

## The Third State: The State of Instruction (HH 512-520)

As we have seen, the initial stages of spiritual awakening involve two states: the state of exteriors and the state of interiors. These first two general states serve the purpose of familiarising spirits with their inner and outer levels of consciousness. The intention behind this is to encourage them to contemplate their thoughts and affections, allowing them to evaluate the quality of their loves and subsequently examine the basis from which they think and act.

Dispositions towards evils are gradually exposed through a process of stripping back inner states of self-denial and concealment. As a result, there comes a realisation and acceptance that these states, which are associated with the hellish proprium, are exactly as the Word describes them. It also becomes clear that these states, being hellish in nature, cannot be improved, converted into good, or reformed. This acceptance has a profound effect on the spirits involved, leading to a decreased motivation to maintain false appearances that mask their true nature.

Consequently, these spirits or spiritual states proceed unhindered towards their destined place in hell, residing on the outskirts of the mind. They willingly embrace and descend into a life that reflects the core essence of their evil and falsehood. Thus, for those states or spirits that can't be elevated into the life of heaven, this progression constitutes both the second and third stage of awakening.

*The third state of man after death, that is, of his spirit, is a state of instruction. This state is for those who come into heaven and become angels. It is not for those who come into hell, because such are incapable of being taught, and therefore their second state is also their third, ending in this, that they are wholly turned to their own love, thus to that infernal society which is in a like love. (HH 512)*

On the other hand, the good spirits, which can also be thought of as states of consciousness, are those that acknowledge the Word as the Lord and recognise Him as the source of all goodness and truth. They understand that salvation from the hellish states, or the negative aspects belonging to the proprium, can only be attained through the Word. These spirits, or states of mind, are receptive of goods and truths from the Word and as such, are marked by an openness that allows them to receive and integrate specific teachings and insights from it. This receptiveness serves to enrich and deepen the expression of goodness through uses that flow in constantly from the Lord as the Word.

So, the function of the first and second states of spiritual awakening is to equip spirits with the self-knowledge about what the nature of hell and heaven are in relation to their own states of life and of the Divinity of the Word as the Lord Himself.

*... no one can so act until he has been taught, for example, that there is a God, that there is a heaven and a hell, that there is a life after death, that God ought to be loved above all things, and the neighbour as oneself, and that the things in the Word ought to be believed because the Word is Divine. Without a knowledge and acknowledgment of these things man is unable to think spiritually (HH 512)*

These foundational knowledges enable the examination and then removal of incompatible states of mind and prepares them for entrance into the third state whereby they are ready to receive the necessary instruction on how to live a heavenly life.

*For one can be prepared for heaven only by means of knowledges of good and truth, that is, only by means of instruction, since one can know what spiritual good and truth are, and what evil and falsity are, which are their opposites, only by being taught. (HH 512)*

## **Instruction Is From Heaven, Not From The World**

*... spiritual good and truth are learned, not from the world but from heaven. They can be learned from the Word and from the doctrine of the Church that is drawn from the Word, and yet unless man in respect of his interiors which belong to his mind is in heaven, spiritual good and truth cannot flow into his life; and man is then in heaven when he both acknowledges the Divine and acts justly and honestly for the reason that he ought so to act because it is commanded in the Word. (HH 512)*

This third state of awakening involves gaining a direct experiential understanding of what constitutes spiritual good and truth, as well as what stands in opposition to them. It goes beyond simply acquiring information about the nature of good and truth from the teachings of the Word. Instead, it entails a process of learning and observing how these principles manifest in one's own states of consciousness and daily life. In the context of Logopraxis, this is why practitioners are encouraged to formulate tasks. By carefully observing and listening, these tasks serve as a focal point for exploration, shedding light on the truth or principle that has been chosen and revealing what forces or influences work against it.

For a spirit can only receive what is of heaven to the degree that heaven is formed within the deeper levels of their mind, "*and man is then in heaven when he both acknowledges the Divine and acts justly and honestly for the reason that he ought so to act because it is commanded in the Word.*" This emphasizes the importance of leading a life that acknowledges the Word through practicing self-examination and repentance in accordance with its teachings. This is the only way to orientate a person's deeper nature towards heaven.

