the first degree of order, flows into the spiritual, which is truth springing from that good and the second degree of order, and then into the natural, which is the third degree of order. From this it is evident that natural things are like the feet on which the higher things support themselves. What is more, things in the spiritual world and those in heaven are ringed about by the natural world. Consequently the whole natural system is a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom, every individual part of it being representative, 2758, 3483. The natural system is kept in being by an influx conforming to that order, and without this influx it could not remain in being for even a single moment.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10196

the whole natural order is a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom; and it is a representative theatre because the natural world has been brought into being by the Divine - and is unceasingly brought into being, that is, is held in being, by Him - by means of the spiritual world.

Module 2 – God's Presence

Arcana Coelestia 9578

I was conveyed by the Lord by means of angels to some planet in the universe, where I was allowed to see into the actual planet

Arcana Coelestia 9579

Being conveyed to planets in the universe does not mean being conveyed and brought to them as to the body but as to the spirit; and the spirit is not conveyed by a journey through intervals of space but through variations of the state of inner life, which seem to the person to be a journey through intervals of space, 5605, 7381, 9440. Furthermore any approach towards them depends on the compatibility or similarity of state, for compatibility or similarity of state brings people together and incompatibility or dissimilarity of state sets them apart. From this it may be recognized how the spirit can be brought to and approach places far away while the person remains where he is.

Arcana Coelestia 9580, 81

But conveying a person's spirit outside his own globe through variations of the state of his interiors and causing the variations to progress one after another till a state is reached that is compatible with or similar to the states of those to whom he is conveyed lies within the power of the Lord alone... Those who are ruled by their bodily senses and think on the level of those senses cannot be led to believe that such a thing has ever happened. The reason for this is that the bodily senses can have no conception of a journey other than one that is made through intervals of space. Those however who think on the sensory level of their spirit, when that level has been removed or withdrawn to some extent from the sensory level of the body, and so think on a more internal level, can be led to believe and conceive that such a thing has happened, because space and time do not come into the idea formed in their mind, but instead of space and time the kinds of realities which are the cause behind all that is spatial and temporal.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 8211

'And so it was in the morning watch' means a state of thick darkness and perdition for those steeped in falsity arising from evil, and a state of enlightenment and salvation for those guided by truth springing from good. This is clear from the meaning of 'the morning watch' as a state of enlightenment and salvation, and in the contrary sense as a state of thick darkness and perdition. The reason why 'the morning watch' has this meaning is that states of faith and love in the next life are like the times of day in the world. That is to say, they are like morning, midday, evening, and night; and these therefore also correspond to those states, 2788, 5672, 5862, 6110. The states also change in almost the same ways. Whenever change takes place morning, and in particular twilight, is an end and a beginning; for night comes to an end and day begins. In that state to which morning corresponds the good begin to be enlightened in matters of faith and to grow warmer in aspects of charity. The opposite also takes place, for then the evil begin

to be overshadowed by falsities and to be chilled by evils. Consequently morning for the latter is a state of thick darkness and perdition, but for the former a state of enlightenment and salvation.

[2] These states in heaven are what give rise to the states of light and heat on earth, and also the states of thick darkness and cold, which come round in turn each year and each day. Whatever arises in the natural world has its origin and cause in those things that arise in the spiritual world; for to be sure the whole natural order is nothing other than a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom, 3483, 4939, 5173, 5962. And this is the reason for correspondences. Variations of light and shade on earth, also of heat and cold, are indeed attributable to the sun, that is to say, to its different heights in the sky each year and each day, and in different parts of the earth. Yet these causes, which are proximate ones and exist in the natural world, were created in accordance with those things that exist in the spiritual world. The latter are the prior efficient causes from which the former, their posterior causes, arise in the natural world. For nothing in a state of order can ever exist on a natural level if its cause and origin do not lead back to a spiritual level, that is, to the Divine operating through that level.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10200

in heaven states of love and light, that is, of goodness and truth, follow one another in sequence unceasingly, just as on earth morning, midday, evening, and twilight do, and as spring, summer, autumn, and winter do. It has also been shown that those states are the origin from which these times of day and seasons of the year arise; for things that come into being in the world are images of the realities that exist in heaven. This is so because everything natural comes into being from what is spiritual, that is, from what is Divine in the heavens.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 9272

