

357. XXXIX. THE RICH AND THE POOR IN HEAVEN.

There are various opinions about reception into heaven. Some are of the opinion that the poor are received and the rich are not; some that the rich and the poor are equally received; some that the rich can be received only by giving up their wealth and becoming like the poor; and proofs are found in the Word for all of these opinions. But those who make a distinction in regard to heaven between the rich and the poor do not understand the Word. In its interiors the Word is spiritual, but in the letter it is natural; consequently those who understand the Word only in accordance with its literal sense, and not according to any spiritual sense, err in many respects, especially about the rich and the poor; for example, that it is as difficult for the rich to enter into heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle; and that it is easy for the poor because they are poor, since it is said,

Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens (Matthew 5 verse 3; Luke 6 verses 20, 21).

But those who know anything of the spiritual sense of the Word think otherwise; they know that heaven is for all who live a life of faith and love, whether rich or poor. But who are meant in the Word by "the rich" and who by "the poor" will be told in what follows. From much conversation and interaction with angels it has been granted me to know with certainty that the rich enter heaven just as easily as the poor, and that no man is shut out of heaven on account of his wealth, or received into heaven on account of his poverty. Both the rich and the poor are in heaven, and many of the rich in greater glory and happiness than the poor.

358. It should be said to begin with that a man may acquire riches and accumulate wealth as far as opportunity is given, if it is not done by craft or fraud; that he may enjoy the delicacies of food and drink if he does not place his life therein; that he may have a palatial dwelling in accord with his condition, have interaction with others in like condition, frequent places of amusement, talk about the affairs of the world, and need not go about like a devotee with a sad and sorrowful countenance and drooping head, but may be joyful and cheerful; nor need he give his goods to the poor except so far as affection leads him; in a word, he may live outwardly precisely like a man of the world; and all this will be no obstacle to his entering heaven, provided that inwardly in himself he thinks about God as he ought, and acts sincerely and justly in respect to his neighbor. For a man is such as his affection and thought are, or such as his love and faith are, and from these all his outward acts derive their life; since acting is willing, and speaking is thinking, acting being from the will, and speaking from the thought. So where it is said in the Word that man will be judged according to his deeds, and will be rewarded according to his works, it is meant that he will be judged and rewarded in accordance with his thought and affection, which are the source of his deeds, or which are in his deeds; for deeds are nothing apart from these, and are precisely such as these are.[1] All this shows that the man's external accomplishes nothing, but only his internal, which is the source of the external. For example: if a man acts honestly and refrains from fraud solely because he fears the laws and the loss of reputation and thereby of honor or gain, and if that fear did not restrain him would defraud others whenever he could; although such a man's deeds outwardly appear honest, his thought and will are fraud; and because he is inwardly dishonest and fraudulent he has hell in himself.

But he who acts honestly and refrains from fraud because it is against God and against the neighbor would have no wish to defraud another if he could; his thought and will are conscience, and he has heaven in himself. The deeds of these two appear alike in outward form, but inwardly they are wholly unlike.

[1] It is frequently said in the Word that man will be judged and will be rewarded according to his deeds and works (see number 3934).

By "deeds and works" deeds and works in their internal form are meant, not in their external form, since good works in external form are likewise done by the wicked, but in internal and external form together only by the good (see numbers 3934, 6073).

Works, like all activities, have their being and outgo [esse et existere] and their quality from the interiors of man, which pertain to his thought and will, since they proceed from these; therefore such as the interiors are such are the works (see numbers 3934, 8911, 10331).

That is, such as the interiors are in regard to love and faith (see numbers 3934, 6073, 10331, 10332).

Thus works contain love and faith, and are love and faith in effect (see number 10331).

Therefore to be judged and rewarded in accordance with deeds and works, means in accordance with love and faith (see numbers 3147, 3934, 6073, 8911, 10331, 10332).

So far as works look to self and the world they are not good, but they are good so far as they look to the Lord and the neighbor (see number 3147).

359. Since a man can live outwardly as others do, can grow rich, keep a plentiful table, dwell in an elegant house and wear fine clothing according to his condition and function, can enjoy delights and gratifications, and engage in worldly affairs for the sake of his occupation and business and for the life both of the mind and body, provided he inwardly acknowledges the Divine and wishes well to the neighbor, it is evident that to enter upon the way to heaven is not so difficult as many believe. The sole difficulty lies in being able to resist the love of self and the world, and to prevent their becoming dominant; for this is the source of all evils.[1] That this is not so difficult as is believed is meant by these words of the Lord:

Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11 verses 29, 30).