This practice not only builds a desire within for the heavenly life, but also enables us to receive the necessary tools and resources for it. Without such a desire, it's impossible to reach this third state of instruction about heavenly life, not because we're shut out, but because we lack the desire or motivation for it. By practicing truths from the Word with a focus on self-examination and repentance, we develop a conviction that the spiritual life is just as the Word describes it. This conviction enables us to trust in the Word and that it is Divine, that it is the Lord Himself present with us.

*Without a knowledge and acknowledgment of these things man is unable to think spiritually; and if he has no thought about them he does not will them; for what a man does not know he cannot think, and what he does not think he cannot will. (HH 512)*

While spiritual principles are initially learnt externally and stored in one's memory, their true integration happens through practice. By experiencing these principles in action within one's

own life, what was once merely memory knowledge evolves into a deep conviction of the heart. This process of transferring knowledge from memory to a deeper level occurs when we seek guidance from the Lord and strive to live a spiritual life with integrity, based on our understanding of the Word. This process of having the internal level of our mind formed into the pattern of heaven is described as follows....

*So it is that when man wills these things then heaven flows into his life, that is, the Lord through heaven into the life of man; for the Lord flows into the will and through the will into the thought, and through both into the life, for the whole life of man is from these. (HH 512)*

*This is living justly and honestly for the sake of the Divine, and not for the sake of self and the world, as ends. (HH 512)*

## Instruction Is Relevant To One's Life

*Instruction in the heavens differs from instruction on earth in that cognitions are not committed to memory, but to life; for the memory of spirits is in their life, for they receive and imbibe everything that is in harmony with their life, and do not receive, still less imbibe, what is not in harmony with it. (HH 517)*

The understandings of spiritual good and truth that spirits acquire in this third state of instruction are not mere intellectual knowledges but are integrated into the core of each spirit's life or will, making one with the form of heaven. This integration serves as guidance for living a heavenly life. Since a spirit's love is their essence and vitality, this instruction is rooted in the realm of living experience rather than mere memory. The teaching in this third state therefore is executed with careful consideration and is tailored to the spirit's background and way of life. Angels, who are in the delight of offering guidance to those preparing for their entry into the heavenly life, are specifically matched to the newcomers' needs.

*Instruction is given by the angels of many societies, ... The places of instruction are ... various, arranged and distinguished according to the kinds and varieties of heavenly goods, that all and each may be instructed there according to their disposition and faculty of reception. (HH 513)*

*All who are in places of instruction dwell separately from one another; for individuals are connected as to their interiors with that society of heaven into which they are about to come (HH 514)*

This tailoring of teacher and learner is enlarged on further for...

*But all are not instructed in the same way, nor by the same societies of heaven. Those who have been brought up from childhood in heaven... receive instruction from the angels of the interior heavens.*

*Those who have died in adult age receive instruction mainly from angels of the lowest heaven...*

*But the Mohammedans receive instruction from angels who had been previously in the same religion and had been converted to Christianity.*

*The heathen, too, are taught by their angels. (HH 515)*

So, each spirit is guided in a gentle and unique manner by the angels, taking into account their distinct form of love and how this is to find expression within the heavenly community they are gradually led into. And even this process of being guided into their society varies, as spirits enter the spiritual world in different states of readiness. There are states of mind that can enter heaven almost immediately, while for others there are things which need removing...

*...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 those who have been instructed in the world, have been prepared there by the Lord for heaven, and also 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 honours and riches in the world, are removed, and in that way they are purified. Some first are vastated, 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 received. (HH 513)*

As we have seen previously, the first two states of a spiritual awakening primarily involve gaining awareness of our self-images. This is achieved through deep reflection using truths from the Word, allowing individuals to better comprehend their own mental states. When there is a strong attachment to a false principle that opposes heavenly life, the only way to loosen it may be through a process of “vastation.” False principles are intertwined with everyone’s sense of self, and their destructive potential only becomes evident when a self-image is shattered through experiences of being “vastated.” This, in turn, creates a humble and receptive attitude towards the guidance that is specific to the third state of instruction.

In our practice of the Word in Logopraxis, we allow ourselves to undergo these same processes that prepare spirits for life in the spiritual world, as the Word provides us with an experiential understanding of the processes that govern spiritual life in the here and now. Just as each spirit’s instruction is uniquely tailored to their core love and way of life, so too are the insights that emerge from practicing or living by spiritual principles, unique to each practitioner. Each of us is given doctrine from the Word that is individualised to our life and specific to the purposes for which our minds are being formed, so that we may serve a unique use for the common good of all in the Lord’s kingdom.