The reason why 'sowing the land' has this meaning is that everything involving the field, what is sown in it, and what it produces means such things as belong in general to the Church and in particular to a member of the Church, that is, to a person regenerated by means of the truth of faith and the good of charity received from the Lord. This is why 'the field' and 'the ground' in the Word mean those within the Church who receive the truths and forms of the good of faith, just as the field receives seeds, and therefore also why the field, seed, sowing, harvest, produce, grain and wheat, bread made from them, and everything else involving the field are mentioned many times in the Word.

[2] Anyone unacquainted with the true nature of the heavenly state inevitably supposes that those things as they are mentioned in the Word are no more than metaphorical ways of speaking and comparisons; yet they are true correspondences. For when angels talk about the Lord's regeneration of a person by means of the truths of faith and forms of the good of charity, there appear at the same time in the world of spirits below them fields, crops, fallow land, and also harvests. The reason for their appearance is their correspondence. Anyone acquainted with this is also able to see that such things have been created in the world in accordance with correspondences; for the whole natural order - that is, all the sky together with the sun, moon, and stars, and the earth together with every object in its three kingdoms - corresponds to such things as exist in the spiritual world,

Module 3 – Unifying Mind And World

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10185

'Its walls' means inner levels. This is clear from the meaning of 'the walls' or the sides as inner levels; for when 'the roof' means that which is inmost, 'the walls', which are below it, mean the inner levels. By inner levels those which are below the inmost ones and above the lowest, thus those in the middle, should be understood. Inner levels are meant by 'the walls' because the sides and breast of the human body mean inner things; for all representatives on the natural level resemble the human form and carry the same meaning as the parts of it they resemble, 9496. The uppermost part of a house for example, called the roof, is similar in meaning to the head; the inward parts below the uppermost are similar in meaning to the breast and sides; and the foundations of the house are similar in meaning to the feet and soles of the feet. The reason why this should be so is that heaven as a whole resembles one human being, and there is an influx from there into the whole natural order. For the natural world comes into being from the spiritual world and is held in being by it. When the words 'spiritual world' are used, that which is Divine and the Lord's there should be understood.

[2] The resemblance of all things on the natural level to the human form is also clear from each member of the vegetable kingdom. Everything there is clothed with leaves and comes into blossom before bearing fruit; and the fruit is the final end, for the sake of which the previous stages of growth take place and towards which they all look. The leaves there resemble the lungs and serve so to speak in place of the breathing-system; for they are the means by which juices are drawn up the plant, which explains why a tree stripped of its leaves bears no fruit. So it is also that in the Word leaves mean truths constituting faith, 885; for by means of those truths the vital element from which good is formed is in a similar way made to rise up. The

blossoming before the fruit comes corresponds to that state and time in people's lives when thoughts of marriage enter their minds and make them glad, thus when truth is joined to good. But the fruit corresponds to actual good, which, to the extent that it matures like fruit, manifests itself in deeds. So it is that in the Word fruit means the deeds of charity, and that the blossoming before the fruit is compared to the voice and the joy of a bride and bridegroom; and so on with all the rest. Anyone therefore who is able to stop and reflect sensibly will recognize most clearly that the heavenly paradise is represented in the earthly paradise, and consequently that all things within the natural order resemble such realities as exist in the spiritual world. And one who is able to draw further conclusions may see that the natural order is not self-existent but is held in being by influx from heaven, that is, from what is Divine there, so completely that if that contact were taken away everything composing the planet would collapse into nothingness.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10367

