

Introduction

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward God, and the Word was God.
The same was in the beginning toward God.
All were made through Him; and without Him not one was made that was made.
In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.
(John 1:1-4)*

In Logopraxis, we seek to honour the potential for awakening to spiritual life through the Word, the Logos, by placing the practice of Sacred Texts at the centre of individual and collective spiritual life. Logopraxis is an intentional spiritual approach specifically focused on the practice of the Word as the basis for self-examination and repentance and as such is a process orientated approach for engaging with Sacred Text. Engaging with the Word in this way produces insights born of direct experience, into the processes involved in the regeneration of the human mind. The material produced through each person's practice forms a rich source of nourishment which, when shared with others, builds a deeper sense of what it means to be a spiritual community. This is especially the case where there is a collective acknowledgement that the Lord is continuously revealing Himself through the shared experience of the Word working in people's lives.

The core teaching that organises the structures and activities of Logopraxis is the profound idea, expressed in John's Gospel and affirmed throughout the Heavenly Doctrines, that the Word is the Lord. This is not meant in a metaphorical sense. The teaching is that the Word in the form of Sacred Text is actually the Lord. The implication is that through engaging with the Texts of Divine Revelation as the basis for spiritual life, the conditions are created whereby an encounter with the Lord as the Word is made possible. A leading principle that we work from in Logopraxis is that the Texts of Divine Revelation have been provided to bring about the regeneration of the human mind. It is the regenerating human mind that is meant by the phrase, a "new Church" in the Heavenly Doctrines.

In simple terms, the restructure of the human mind takes place as the Lord's love flows in and organises truth, bringing light so that evils and falsities can be identified and shunned as sins against the Lord. This is what the term charity means when applied inwardly. This process sees new beliefs and affections implanted, which give a new form to the natural mind so that it is better able to receive the influx of the Lord's life. What people find when they consciously look to the Word with a view to self-examination and repentance, is that the Word becomes psychoactive.

But what does it mean for the Word to become psychoactive? What we know from the opening chapter of John's Gospel is that it is the Word that brings, "*all that have come into being into being.*" And while this is true so far as the external world is concerned, which is where material thinking places its focus, it is equally true for that which is brought into being so far as the inner world of the human spirit is concerned. It is the role the Word plays in bringing this inner world into being that is the primary focus for Logopraxis. In Logopraxis, we find that as we engage with the Word in an effort to apply its truths to the inner life of the mind, it actually unfolds within the mind in such a way that we are often given a direct

experience that illustrates the very thing the stories describe as to their inner or spiritual meaning.

The inner meaning of the Word isn't concerned with historical peoples or events or even what we take to be the external world around us. The inner level of meaning is only concerned with the inner realities of the spiritual world, this being a world made up of states of mind, and their openness and/or resistance to the inflow of Divine Life. As something psychoactive, the Word creates what it speaks of within the inner world of our mind as we take in its truths and apply them to examine the quality of the mental states that arise over the course of our day. In describing states of consciousness, which are states of affection and states of thought, the inner or spiritual meaning of the Word offers profound insights into those things that belong to our inner mental world. This world is the world of our spirit or what is referred to in the Heavenly Doctrines as the spiritual world. It is to this dimension of reality that the internal sense of the Word is directed and so needs to be applied.

In short, we need to learn to read the Word in its letter but think in terms of its inner application to the life of the mind. This is what it means to read spiritually or apart from space and time. Logopraxis asks us to read the letter but to think in terms of states of mind so that we have a way to access those things that need to be drawn out into awareness, if we are to be spiritually reborn. To think in terms of mental states, or states of affection and thought, specifically means that when we engage with the Text we do so with a view to receiving insight into the quality of what passes for our mental life. It is such insights into our mental processes that gives us the ability to respond in a way that supports our awakening to spiritual life. As soon as we remove ideas of person, place, space and time from our thought in regard to an experience or situation, or with regard to the Text itself, we are immediately brought back to how things apply at the level of our mind. This is what it means to think spiritually or to think apart from space and time from a Logopraxis perspective.