The Lord's yoke is easy and His burden light because a man is led by the Lord and not by self just to the extent that he resists the evils that flow forth from love of self and of the world; and because the Lord then resists these evils in man and removes them.

[1] All evils are from the love of self and of the world (see numbers 1307, 1308, 1321, 1594, 1691, 3413, 7255, 7376, 7488, 7490, 8318, 9335, 9348, 10038, 10742).

These are contempt of others, enmities, hatred, revenge, cruelty, deceit (see numbers 6667, 7370-7374, 9348, 10038, 10742).

Into such loves man is born, thus in them are his inherited evils (see numbers 694, 4317, 5660).

360. I have spoken with some after death who, while they lived in the world, renounced the world and gave themselves up to an almost solitary life, in order that by an abstraction of the thoughts from worldly things they might have opportunity for pious meditations, believing that thus

they might enter the way to heaven. But these in the other life are of a sad disposition; they despise others who are not like themselves; they are indignant that they do not have a happier lot than others, believing that they have merited it; they have no interest in others, and turn away from the duties of charity by which there is conjunction with heaven. They desire heaven more than others; but when they are taken up among the angels they induce anxieties that disturb the happiness of the angels; and in consequence they are sent away; and when sent away they betake themselves to desert places, where they lead a life like that which they lived in the world. [2] Man can be formed for heaven only by means of the world. In the world are the outmost effects in which everyone's affection must be terminated; for unless affection puts itself forth or flows out into acts, which is done in association with others, it is suffocated to such a degree finally that man has no longer any regard for the neighbor, but only for himself. All this makes clear that a life of charity towards the neighbor, which is doing what is just and right in every work and in every employment, is what leads to heaven, and not a life of piety apart from charity; [1] and from this it follows that only to the extent that man is engaged in the employments of life can charity be exercised and the life of charity grow; and this is impossible to the extent that man separates himself from those employments. [3] On this subject I will speak now from experience. Of those who while in the world were employed in trade and commerce and became rich through these pursuits there are many in heaven, but not so many of those who were in stations of honor and became rich through those employments; and for the reason that these latter by the gains and honors that resulted from their dispensing justice and equity, and also by the lucrative and honorable positions bestowed on them were led into loving themselves and the world, and thereby separating their thoughts and affections from heaven and turning them to themselves. For to the extent that a man loves self and the world and looks to self and the world in everything, he alienates himself from the Divine and separates himself from heaven. [1] Charity towards the neighbor is doing what is good, just, and right, in every work and every employment (numbers 8120-8122). Thus charity towards the neighbor extends to all things and each thing that a man thinks, wills, and does (see number 8124). A life of piety apart from a life of charity is of no avail, but together they are profitable for all things (see numbers 8252, 8253).

361. As to the lot of the rich in heaven, they live more splendidly than others. Some of them dwell in palaces within which everything is resplendent as if with gold and silver. They have an abundance of all things for the uses of life, but they do not in the least set their heart on these things, but only on uses. Uses are clearly seen as if they were in light, but the gold and silver are seen obscurely, and comparatively as if in shade. This is because while they were in the world they loved uses, and loved gold and silver only as means and instruments. It is the uses that are thus resplendent in heaven, the good of use like gold and the truth of use like silver. [1] Therefore their wealth in heaven is such as their uses were in the world, and such, too, are their delight and happiness. Good uses are providing oneself and one's own with the necessities of life; also desiring wealth for the sake of one's country and for the sake of one's neighbor, whom a rich man can in many ways benefit more than a poor man. These are good uses because one is able thereby to withdraw his mind from an indolent life which is harmful, since in such a life man's thoughts run to evil because of the evil inherent in him. These uses are good to the extent that they have the Divine in them, that is, to the extent that man looks to the Divine and

to heaven, and finds his good in these, and sees in wealth only a subservient good.

[1] Every good has its delight from use and in accordance with use (see numbers 3049, 4984, 7038); also its quality; and in consequence such as the use is such is the good (see number 3049).

All the happiness and delight of life is from uses (see number 997).

In general, life is a life of uses (see number 1964).

Angelic life consists in the goods of love and charity, thus in performing uses (see number 454).

The ends that man has in view, which are uses, are the only things that the Lord, and thus the angels, consider (see numbers 1317, 1645, 5844).