## **Each Has A Unique Use That Serves The Common Good**

*The Lord provides that everyone should love the uses suited to his peculiar disposition and that love is exalted by the hope of becoming an angel.... All uses of heaven have reference to the common use which is for the Lord’s kingdom, ... since all particular and individual uses are excellent in proportion as they relate more nearly and more fully to that common use. (HH 517)*

The common use in heaven is the expression of the common good or common love and this is the Lord's love which is a love for the salvation of what is human, the human form being the union of good and truth in life.

*... for Being (Esse) itself, or Jehovah, is nothing else than mercy, which is the manifestation of love towards the whole human race. (Arcana Coelestia 2253)*

The closing of the second state of awakening, the state of interior concerns, brings about two important realisations. The first is the awareness that one's inner nature determines the quality of one's external actions and speech. The second, and most significant realisation, is that acknowledging the Lord involves acting on what one understands to be true from the Word. This acknowledgement is essential for receiving the genuine insights and states of enlightenment that are necessary as the spirit moves into the third state, the state of instruction.

From a Logopraxis perspective, this parallels with the essential need to compel oneself to engage in the disciplines of self-examination and repentance, so that the insights and states of enlightenment needed to support inner work may arise. But it can't be said that such states are a product of self-compulsion. In Logopraxis we have the aphorism that, "your effort achieves nothing but without effort nothing is achieved", meaning that we work from an 'as of self' effort whilst striving to be in the acknowledgement that all work is the Lord's.

Through practicing the Word, self-awareness is heightened, enabling the identification of those states of mind that hinder the reception of the Lord's goods and truths, thus allowing these obstructive states to begin moving to the peripheries of our mind. This process of purification leads to an increased ability for those in a community of spiritual practice to harmonise their efforts in support of the common good. In this way the unique uses of the different individuals in such a community combine to form a shared or '*common use*' that unites the members into a body that is focused on a unique work.

This common good or love is the Lord's love for the salvation of what is human. And in this third state of awakening, the state of instruction, there is a notable change in perspective where this love comes forward into the centre of a spirit's life. This shift involves moving away from an inward focus for the sake of one's own regeneration, which is characteristic of the initial states of exteriors and interiors. The emphasis now lies on serving the spiritual well-being of others and working towards the greater purpose, aligned with the Lord's love for the salvation of the human race. The nature of the guidance received during the state of instruction is determined by this shift towards focusing on use for others, for the society that the spirit lives in and for the general whole of the Lord's kingdom. In Logopraxis, this can translate to working for others in one's Life Group, for the whole of the Logopraxis community, for all those we have contact with in our life and for the general whole of the Lord's kingdom. This infilling and expansion of common good or use is the primary focus of the third state of instruction.

Further to the role of use regarding instruction in the third state of awakening we read...

*For spirits are affections and are therefore in a human form that is similar to their affections. Being such, they are constantly inspired with the affection of truth with regard to the uses of life; ... with everyone the affection of truth is so conjoined with the affection of use that they*

*act as one; and thereby truth is so implanted in use that the truths they learn to know are truths of use. In this way are angelic spirits instructed and prepared for heaven. (HH 517)*

We see from this statement that a key aspect of the process of instruction is the cultivation of the “*affection of truth with regard to the uses of life.*” The transformative work that the Lord undertakes as the Word in reforming and regenerating an individual’s mind always aligns with His universal end of the salvation of the human race taken as a whole. Consequently, through the Word, the Lord inspires a deep love for use into each individual. This love of use is not something that is forced upon individuals but rather it is something that arises naturally from their own unique dispositions and abilities foreseen by the Lord. The Lord, through the Word as means, provides that “*everyone should love the uses suited to his peculiar disposition*”. As individuals begin to cultivate this love of use, through looking to the Word as the Lord in their practice, they are filled with an expanded sense of purpose and meaning. They are driven by the “*hope of becoming an angel*”, of using the talents and abilities they have been gifted with in support of the spiritual well-being of others and so more effectively contributing to the greater good, the “*common use*”.