So, when we read in Heaven and Hell about awakening to life in the spiritual world after death, we know that what it describes literally is an event called death that everyone living in the world will experience at some point in their future. But if we read it again with the idea that spiritual Texts deal primarily with states of mind and not events in time, then we may see that the Text simultaneously offers us at least two distinct levels of meaning to which the term 'death' can be applied. There is a natural meaning, where the focus is on a future event in time that involves the death of the body and there is a spiritual meaning, where the focus is in the present on the state of mind that is dead to the spiritual realities that lie within the Word. As soon as we see that the future event called death is also a state of mind here and now, then we can see that the phrase "awakening from death" also has more than one level of meaning and application. The Texts of Divine Revelation are then seen as something given to support the awakening of the human mind from its state of death where spiritual realities are concerned.

Once this connection between the descriptions of an awakening in the spiritual world and an awakening to the inner world of our mental life is made, then the works of Divine Revelation in the form of Sacred Texts can be understood in a completely different way. They become eminently practical so far as their application to the life and spiritual transformation of the human mind is concerned. Through the practice of truths, the power of the Word to raise us from the death of a spiritually destitute existence can be realised, not at some point in the future, but in the here and now. Logopraxis seeks to support this end in the hope that the Lord might be known as the ALL in ALL.

The Three States of Awakening

There are three states that man passes through after death before he enters either heaven or hell. The first state is the state of his exteriors, the second state the state of his interiors, and the third his state of preparation. These states man passes through in the world of spirits. (HH 491).

Man, from infancy even to adult age, is in the world of spirits as to his spirit, because he is successively in different states, and is then in freedom, so that he can be reformed. (SE 5163)

The process of awakening to spiritual life is described in the work Heaven and Hell (HH 491-520) where it is broken down into three general states. These are:

1. “the state of exteriors” (HH 491-498)
2. “the state of interiors” (HH 499-511)
3. “the state of preparation’ or “instruction of those who come into heaven” (HH 512-520).

Spirits enter the spiritual world in various states of preparation related to the life they cultivated for themselves in the natural world. This means that there are those who can enter heaven almost immediately, whereas there are others who, in order to complete their transition, will have to be processed by passing through a series of states in the World of Spirits...

The good spirits who are to be instructed are brought by the Lord to these places when they have completed their second state in the world of spirits, and yet not all; for there are some that have been instructed in the world, and have been prepared there by the Lord for heaven, and these are taken up into heaven by another way-some immediately after death.

... some after a short stay with good spirits, where the grosser things of their thoughts and affections which they had contracted from honors and riches in the world are removed, and in that way they are purified.

Some first endure vastations, which is effected in places under the soles of the feet, called the lower earth, where some suffer severely. These are such as had confirmed themselves in falsities and yet had led good lives, for when falsities have been confirmed they inhere with much force, and until they have been dispersed, truths cannot be seen, and thus cannot be accepted (HH 513).

In general, each of the three states of awakening to spiritual life unfold as the previous state reaches completion. The transition through spiritual states is an ordered process where every subsequent state is built upon a prior state. When that which is prior has reached a point of completion, it can then support the movement forward into the new state.

Each state moves the spirit through its own series of sub-states that reorganise the psycho-spiritual structures of the mind. All spiritual processes that effect these changes and hence

reformation and regeneration, are governed and facilitated by the operation of the Word, this being the Lord.

No one can think their way into the next state, nor can anyone enter a state through sheer force of their will, any more than a person can hasten their developmental progression from childhood into adolescence or adolescence into adulthood.

We might also remind ourselves that this process of the three states of awakening is not a perfectly linear process. Each spirit's path is unique and develops in the way that is just right for them. The implication being that each spirit's experience won't always match that of another's. It is the case however that the general pattern is one common to all even though there is likely to be fluctuation back and forth between the three states and also cycling through them at different levels of depth. This is essentially the dynamic eternal unfolding of spiritual processes of the Word as the Lord within the individual and collective human minds.