The kingdom of the Lord is a kingdom of uses (see numbers 454, 696, 1103, 3645, 4054, 7038).

Performing uses is serving the Lord (see number 7038).

Everyone's character is such as are the uses he performs (see numbers 4054, 6315); illustrated (see number 7038).

362. But the lot of the rich that have not believed in the Divine, and have cast out of their minds the things pertaining to heaven and the church, is the opposite of this. Such are in hell, where filth, misery, and want exist; and into these riches that are loved as an end are changed; and not only riches, but also their very uses, which are either a wish to live as they like and indulge in pleasures, and to have opportunity to give the mind more fully and freely to shameful practices, or a wish to rise above others whom they despise. Such riches and such uses, because they have nothing spiritual, but only what is earthly in them, become filthy; for a spiritual purpose in riches and their uses is like a soul in the body, or like the light of heaven in moist ground; and such riches and uses become putrid as a body does without a soul, or as moist ground does without the light of heaven. Such are those that have been led and drawn away from heaven by riches.

363. Every man's ruling affection or love remains with him after death, nor is it rooted out to eternity, since a man's spirit is wholly what his love is, and what is unknown, the body of every spirit and angel is the outward form of his love, exactly corresponding to his inward form, which is the form of his disposition and mind; consequently the quality of his spirit is known from his face, movements, and speech. While a man is living in the world the quality of the spirit would be known if he had not learned to counterfeit in his face, movements, and speech what is not his own. All this shows that man remains to eternity such as his ruling affection or love is. It has been granted me to talk with some who lived seventeen hundred years ago, and whose lives are well known from writings of that time, and it was found that the same love still rules them as when they were on the earth. This makes clear also that the love of riches, and of uses from riches, remains with everyone to eternity, and that it is exactly the same as the love acquired in the world, yet with the difference that in the case of those who devoted their riches to good uses riches are changed in the other world into delights which are in accord with the uses performed; while in the case of those who devoted their riches to evil uses riches are turned into mere filth, in which they then take the same delight as they did in the world in their riches devoted to evil uses. Such then take delight in filth because filthy pleasures and shameful acts, which had been the uses to which they had devoted their riches, and also avarice, which is a love of riches without regard to use, correspond to filth. Spiritual filth is nothing else.

364. The poor come into heaven not on account of their poverty but because of their life. Everyone's life follows him, whether he be rich or poor. There is no peculiar mercy for one in preference to another;[1] he that has lived well is received, while he that has not lived well is rejected. Moreover, poverty leads and draws man away from heaven just as much as wealth does. There are many among the poor who are not content with their lot, who strive after many things, and believe riches to be blessings;[2] and when they do not gain them are much provoked, and harbor ill thoughts about the Divine providence; they also envy others the good things they possess, and are as ready as any one to defraud others whenever they have opportunity, and to indulge in filthy pleasures. But this is not true of the poor who are content with their lot, and are careful and diligent in their work, who love labor better than idleness, and act sincerely and faithfully, and at the same time live a Christian life. I have now and then talked with those belonging to the peasantry and common people, who while living in the world believed in God and did what was just and right in their occupations. Since they had an affection for knowing truth they inquired about charity and about faith, having heard in this world much about faith and in the other life much about charity. They were therefore told that charity is everything that pertains to life, and faith everything that pertains to doctrine; consequently charity is willing and doing what is just and right in every work, and faith is thinking justly and rightly; and faith and charity are conjoined, the same as doctrine and a life in accordance with it, or the same as thought and will; and faith becomes charity when that which a man thinks justly and rightly he also wills and does, and then they are not two but one. This they well understood, and rejoiced, saying that in the world they did not understand believing to be anything else but living. [1] There can be no mercy apart from means, but only mercy through means, that is, to those who live in accordance with the commandments of the Lord; such the Lord by His mercy leads continually in the world, and afterwards to eternity (see numbers 8700, 10659). [2] Dignities and riches are not real blessings, therefore they are granted both to the wicked and to the good (see numbers 8939, 10775, 10776). The real blessing is reception of love and faith from the Lord, and conjunction thereby, for this is the source of eternal happiness (see numbers 1420, 1422, 2846, 3017, 3406, 3504, 3514, 3530, 3565, 3584, 4216, 4981, 8939, 10495).