All of the “*particular and individual uses*” that individuals engage in within a spiritual society or community are valued to the extent to which they are aligned with the common use of regenerating the human mind. In this way, even the most mundane and seemingly insignificant tasks in one’s practice of the Word can take on a deep spiritual significance when they are held within the context of the Lord’s end in view.

So, we can see that the affection of truth and its practice, and the love of use are two sides of the same coin for, “*the affection of truth is so conjoined with the affection of use that they act as one*”. They are so closely intertwined that they become one and, in this way, truth becomes implanted in use. It is through this process of aligning our own goals and aspirations with those of the Lord’s kingdom that we become instructed and prepared to engage in the spiritual life of our community more fully.

The implications of this in our Logopraxis work is that the more we make the truths of the Word the basis of our life, the more we become connected with the Word as the Lord. Through this practice, we can expect to see a growing desire to understand the Word’s truths on a deeper level of application to spiritual life. It is an understanding that empowers us to live the uses we love. And because the Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of uses it is in the performance of use in serving others that increases the sense of fulfilment and purpose. Thus, it is in consciously working for the greater common good, that the Lord and His kingdom is ultimately served. And it is the practice of the Word as the Lord that is the key to unlocking our true spiritual potential as human beings.

## **The Practice Of The Word As The Lord**

*... the acknowledgment of the Lord, faith in Him, and love to Him, are the way to heaven; and the Word is what teaches the way: whence it is, that without the Lord, by means of the Word, there is no salvation. (Last Judgement 55)*

Entrance to heaven is only possible through the Word for to experience the Word working in our life is to experience the Lord working in our life. The Word, doctrine drawn from the Word, and the Lord are all one and the same thing. This is the realisation of the experiential instruction that is received as the third state of awakening to spiritual life.

*...there is no doctrinal thing, nor the smallest part of one, that is not from the Lord, because the Lord is doctrine itself. Hence it is that the Lord is called the "Word," because the "Word" is doctrine (AC 3364)*

The Word applied to life through the practice of spiritual principles informs the specific form of use that is needed in any given situation. This is the essence of doctrine drawn from the Word and it serves as the foundation for spiritual instruction.

*All the instruction... (in preparing a spirit for heaven) is done from the doctrine drawn from the Word, and not from the Word apart from doctrine. (HH 516)*

*Sound doctrine drawn from the Word must absolutely shine before people and show them the way to go; those teachings are provided by the internal sense, and the person who is acquainted with them has the internal sense of the Word. (AC 10276{8})*

The doctrine referred to here pertains to the internal sense of the Word and what it teaches, which is specifically adapted to support the regeneration of the human mind so that it might come into a heavenly life. To receive this doctrine from the Word transforms us because the Word and the doctrine drawn from it, through the practice of truths, is the Lord. The Lord is experienced as the uses that flow from Him when the life of this practice is active, both directly so far as our own engagement is concerned or indirectly through others who are engaged in the inner practice of the Word with a focus on the spiritual wellbeing of others. But whether directly or indirectly, in every case, uses are expressions of that 'common use' or common good which is the Lord's love and wisdom toward the human race.

*...by "that they may serve Me" is signified elevation into heaven in order to perform uses therefrom. That "to serve the Lord" denotes to perform uses, is because true worship consists in the performance of uses, thus in the exercises of charity... The angels in heaven have all happiness from uses, and according to uses, so that to them uses are heaven. (AC 7038)*

As we saw earlier, doctrine derived from the Word is not merely a set of memorisable statements such as we find in books. Certainly, these serve as a starting point but only as far as they open the mind to more interior things. The uptake of doctrine that relates to the third state of awakening is the understanding that arises through the application of truths to life, "cognitions are not committed to memory, but to life" (HH 517). It is what is learnt experientially as we give truths authority in our life to examine our minds. This is what it means to live from the Word. To give the Word authority in our life means to engage with it as the basis for examining the quality of our mental activity. Without this, regeneration is simply not possible.