The First State: Exteriors

The first state of awakening to life in the spiritual world is called “*a state of exteriors*”. It is the first state a spirit awakens to on their entry into the spiritual world and, as is suggested in the name given to it, it is largely concerned with the more external aspects of one’s inner or mental life.

This first state of man after death continues with some for days, with some for months, and with some for a year; but seldom with any one beyond a year; for a shorter or longer time with each one according to the agreement or disagreement of his interiors with his exteriors. For with everyone the exteriors and interior must make one and correspond. In the spiritual world no one is permitted to think and will in one way and speak and act in another. Everyone there must be an image of his own affection or his own love, and therefore such as he is inwardly such he must be outwardly;

and for this reason a spirit's exteriors are first disclosed and reduced to order that they may serve the interiors as a corresponding plane. (HH 498)

Removal of Exteriorly Held Images of the Self

The main function involved in this first state is to create a plane in the exterior mind that can faithfully express what is more interior. This is achieved through a process involving the stripping away of the exteriors of the spirit and then reforming them so that they are responsive to interiors (HH 498). This process of stripping and ordering is necessary...

For man is accustomed from childhood to maintain a semblance of friendship, benevolence, and sincerity, and to conceal the thoughts of his own will, thereby living from habit a moral and civil life in externals, whatever he may be internally. As a result of this habit man scarcely knows what his interiors are, and gives little thought to them. (HH 492)

A spirit’s introduction to the spiritual world involves coming to terms with a few home truths concerning their sense of self and what the quality of the “*thoughts of [their] own will*” actually are. This process involves the removal of any self-deceptive images a spirit carries of themselves and the false thinking that supports this. As we can see in HH 498 the length of time (reflective of states) a newly arrived spirit undergoes of being processed in the world of spirits, is related to the depth of attachment they have to these false images they carry of themselves. This is described as a difficult and even a painful experience. It needs to be remembered that it is a spiritual law that exteriors must match interiors and that it is not permitted for a spirit to have an exterior that doesn’t align with their interiors.

For Logopraxis practitioners, the awakening to the spiritual or interior life of the mind through the practice of the Word, produces the same experience described here of having the exterior self-image one carries, exposed for what it is. When we begin to seek to live by truths from the Word through a practice of self-examination and repentance, our sense

of self starts to experience varying degrees of disruption. The process involves coming to see that we are not in fact who we thought we were. This is often a painful experience and because of this there exists a strong cultural tendency to avoid the kind of introspective work required for developing a spiritual life.

Logopraxis looks to support its members so that they can engage in spiritual work but it doesn't look to offer ways to help people escape from spiritual struggles or avoid passing through genuine spiritual processes. The core teaching in Logopraxis, that the Word is the Lord, applies here. If we are looking to the Lord as the Word to direct and guide our work, then it follows that no matter how difficult things may appear in the present, He has it all in hand and is able to carry us through. The Lord alone sees what the eternal ends for every life are. He alone as the Word, is the only one able to manage the incredible level of complexity involved in the regeneration of the individual and collective human mind.

A community that supports its members to engage in genuine spiritual struggles, is what we find described in the first phase of awakening to spiritual life. Upon awakening, a newly arrived spirit must be told that they have died and that they are actually a spirit. This is because their life upon awakening, at least initially, reflects their life in the world. There is hardly any perceptible difference seen in that new spirits after entering the spiritual world tend to forget that they have died and believe that they are still living in the world.

The first state of man after death resembles his state in the world, for he is then likewise in externals, having a like face, like speech, and a like disposition, thus a like moral and civil life; and in consequence he is made aware that he is not still in the world only by giving attention to what he encounters, and from his having been told by the angels when he was resuscitated that he had become a spirit (n.450). Thus is one life continued into the other, and death is merely transition. (HH 493)

While this “forgetfulness” may seem remarkable, it is not too dissimilar to our own experience of the process of awakening to spiritual life through the practice of the Word. This process not only continues over the duration of our whole life here but in fact we are never fully awake in this world or the next. We are, and will, perpetually, be awakening to the further wonders of spiritual life to eternity. At this level of natural life, we frequently forget that we are spirits in a physical body. Despite being constantly reminded by the Word of the nature of spiritual life, we often find ourselves being pulled into the sensual appearances of corporeal life where we forget that “real” life is found in what is spiritual and not in the natural world of appearances presenting to our senses.