The reason why a person enters heaven and becomes an embodiment of the Church when governed by good is that the Lord flows into the good residing with a person, and through the good into his truth. He flows into the internal man, where heaven within that person exists, and through the internal into the external, where the world within that person exists. Therefore unless the person is governed by good his internal man is not opened but remains closed, no matter how many truths he knows on a doctrinal level. And since heaven exists within his internal man the person is in heaven when that internal man is opened; for heaven does not exist in some place but within a person's interiors.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 775

With regard to the origin of all things, every single thing comes from the Lord. From Him comes the celestial; by way of the celestial from Him the spiritual comes into being; by way of the spiritual comes the natural; by way of the natural comes that which constitutes the body and the senses. And just as these come into being from the Lord in this way, so in the same way they are kept in being, for as is well known, being kept in being is constant coming into being. People who assume that things arise and come into being in any other way, as those do who worship nature and trace the origin of things back to that, are governed by assumptions so dismal that the delusions of wild animals roaming the forest can be said to contain far more sanity. There are many such persons who seem to themselves to excel everybody else in wisdom.

Arcana Coelestia 9967

Afterwards I was taken by the Lord to a planet in the universe which was further away from ours than the first dealt with at the ends of several foregoing chapters. I was allowed to know that it was further away by the fact that it took two days to convey me there as to my spirit. This planet lay to the left, but the first to the right. Lying further away in the next life is not due to spatial remoteness but to difference of state, which however produces there the appearance of a spatial remoteness, in accord with what has been stated previously in 9440. From the time therefore that it took to get there, which was two days, as has just been said, I was able to deduce that the state of the interiors with those people, that is, the state of affections and consequent thoughts, was in like measure different from the state of the interiors that exists with spirits from our planet. And since I was conveyed there as to my spirit by means of changes of the state of the interiors I was allowed to note the actual changes taking place one after another before arrival there. This happened when I was wide awake.

Arcana Coelestia 10734

I was conveyed to yet another planet in the universe outside our solar system, which was accomplished by means of changes in the state of my mind, thus changes as to my spirit. For as stated several times before, the only way in which a spirit is conveyed from one place to another is by means of changes in the state of the spirit's interiors, though these changes still seem to him to be like movements from place to place or journeys.

Module 4 – Integrating Science And Spiritual Truth

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 6948

Divine Truth emanating from the Lord flows into every person by way of his interiors into his exteriors, right down into the external sensory and the bodily levels, and everywhere it flows it stirs to life things attuned to it in their proper order - on the sensory level things attuned to it such as appear in the world around and on earth. But things that exist in the world around and on earth are different in appearance from what they really are, and so they are full of illusions. When therefore the sensory level relies solely on those appearances* the thought which takes place there is inevitably opposed to any good or truth of faith because that thought is based on illusions, and when Divine Truth flows in the sensory level turns it into falsity.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 3721

The reason why through that ultimate degree there is so to speak a way in from the natural creation is that man's natural mind is the place through which things of heaven, that is, which are the Lord's, flow in and come down into the natural creation; and through that same mind the things that belong to the natural creation go back up, see 3702. The fact that there is so to speak an entrance from the natural creation through the natural mind into interior parts may be seen from what has been stated and shown in various places before.

[2] It seems to man as though worldly objects enter in through his physical or external senses and affect interior things, and so that there is an entrance from the ultimate degree of order into things that are within. But this is an appearance and illusion, as is evident from the general rule that what is secondary cannot flow into what is primary, or what amounts to the same, what is lower cannot flow into what is higher, or what is also the same, what is exterior into what is interior, or what is still the same, things of the world and the natural creation into those of heaven and of the spirit. For the former are grosser, the latter purer, and the grosser things that belong to the external or natural man come into being and are kept in being from those belonging to the internal or rational man. Those grosser things are unable to have any effect on the purer things but are affected by them. The nature of this influx however, seeing that appearance and illusion itself convince people that the reverse is true, will in the Lord's Divine mercy be discussed separately, where influx is the subject. This then is why it is said that through the ultimate degree of order there is, so to speak, a way in from the natural creation.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 3483