*For the Word in the sense of the letter is not understood apart from doctrine, and doctrine is not seen without a life in accordance with it. That is because a life in accordance with doctrine drawn from the Word opens the spiritual mind, and light from heaven flows into the mind, enlightening it and giving it the ability to see. The reality of this is not known by one*

*who does not live according to the truths of doctrine they are acquainted with. (Apocalypse Revealed 320)*

## Spiritual Literacy Skills

Working to give the Word authority in our life through a conscious effort to apply its spiritual principles to the life of our mind, leads to the development of what, in Logopraxis work, are called “*spiritual literacy skills*”. Spiritual literacy involves using truths from the Word as a basis for examining the quality of the thoughts and affections that make up our state of mind. By engaging in this practice, the Word provides a way of thinking where what is exterior becomes reframed as spiritual states or states of mind. This is the true meaning of repentance or “*metaonia*’ that was discussed in the previous section in the state of interiors and refers to the “*new mind*” that the Word offers us.

The growth of spiritual literacy involves developing essential skills such as, being able to divide our attention, reflect on our internal chatter, and examine the motives behind our responses. With regular practise, these skills can become second nature allowing us to live more consciously from the Word. They can help us lead more meaningful lives by supporting our spiritual development and allowing us to be more aware of the Word when reflecting on our states when alone and when in contact with others. They provide the basis for developing greater insight into the nature of the proprium, opening the way to experiencing the boundless mercy of the Lord as He works to free us from it. Developing spiritual literacy also means that we are better able to draw distinctions between levels of existence and so become clearer about boundaries and what belongs where.

The ability to draw cognitive boundaries between our inner, mental world and the outer, material world is crucial for maintaining psychological balance. These cognitive boundaries help us to distinguish between our internal world of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, and the external world of people, events, and circumstances. Without these boundaries we can become overwhelmed by external influences causing confusion, anxiety, and stress. This is because without the clear distinctions between levels that the practice of the Word provides, we are prone to give power to external influences as causal. To do this is to fall into the false belief that the external conditions of life are the cause of our inner psychological states which is contrary to what the Word teaches.

*It appears to man that the objects of the world enter through his bodily or external senses, and affect the interiors; and thus that there is an entrance from the ultimate of order into what is within; but that this is a mere appearance and fallacy is manifest from the general rule that posterior things cannot flow into prior; or what is the same, lower things into higher; or what is the same, exterior things into interior; or what is still the same, the things which are of the world and of nature into those which are of heaven and of spirit; for the former are of a grosser nature, and the latter of a purer one; and those grosser things which are of the external or natural man come forth and subsist from those which are of the internal or rational man; and they cannot affect the purer things, but are affected by the purer things. (AC 3721{2})*

To be spiritually literate allows us to step back from what's presenting so that we become aware of the spiritual principles that we can employ to govern our perceptions and responses in any given situation and circumstance in our daily life. We can then make distinctions between the outer, material world manifestations and the inner world of our thoughts and feelings that constitute the life of the spirit. Again, this is the doctrine for life that the practice of the Word offers.

So, the first two states of exterior and interior concerns of a spiritual awakening occur as we are exposed to the Lord's truths. These two states of awakening guide individuals through transformative processes that enable them to develop a deeper understanding of the distinction between their interior and exterior aspects of life. Specifically, they facilitate the discernment of what pertains to the interior and exterior states of existence, which in turn reflects the distinction between the interior and exterior levels of their natural mind. It is essential to recognise that what manifests in the external realm is fundamentally rooted in its internal counterpart, serving as its underlying cause and origin. Thus, these states of awakening not only foster an individual's awareness of the interplay between the spiritual and natural aspects of their being but also offer insights into the intricate dynamics that shape their spiritual and natural minds. This is because, as we have seen, *"a life in accordance with doctrine drawn from the Word opens the spiritual mind, and light from heaven flows into the mind, enlightening it and giving it the ability to see"* (AR 320). It is the practice of truths from the Word that offer a new capacity to discern the source of our thoughts and emotions so that we can develop the ability to detach from them as something coming from us. These cognitive boundaries therefore offer us new ways to manage our reactions to external stimuli, resulting in a more stable, centred state of mind.

Being willing to let go of negative and harmful thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and embracing those that are in harmony with the Word's teachings forms the foundation for the expansion of spiritual literacy skills. As the individual becomes accustomed to the work of detaching from proprial states concerned with self, the Lord by means of the Word implants a love to serve the Lord's desire for the regeneration of all. This shift brings a change in focus in how the spiritual literacy skills are directed to support the spiritual well-being of others and the spiritual community as a whole.