The reality of this is acknowledged in Logopraxis through the provision of a structure that acts as a continual reminder to keep turning back to the Word as the anchor for our life. In this way we are constantly reminded that the core focus for the spiritual life is the inner life of the mind and that we receive our life from the Lord through the practice of the Word. It is this that brings us into a spiritually productive relationship with our outer sensual and corporeal life. The practice of truths from the Word opens up moments of insight because the focus is on “*giving attention to what is encountered*” HH 493. It is through being willing to see life from what the Word offers us to work with, that awakens

our spiritual senses. Through the practice of the Word, we are reminded of what it teaches as to the true nature of spiritual life.

The Reworking of Relational Ties

Another aspect of the “*state of exteriors*” in the spiritual world is contact with friends and relatives who have died, including any marriage partners the spirit was with in the world. Spirits are reunited with spouses so that their mutual state of compatibility can be processed. The basis of their compatibility rests on whether they were initiated into “...*a truly conjugal love, which is a conjunction of minds by heavenly love*” (HH 494) while in the world. If this didn’t occur, couples can stay together until they feel the need to part and go their separate ways. Of some couples it is said that they even break out into open hostility towards each other.

Affectional bonds play a significant role in our sense of identity and so are a major focus in the first state of awakening, the state of exteriors. Again, this stage of the awakening process is about having the exterior mind undergo a reorganisation so that it forms a receptive plane for more interior aspects that make up a spirit’s life. As we were reminded earlier, it is a spiritual law that a spirit’s exterior and interior mind be congruent, so that what is expressed exteriorly faithfully corresponds to the interior state of mind.

The processing of affectional bonds in the spiritual or inner world of the mind, often presents as a significant area for inner work in Logopraxis. This is especially the case as we are continually having spiritual principles integrated and becoming active into our sense of what constitutes a spiritual life.

What we see in Logopraxis, is a tendency for practitioners to focus on issues presenting in their relationships with others. For this to be a rich source of material for spiritual work, the focus needs to shift from the other person or persons in the relationship to the actual states of mind that the relationship grounds within one’s own inner mental landscape.

So Logopraxis redefines how we hold the situations and circumstances of our outer life, through offering a perspective that places all that happens into a spiritual frame. The situations, circumstances, and relationships of outer life then become a catalyst for spiritual work as we attend to what arises within our inner mental life whilst interacting with the things of outer life. Working from the Word allows us to see how the outer and inner aspects of life stand in relation to one another.

We learn through the practice of the Word that it is our own states of mind where our attention needs to be and that the things of our outer life merely offer a way through which we can come to see the inner attachments, attitudes, and beliefs we hold or are even wedded to. Working through the relationships we have formed in our outer life with others such as spouses, family, relatives, friends and work colleagues, etc is all part of the process of awakening to spiritual life.

When in a state of exteriors, outer things tend to dominate interior things in such a way that the quality of interior things is hidden from our awareness. However, when we allow truths from the Word to bring light on what’s arising within our inner mental landscape, a shift occurs in how we view what life offers us. We begin to see that the things of the outer life are not the cause of our inner responses but merely ground interior mental

states. We then can be made aware of the quality of our affections and thoughts and by extension our spiritual associations. Learning to apply truths more inwardly, reduces the tendency to project the cause for how we are being affected interiorly onto the situations, circumstances and/or people in the external world. We are then able to work on our responses. This being the only area where real change is possible. A crucial factor in being present to the spiritual work being offered, lies in accepting that our states of mind and thereby our quality of life reflect the quality of the affections and beliefs we are attached to. It is our attachment to these inner things that forms our identity and impacts on the quality of our sense of self and on whether it is grounded in a genuine love for what is spiritual and of the Lord.