365. All this makes clear that the rich and the poor alike come into heaven, the one as easily as the other. The belief that the poor enter heaven easily and the rich with difficulty comes from not understanding the Word where the rich and the poor are mentioned. In the Word those that have an abundance of knowledges of good and truth, thus who are within the church where the Word is, are meant in the spiritual sense by the "rich;" while those who lack these knowledges, and yet desire them, thus who are outside of the church and where there is no Word, are meant by the "poor." [2] The rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, and cast into hell, means the Jewish nation, which is called rich because it had the Word and had an abundance of knowledges of good and truth therefrom, "garments of purple" signifying knowledges of good, and "garments of fine linen" knowledges of truth.[1] But the poor man who lay at the rich man's gate and longed to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and who was carried by angels into heaven, means the nations that have no knowledges of good and truth and yet desired them (Luke 16 verses 19 to 31). Also the rich that were called to a great supper and excused themselves mean the Jewish nation, and the

poor brought in in their place mean the nations outside of the church (Luke 14 verses 16 to 24). [3] By the rich man of whom the Lord says:

It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Matthew 19 verse 24),

the rich in both the natural sense and the spiritual sense are meant. In the natural sense the rich are those that have an abundance of riches and set their heart upon them; but in the spiritual sense they are those that have an abundance of knowledges and learning, which are spiritual riches, and who desire by means of these to introduce themselves into the things of heaven and the church from their own intelligence. And because this is contrary to Divine order it is said to be "easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye," a "camel" signifying in general in the spiritual sense the knowing faculty and things known, and a "needle's eye" signifying spiritual truth.[2] That such is the meaning of a "camel" and a "needle's eye" is not at present known, because the knowledge that teaches what is signified in the spiritual sense by the things said in the literal sense of the Word has not up to this time been disclosed. In every particular of the Word there is a spiritual sense and also a natural sense; for the Word was made to consist wholly of correspondences between natural and spiritual things in order that conjunction of heaven with the world, or of angels with men might thereby be effected, direct conjunction having ceased. This makes clear who in particular are meant in the Word by the "rich man." [4] That the "rich" in the Word mean in the spiritual sense those who are in knowledges of truth and good, and "riches" the knowledges themselves, which are spiritual riches, can be seen from various passages (as in Isa. 10 verses 12 to 14; 30 verses 6, 7; 45 verse 3; Jer. 17 verse 3; 48 verse 7; 50 verses 36, 37; 51 verse 13; Dan. 5 verses 2 to 4; Ezek. 26 verses 7, 12; 27 verse 1 to the end; Zech. 9 verses 3, 4; Psalm 45 verse 12; Hosea 12 verse 9; Apoc. 3 verses 17, 18; Luke 14 verse 33; and elsewhere). Also that the "poor" in the spiritual sense signify those who do not possess knowledges of good and of truth, and yet desire them (Matt. 11 verse 5; Luke 6 verses 20, 21; 14 verse 21; Isa. 14 verse 30; 29 verse 19; 41 verses 17, 18; Zeph. 3 verses 12, 13). All these passages may be seen explained in accordance with the spiritual sense in the Arcana Coelestia (see number 10227).

[1] "Garments" signify truths, thus knowledges (see numbers 1073, 2576, 5319, 5954, 9212, 9216, 9952, 10536).

"Purple" signifies celestial good (see number 9467).

"Fine linen" signifies truth from a celestial origin (see numbers 5319, 9469, 9744).

[2] A "camel" signifies in the Word the knowing faculty and knowledge in general (see numbers 3048, 3071, 3143, 3145).

What is meant by "needlework, working with a needle," and therefore by a "needle" (see number 9688).

To enter from knowledge into the truths of faith is contrary to Divine order (see number 10236).

Those that do this become demented in respect to the thing of heaven and the church (numbers 128-130, 232, 233, 6047).

And in the other life, when they think about spiritual things they become as it were drunken (see number 1072).

Further about such (see number 196).

Examples showing that when spiritual things are entered into through knowledges they cannot be comprehended (see numbers 233, 2094, 2196, 2203, 2209).

It is permissible to enter from spiritual truth into knowledges which pertain to the natural man, but not the reverse, because there can be

spiritual influx into the natural, but not natural influx into the spiritual (see numbers 3219, 5119, 5259, 5427, 5428, 5478, 6322, 9110). The truths of the word and of the church must first be acknowledged, after which it is permissible to consider knowledges, but not before (see number 6047).