*... so far as the Lord flows into the life of any one He instructs him, for so far He kindles the will with the love of knowing truths and enlightens the thought to know them; and so far as this is done, the interiors of man are opened and heaven is implanted in them and furthermore, what is Divine and heavenly flows into the honest things pertaining to moral life and into the just things pertaining to civil life with man, and makes them spiritual, since man then does these things from the Divine, since they are done for the sake of the Divine. (HH 512).*

So, what the three states of awakening show is that spiritual development involves a progressive movement from working with the Word, where the main focus is on our own personal regeneration, to a focus on the Lord's ultimate end, which is the salvation of the human race. This third state of instruction is therefore a time when individuals learn to align their lives with the Divine will and purpose. For entering into the life of heaven involves engaging in activities that promote the regeneration of the human mind, as heaven is the

Lord's kingdom, and its essence is the performance of uses that support the Lord's love for the salvation of all.

## Spiritual Community

We can see then that developing spiritual literacy skills is crucial for both our personal regeneration and our ability to support others in their process. And that the acquisition of these skills means that we are able to participate more fully in the life of a spiritual community. For everyone who seeks to live a spiritual life is in a practice of self-examination and repentance, in an effort to shun evils as sins against the Lord as the Word and while this can only ever be an individual practice, it isn't something that is done in isolation. Heaven is a kingdom of uses that are organised by the Lord in support of His desire for a heaven from the human race. He coordinates all spiritual uses into an orderly form, both individually and collectively, so that His end is achieved. Everything that is ordered to achieve this end can be said to be in the human form which is good and truth working together as one in life, in use. A spiritual community therefore is a community of interdependent functions or uses that work together in support of the regeneration of the human mind.

One way of understanding this process is that a regenerating mind is a mind that is becoming more fully human in its form. Such a mind is being inwardly formed or in-formed through the type of instruction described in the third state of awakening, which as we have seen, is instruction that is provided from the application of truths to one's life. The instillation of truths into good transforms the mind into a living expression of charity or a spiritual use. Of the angelic form of mind we read...

*...the whole angel, and especially the face, is as it were charity, the charity both plainly appearing to the view and being perceived by the mind. When this form is beheld, it is unutterable beauty that affects with charity the very inmost life of the beholder's mind. Through the beauty of this form the truths of faith are presented to view in an image, and are even perceived from it. Such forms, or such beauties, do those become in the other life who have lived in faith in the Lord, that is, in the faith of charity. All the angels are such forms, with countless variety, and of such is heaven. (AC 553)*

In Logopraxis, we seek to engage in the conscious application of truths from the Word through actively seeking to discern and think from the principles it teaches. To practice truths to shun evils is what it means to acknowledge the Divinity of the Word. For if the Word is to have authority in our life, then its acknowledgment can't just be merely theoretical but must be lived out in our actions. This acknowledgment, in the activity of shunning evils as sins through the use of its truths, serves as a testament to the life of charity and constitutes a vibrant embodiment of what it truly means to be a church.

*There are three essentials of the church, an acknowledgment of the Divine of the Lord, an acknowledgment of the holiness of the Word, and the life that is called charity. According to the life which is charity is every one's faith; from the Word comes the knowledge of what the life must be, and from the Lord are reformation and salvation. (Divine Providence 259)*

In Logopraxis we share our experience related to our engagement with the Word within our Life Group on a two-weekly cycle. When we do this with an intention to benefit the group and the Logopraxis community more generally, so as to support the Lord's purpose of universal salvation, a remarkable opportunity unfolds. It is an opportunity to witness the emergence of the collective human form or the expression of the church as that within which the Lord is made visible. This concept entails the realisation and recognition of heaven manifested on earth, where the state of heavenly existence is tangibly felt and acknowledged as a psychological state that is grounded in the natural mind's level of awareness. As such, this profound experience is firmly anchored in the developing collective awareness of the group as those present share their insights of the Word working in their lives.