Working with Spiritual 'Friends'

The state of man's spirit that immediately follows his life in the world being such, he is then recognized by his friends and by those he had known in the world; for this is something that spirits perceive not only from one's face and speech but also from the sphere of his life when they draw near. (HH 494)

Because the exterior affections and memory of newly arrived spirits is still active, they can recognise and hence connect with those they knew as friends in the world but who, like them, have passed into the spiritual world. We are told that these friends take on the function of addressing the spirit's curiosity about heaven and hell, what each is like and where they are located. They take the newly arrived spirit to various places and introduce them into various companies of other spirits and instruct them as to the state of eternal life. This process causes the newly arrived spirit to reflect on the beliefs they had held about such things while in the world.

These friends, when seen as something related to the experience of awakening to spiritual life through the practice of the Word, can be thought of as those ideas about the spiritual matters that we relate to and have come to trust and rely on. From our first contact with the spiritual teachings found in the Word, these "*friends*", some old and some new, are a vital support to being led deeper into the practice of truths and our exploration of what the Word teaches regarding the interior life.

... their friends tell them about the conditions of eternal life, and take them about to various places and into various companies, and sometimes into cities, and into gardens and parks, showing them chiefly such magnificent things as delight the externals in which they are. They are then brought in turn into those notions about the state of their soul after death, and about heaven and hell, that they had entertained in the life of the body,

.... Nearly all are anxious to know whether they will get to heaven (HH 495).

We need to be able to recognise that these "*friends*" assist us to explore "*places*" and "*companies*" and "*cities*" and "*gardens*" that belong to the inner world of the mind, this being the spiritual world. These "*friends*" or concepts may be somewhat sensually or naturally orientated, or they may be of a purely historical or persuasive faith. They may be drawn from other spiritual traditions both traditional and contemporary. They may

even be opposed to the deeper perspective the Word offers. Whatever they are or whatever their quality, they remain an important starting point from which we can be led into a more genuine sense of what living a spiritual life entails.

One aspect of being in a state of exteriors is that newcomers to the spiritual world believe that entry into heaven is based on a person's outer conduct. The strength of their attachment to this idea means that it is difficult to break. This is particularly the case for those who believe that because they have lived upright moral and civic lives in the world they qualify for entry to heaven. They fail to reflect on the fact that everything done in outer life by the good, can also be done by the evil, so that if the outer actions or speech are viewed alone, one is unable to draw any distinction (HH 495) between the good and the evil. There is, as yet, a lack of understanding that it is the quality of a spirit's interior life that makes the difference and not their outer behaviour. A spirit's true nature always comes back to the quality of the affections and thoughts they live from and to what degree these are centred in a love for what is genuinely spiritual or not.

Still less is it known that outward acts are such as the intentions and thoughts are, and the love and faith in these from which they spring. And even when taught they fail to comprehend that thinking and willing are of any avail, but only speaking and acting. (HH 495).

When a spirit comes to see what's actually involved in a heavenly life, they then have what's needed to be able to draw a comparison between this and what they thought in the world. For those who thought that entry to heaven was based on outer behaviour and so hadn't paid a lot of attention to their intentions and thoughts...

. . . they feel indignant at their total ignorance of such things, and at the ignorance of the church also (HH 495).

The feelings of “*indignation*” and the concern about making “*it into heaven*” also often reflects states that are experienced in Logopraxis work. Through the practice of the Word, we start to understand the disparity that exists between what we project as our self-image to the world and what goes unexpressed at the level of our intentions (affections) and thoughts. As we come to examine our inner mental life we begin to see, sometimes for the first time, the true quality of the hellish proprium. In the struggle to acknowledge this, any confidence held in what formed our historical faith starts to be called into question as new insights based on the actual practice of truths from the Word become established. This is often accompanied with a sense of lost years or even, a wasted life. There is the perplexing question of why, given its essential importance, there wasn't this emphasis on the inner application of the Word to the life of the mind. What is clear is that the insights that arise from a more interior life focus can present a challenge. This challenge occurs when we look to reconcile the understanding we have inherited from others, which is typically called a historical faith, with the new insights gained through the direct experience that arises from the practice of truths from the Word.