Everything at all visible in the universe is representative of the Lord's kingdom, so much so that nothing exists in the starry sky above, or on this planet and in its three kingdoms below, which is not in its own way representative. For every single thing within the natural order is an ultimate image, in that the Divine issues forth into celestial things, which are expressions of good; celestial things issue forth into spiritual, which are expressions of truth; and celestial and spiritual things issue forth into natural things. This shows how stupid, indeed how earthly and also topsy-turvy, human intelligence is which separates or isolates natural forces from that which is prior to them and flowing into them - that is, from their efficient cause - and then attributes everything to natural forces. And people who think and talk in this fashion seem to themselves to be wiser than anybody else, that is to say, by their attribution of everything to natural forces. Angelic intelligence however is quite the reverse - it attributes nothing to natural forces but every single thing to the Lord's Divine, and so to life, not to anything devoid of life.

[2] The learned know that remaining in being consists in perpetual coming into being. Nevertheless it is contrary to their affection for falsity, and consequently to their reputation for being learned, to say that natural forces are constantly kept in being, even as they came into being, from the Lord's Divine. Now because every single thing remains in being from the Divine, that is, is constantly coming into being from Him, and every single thing from that source is inevitably a representative of the real thing by means of which it has come into being, the whole visible universe is therefore nothing else than a theatre that is representative of the Lord's kingdom. And this in turn is a theatre representative of the Lord Himself.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 10126

The Word of the Lord may be called a kind of heaven on lowest levels; for all the things that are seen and heard on heaven's lowest levels are representative of what angels in higher heavens speak and think, all of which has regard to the truths of faith and forms of the good of love. The reason why such representative things are present on heaven's lowest levels is that those who are on heaven's lowest levels have no ability to grasp the more internal aspects of angelic wisdom, only such things as represent them. Furthermore it is in keeping with Divine order that when the higher realities pass down to lower levels they are converted into images bearing a similarity to them and are in this way presented to the outward senses, and so are accommodated to everyone's ability to grasp them. So it is that the Word on its lowest levels, that is, in the sense of the letter, is representative of and consequently serves to mean the celestial and spiritual realities that exist in the higher heavens, and that by this means the Word is also presented to people on earth in a form accommodated to their ability to grasp it. Thus it also serves as a base and foundation for the heavens.

Arcana Coelestia 9440

A person unacquainted with the arcana of heaven may think that no one can see planets so far away and through what he has experienced with his senses report about them. But let it be recognized that intervals of space and distances between places, and consequent movements from one to another, which are visible in the natural world, are first occasioned by and have their origin in the changes of state undergone by the interiors, and that among angels and spirits appearances are in exact accord with those changes. In this way spirits and angels can be transported from one place to another, and from one planet to another, even to planets on the edge of the universe. The same thing can be done to a person's spirit while his body remains where it is. It has happened to me also, for I have been allowed in the Lord's Divine mercy to mix with spirits as a spirit, while at the same time mixing with

people on earth as a person on earth. Regarding intervals of space and distances between places, and movements from one to another in heaven, that they are appearances which are products of changes of state undergone by the interiors, see 5605. The person who thinks on a sensory level does not see how anyone's spirit can be transported in that way, for he dwells within space and time and measures his movements from one place to another according to them.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 1632.

I have spoken to angels about representatives, suggesting that the vegetable kingdom on earth included nothing that was not in some way representative of the Lord's kingdom. They replied that everything beautiful and glorious in the vegetable kingdom has its origin in the Lord by way of heaven; and that when celestial and spiritual influences from the Lord enter nature, such things are really created, and that this is the origin of the vegetative soul or life. Consequently they are representative.

Arcana Coelestia (Elliott) 2999.

What is more, nothing ever exists in the created world that does not have a correspondence with things in the spiritual world, and so that does not represent in its own way something in the Lord's kingdom. It is from there that all things come into being and are kept in being. If man knew that this is how these things stand he would never attribute everything to natural forces as he is accustomed to do.