In practice then, the Logopraxis approach provides a container where each member's experiences of the Word can be exchanged with others to support this possibility of becoming more of a church, both on an individual and collective level. The process of sharing our personal reflections and insights, as well as discussing how the Word has impacted our lives often leads to a deeper understanding of the Word and its transformative power. This can result in an opening of the Word, which transforms the meaning of the Text, shining a light on the spiritual processes involved in the regeneration of the human mind. In Logopraxis this is the activity of the Word as the Lord at work in our midst. It is the Divine Human made visible. It is what it means to be instructed by the Word alone and what each receives is doctrine uniquely tailored to support their spiritual life. *...truth is so implanted in use that the truths they learn to know are truths of use. (HH 5172)*

Therefore, the collective experience not only fosters the spiritual development of individuals but also nurtures the growth of the community as a whole. In this dynamic, individuals actively contribute to the collective's development while simultaneously benefiting from the support and shared wisdom of the community. As a result, a deep sense of spiritual fellowship that is centered around the lived experience of the Word as the embodiment of the Lord, emerges. So we can see, as previously discussed, that this intricate interplay and interdependence between individual contributions and the collective endeavour form the fundamental essence of spiritual community.

*...there is not the least of difference that is not disposed in most perfect order, so as to conspire most harmoniously to a common unity, and the common unity to unanimity of individuals, and thereby to the happiness of all from each, and of each from all. Each angel and each society is therefore an image of the universal heaven, and is as it were a little heaven. (AC 684)*

## **This Is The Way**

The Logopraxis approach has been built on a single principle - that the Lord is the Word. This is its common use or good and all else flows forth from that. This is its heart, and the lived life of the Word in its practitioners are like its lungs, breathing life into the rest of the body, willing each area to thrive and function in its own unique use.

Through the exchange of the life with the Word with one another, Logopraxis enables individuals to integrate their personal experiences of the Word into the community as a whole, creating a shared understanding and deeper spiritual connection. This shared understanding allows the community to support each other's spiritual growth and well-being, fostering a culture of mutual care and support. The ways in which the Word as the Lord achieves this is described in the following...

*The affection of truth that is suited to the use is insinuated by various means, most of which are unknown in the world; chiefly by representatives of uses which in the spiritual world are exhibited in a thousand ways, and with such delights and pleasures that they permeate the spirit from the interiors of his mind to the exteriors of his body, and thus affect the whole. In consequence, the spirit becomes as it were his use. Therefore, when he comes into his society, into which he is initiated by instruction, he is in his life by being in his use. From these things it can be confirmed that cognitions, which are external truths, do not bring anyone into heaven; but the life itself, which is a life of uses implanted by means of cognitions. (HH 517)*

Supported and surrounded by others in their heavenly society, which is their heavenly home, every spirit is brought into its own love, clothed with its unique understanding of the Word, and its specific use that flows forth from the marriage of those two. Each finds their place and function in that society. The more they receive truths that are integrated into their life and loved because they are the Lord, the more they come into this use. Each forgetting themselves and their individual needs, their focus is the Lord as the Word, their desire is to do His will. Each looking to see how they might draw forth what is of the Lord in one another, of how they might nurture the unique gifts and abilities in each other, so that together they might be more effective in fulfilling the Lord's purposes.

*When spirits have been prepared for heaven by instruction in the places above described ... they are clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly glowing white as if made of fine linen; and they are thus brought to the way that leads upwards towards heaven, and are delivered there to angel guards, and afterwards are received by other angels and introduced into societies and into many blessednesses there. After this, each one is led by the Lord into his own society, which is also effected by various ways, sometimes by winding paths. The ways by which they are led are not known to any angel, but are known to the Lord alone. When they come to their own society then their interiors are opened; and as these are in conformity with the interiors of the angels who are in that society they are immediately recognized and received with joy. (HH 519)*

By means of the spiritual light that the Word as the Lord offers through the practice of its truths, the church as a spiritual form, both individually and collectively, may be directed and guided in its thoughts and affections. As each member of the community is led into its unique function and use, so too is the collective led into its own unique function and use. Each little heaven, an image of the larger heaven. This is so that all who come into contact with the church might be touched by the living witness that she is to the transforming power of His love. The Lord is her very life and fires her affection for truths so that this love might be expressed in real and tangible ways: always seeking the salvation of all and always looking to show her the path that leads to heaven.