We see that the spirit's friends also provide instruction regarding what heaven and hell are. That what is experienced as a heaven or hell reflects the quality of a spirit's inner state of life, that is, the affections and thoughts that make up the life of the mind. Essentially the inner state of life is projected out to form a spirit's experience of an

outer world. The instruction provided emphasises the importance and therefore the impact, the interior life has on the state or quality of life a spirit comes into upon awakening in the spiritual world. The instruction provides the basis for new ways of thinking about heaven and hell. It is given to assist the movement of thoughts away from the natural idea that heaven and hell are places people go to after they die, towards the idea that the experience of heaven or hell is directly tied to the quality of the thoughts and affections a spirit habitually lives from and finds delight in. This leads to the dawning realisation that it is actually the quality of our interior life that matters. Depending on what a spirit focused on and so cultivated as their life in the world, there is the potential for states of significant disruption as they grapple with whether they will make it into heaven or not.

Similar states of disruption arise for those involved in Logopraxis work. They arise from the fact that once the inner life begins to be emphasised, any reliance we have on outer conduct as the basis for getting into heaven begins to be challenged. This could include things like religiously orientated activities, or a sense of security found in belonging to a particular religious group, or subscribing to a specific form of doctrinal understanding. The process of awakening brings us to see that a historical faith where the emphasis for “spiritual” life is focussed on engaging in rituals, or “good/moral behaviour” or in belonging to a church organisation, doesn’t constitute a saving faith. As this realisation dawns, so we also come to see that it is the state of the church within, the inner life of our thoughts and affections, that really matters. The following quote is telling in this regard...

Most of them [new comers] believe that they will [get into heaven], because of their having lived in the world a moral and civil life, never considering that the bad and the good live a like life outwardly, alike doing good to others, attending public worship, hearing sermons, and praying;...And [so they are] wholly ignorant that external deeds and external acts of worship are of no avail, but only the internals from which the externals proceed...There is hardly one out of thousands who knows what internals are, and that it is in them that man must find heaven and the church. (HH 495)

Just as the spirits are instructed upon arriving in the spiritual world, so we also through the practice of truths from the Word, come to experience heaven and hell as states or exterior projections that mirror the interior quality of the state of the mind that rules in our life. Understood in this way, we see that what we live in mentally, so far as its heavenly or hellish quality is concerned, isn’t something limited to some “other world” off in the future somewhere. Instead, through reflection, we see that it is an ever-present reality to be accessed in the present moment. Once it is understood that heaven and hell are the product of internal states of mind and are not places, the importance of needing to work on the inner life whilst living in this world, becomes all the more apparent.

Honouring Spiritual Freedom

Despite the natural, sensual and historical nature that “*friends*” can often embody, care must be exercised to honour them wherever we find them, whether that’s within ourselves or within others engaged in inner work. It is these ‘*friends*’ that serve to bring us into a state where we are ready to accept new ideas from the Word and this process cannot be rushed or circumvented.

It takes a certain level of trust to accept that challenging states that arise in awakening to spiritual life are a necessary part of the process. The temptation to somehow make things easier for ourselves or others is ever present. In Logopraxis work there is always the potential for discomfort and disruption. It is never easy to be a witness to states of suffering and it is only natural to want to alleviate them, whether it be our own or others. But in Logopraxis our trust must be in the Word's ability to guide and direct us. This is only possible from having the experience of engaging with the Word as the Lord Himself and accepting that the states that arise as a result, are under His Providence and therefore must be a necessary part of the process.