*Go ye back from the way, cause ye to turn aside from the path. Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, This is the way, go ye in it. (Isaiah 30:11,21)*

## Conclusion

*... no angel or spirit ever thinks of death; indeed they do not at all know what it is to die; wherefore, when "death" is mentioned in the Word, the angels understand by it either damnation, which is death in the spiritual sense, or the continuation of life and the resurrection. (LJ 25)*

Once we remember that the Text before us is a spiritual text and therefore must be describing our spiritual experiences, then a whole new possibility of meaning opens up for us that has practical application to the work involved in the reformation and regeneration of our life in the here and now. The descriptions of death then in the awakening series in Heaven and Hell become illustrations of the reordering and sorting out of our inner psychological life, that is, of the inner world of our feelings and thoughts. As we consciously engage with the Word, seeking to apply its truths to examine the quality of our mental life, it awakens the mind in this inner spiritual world that is the life of the spirit, and it leads us through a process:

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).

The state of exteriors can be seen then as an illustration of the stripping away of self-images to reveal the true nature of the loves that have been driving them. And the meeting of relatives and friends in the spiritual world in this first state then becomes the revisiting and reworking of concepts about spiritual life that we have been affectionally attached to and have had relationship with. We see that there is a need to examine these now in the light of what is being revealed by the Word as their interior natures are exposed.

The work done in this first state of awakening paves the way for what must unfold in the second state of interiors where things start to get sorted into two classes: those states which acknowledge the Lord as the Word and those that don't. As truths from the Word are applied in life, those that offer *damnation* because they are being ruled by the loves of the hellish proprium are identified for the states of *death* that they are and effectively cast into hell in this recognition. What then remains as a result of this sorting process is the potential to be instructed further by the Word in preparation for entering heavenly states of life, or a life of use aligned with the Lord's end.

This instruction is the third and final state and completes the process of awakening to spiritual life which culminates in a *resurrection* and *continuation of life in heaven*. It involves the elevation of truths from the memory, through their practise, so that they can be integrated into the very core of one's life. As the ability to think and live consciously from the Word starts to deepen, there is more stability experienced than there was previously in the first two states. This increased inner stability and deepening of spiritual literacy offers a foundation upon which we can become more attuned to the Lord's presence in our lives and in our interactions with others. As such there is a shift in focus away from working for the sake of one's own regeneration to working for the sake of what can be offered back to others and to the collective community through one's work with the Word. The result is a movement toward

being more consciously aligned with the Lord's universal end, the *common use*, which is the love for the salvation of all.

There is also an increased acknowledgement that the work of each brought together as a whole, forms an invaluable contribution to our ongoing learning of how to be in a spiritual community that is centred on the lived experience of the Word. The conscious effort to work to live from the Word brings a new meaning to what it means to be in a life of charity, and it also opens up the possibility of seeing what it means to be a church, both on an individual and collective level. These experiences, through our Logopraxis work, can be viewed as illustrations of the descriptions of the heavenly communities that the spirits find themselves led into in the third state of instruction.

We can see then that our conscious participation and as-of-self effort to engage with the Word as the Lord Himself is paramount to the processes that are involved in spiritual awakening. Logopraxis therefore seeks to provide a structure and spiritual practice that supports the cultivation of a deep love and reverence for the Word and to bring people together in a shared commitment to the practise of it to experience its transformative power. Through self-examination and repentance, the way is opened for the mental structures of our natural mind to be re-formed into vessels that are able to hold what is higher in our conscious awareness. The experiences that arise from this practice, when shared, becomes incredibly instructive both on an individual and collective level.

Practise is therefore essential, and nothing can substitute this - for it is our willingness to practise at each state of awakening that opens us up to receive the goods and truths we need to be carried through to the next state. No one can leapfrog a state. Each stage is linked to a state of life that arises from changes in the psycho-spiritual structures of a person's mind as they undergo states of reformation and regeneration. As was pointed out at the very outset in the introduction of this three-part paper, 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. These states, whilst presented as linear and progressive in nature, are also cyclic in our experiences of them. Our regeneration and instruction is an eternal process, one that is always moving into deeper states of seeing what it is the Word as the Lord is offering for us to see. To see what resists and what saves, to see what is dead and what offers life, to see what is hell and what is heaven. Through the seeing we are set free as we are led into an ever-deepening sense of use in His heavenly community, for the sake of His kingdom and His love for the salvation of all.

*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)*