Interventions that seek to try to 'correct' the thinking or beliefs that are held can result in making things even more difficult. Placing our own judgement and agendas on what ideas should or shouldn't be introduced, risks offending those "*friends*" that are relied on and who, at this stage of the process, may well constitute the practitioner's greatest ally. Everyone engaged in inner work needs to be left in freedom to navigate whatever states of mind the Word is bringing into their awareness as a result of their practice. We constantly need to remind ourselves that the best support we can give to spiritual processes, whether it be our own or others, is to maintain our connection with our work with the Word and to keep redirecting the attention back to what the Word is offering us and others to work with.

The processes involved in reorganising the exterior mind so that it can form a plane into which interior things can be held, can be difficult at times. The spiritual life is one in which we are empowered through the practice of the Word to accept that the regeneration process comes with its challenges. The severing of attachments to the exterior sense of self that has the loves of self and the world at its root, is not achievable without suffering and a sense of loss. However, through being willing to enter into the processes of awakening consciously and as we look to practise what the Word offers us to work with, we come to see that the Word can be relied upon to carry us through whatever states arise for us.

We are reminded that through all of this, it is the Lord who fights for us, to provide us with a new sense of self grounded in higher heavenly loves. When we act from truths from the Word, we act from the Lord and Love itself, for truth is the very form love takes to inspire and motivate us to live a spiritual life. In a very real sense, we see that all motivation to engage with truths is from the Lord. That He alone is the doer that gives us the ability to act as if of ourselves. As we experience truths from the Word supporting us in these processes, we come to see firsthand that the Word is indeed the Lord and that He is perpetually working towards the best possible end for the life of all, such is the nature of the Lord's love.

Preparation and Movement into the Second State of Awakening

The primary work in spiritual life is centred on inner realities that have to do with human mind and its thoughts and affections. Attending to the life of the mind is the "core stuff" of Logopraxis work, everything else is secondary. This statement from the work Heaven and Hell provides a clear statement regarding the status of the exterior aspects of a religious life so far as a person's salvation is concerned...

"outward behaviour and outward worship accomplish nothing whatever..." (HH 495)

As we awaken to spiritual life, this realisation can come as a real shock. This is especially so if we have placed a lot of emphasis on outer religious activity as something essential for a spiritual life. This phase of the process of awakening, that of “*a state of exteriors*”, is designed to place the things that make up our outer sensual and corporeal life and the exterior images and concepts we have formed from them, into their proper perspective in relation to what is more internal.

We now arrive at a point in the awakening process that corresponds to the experience in the spiritual world when good spirits examine the new arrivals to determine their nature. Good spirits are those that do the examining in order bring about a state of self-awareness. They do this through the removal of any deceptive reliance on merit that is associated with exterior moral and civil behavior or external religious practices.

Such, however, are explored by good spirits to discover what they are, and this in various ways; since in this the first state the evil equally with the good utter truths and do good acts (HH 496).

We are told that evil and good spirits can be distinguished from each other by what they attend to in conversation. Their nature is also evident in that they consistently turn toward certain regions and, when left to themselves, they follow paths that lead to them. This orientation reveals where their love lies and hence its quality.

... that the evil give eager attention to whatever is said about external things, and but little attention to what is said about internal things, which are the truths and goods of the church and of heaven. These they listen to, but not with attention and joy (HH 496).

Once we begin consciously engaging in the life that Logopraxis asks of us, we find that our work is to take truths from the Word and use these in the process of self-reflection to examine the quality of our mental life, with a view to shunning evils as sins against the Word and a life of repentance. The good spirits that examine those in the spiritual world represent the process by which truths of Word within the human mind actively examine our thoughts and affections, as we make an effort to engage with them for this very purpose. It is these truths being worked into our lives that give us the ability to reflect on more interior concerns that belong to the life our mind. It is in this way that...

The Lord brings us out of that hellish freedom that is really slavery and into the heavenly freedom that is truly, inherently free. (DP 145)

The core work of this state of exteriors, involves the struggle to see that it is a focus on the inner life and not the outer that is primary in living the spiritual life. The level of difficulty in coming to appreciate this can't be underestimated as the following quote shows...

And even when taught they fail to comprehend that thinking and willing are of any importance, but only speaking and acting. (HH 495).