

566. WHAT HELL FIRE IS AND WHAT THE GNASHING OF TEETH IS.

What eternal fire is, and what the gnashing of teeth is, which are mentioned in the Word in reference to those who are in hell, scarcely any one as yet has known, because the contents of the Word have been thought about only in a material way, and nothing has been known about its spiritual sense. So fire has been understood by some to mean material fire, by others to mean torment in general, by others remorse of conscience, and others have held that it is mentioned merely to excite terror in the wicked. Likewise some have supposed the gnashing of teeth to mean actual gnashing, and some only a horror, such as is excited when such a collision of teeth is heard. But any one who is acquainted with the spiritual meaning of the Word may know what eternal fire is, and what the gnashing of teeth is; for every expression and every meaning of the expressions in the Word contains a spiritual meaning, since the Word in its bosom is spiritual; and what is spiritual can be set before man only in natural forms of expression, because man is in the natural world and thinks from the things of that world. Therefore it shall now be told what is meant by "eternal fire" and "the gnashing of teeth" into which the spirits of evil men enter after death, or which their spirits, then in the spiritual world, endure.

567. There are two origins of heat, one the sun of heaven which is the Lord, and the other the sun of the world. The heat that is from the sun of heaven, that is, the Lord, is spiritual heat; and this in its essence is love (see above, n. 126-140); but the heat from the sun of the world is natural heat, and this in its essence is not love, but serves spiritual heat or love as a receptacle. Evidently love in its essence is heat, since it is love, in accord with its degree and quality, that gives heat to the mind, and thence to the body; and this man experiences as well in the winter as in the summer. The heating of the blood is from the same source. That the natural heat that springs from the sun of the world serves spiritual heat as a receptacle is evident from the heat of the body, which is excited by the heat of its spirit, and is a kind of substitute for that heat in the body. It is especially evident from the spring and summer heat in animals of every kind which then annually renew their loves. [2] It is not the natural heat that produces this effect, but it disposes their bodies to receive the heat that flows into them from the spiritual world; for the spiritual world flows into the natural as cause into effect. Whoever believes that natural heat produces these loves is much deceived, for influx is from the spiritual world into the natural world, and not from the natural world into the spiritual; and as all love belongs to the life itself it is spiritual. [3] Again, he who believes that any thing comes forth in the natural world without influx from the spiritual world is deceived, for what is natural comes forth and continues to exist only from what is spiritual. Furthermore, the subjects of the vegetable kingdom derive their germinations from influx out of the spiritual world. The natural heat of spring time and summer merely disposes the seeds into their natural forms by expanding and opening them so that influx from the spiritual world can there act as a cause. These things are mentioned to make clear that there are two kinds of heat, spiritual heat and natural heat; and that spiritual heat is from the sun of heaven and natural heat from the sun of the world, and that influx and consequent cooperation produce the effects that appear before the eyes in the world.[1]

[1] There is an influx from the spiritual world into the natural world (numbers 6053-6058, 6189-6215, 6307-6327, 6466-6495, 6598-6626).

There is also an influx into the lives of animals (see number 5850).

And into the subjects of the vegetable kingdom (see number 3648). This influx is a continual endeavor to act in accordance with the Divine order (number 6211 at the end).

568. Spiritual heat in man is the heat of his life, because, as was said above, it is in its essence love. This heat is what is meant in the Word by "fire," love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor by "heavenly fire," and love of self and love of the world by "infernal fire."

569. Infernal fire or love springs from a like origin as heavenly fire or love, namely, the sun of heaven, or the Lord; but it is made infernal by those who receive it. For all influx from the spiritual world varies in accordance with reception, that is, in accordance with the forms into which it flows, just as it is with the heat and light from the sun of the world. The heat from that sun flowing into shrubberies and beds of flowers produces vegetation, and draws forth grateful and sweet odors; but the same heat flowing into excrementitious and decaying substances produces putrefactions, and draws forth rank and disgusting stench. In like manner the light from the same sun produces in one subject beautiful and pleasing colors, in another unbeautiful and disagreeable colors. The same is true of the heat and light from the sun of heaven, which is love. When the heat, or love, from that sun flows into good, as it does in good men and angels, it makes their good fruitful; but when it flows into the evil it produces a contrary effect, for their evils either suffocate it or pervert it. In like manner when the light of heaven flows into the truths of good it imparts intelligence and wisdom; but when it flows into the falsities of evil it is turned into insanities and phantasies of various kinds. Thus in every instance the result is in accordance with reception.

570. As infernal fire is the love of self and of the world it is also every lust of these loves, since lust is love in its continuity, for what a man loves he continually lusts after. Infernal fire is also delight, since what a man loves and lusts after he perceives, when he obtains it, to be delightful. Man's delight of heart is from no other source. Infernal fire, therefore, is the lust and delight that spring from these two loves as their origins. The evils flowing from these loves are contempt of others, enmity, and hostility against those who do not favor them, envy, hatred, and revenge, and from these fierceness and cruelty; and in respect to the Divine they are denial and consequent contempt, derision, and detraction of the holy things of the church; and after death, when man becomes a spirit, these evils are changed to anger and hatred against these holy things (see above, number 562). And as these evils breathe forth continually the destruction and murder of those whom they account as enemies, and against whom they burn with hatred and revenge, so it is the delight of their life to will to destroy and kill, and so far as they are unable to do this, to will to do mischief, to injure, and to exercise cruelty. [2] Such is the meaning of "fire" in the Word, where the evil and the hells are treated of, some passages from which I will here quote in the way of proof:

Everyone is a hypocrite and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briars and thorns, and kindleth in the thickets of the forests, and they roll upward in the rising of smoke; and the people is become like food for fire; no man spareth his brother (Isaiah 9 verses 17 to 19).

I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth blood and fire, and pillars of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness (Joel 2 verses 30, 31).

The land shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever (Isaiah 34 verses 9, 10).

Behold the day cometh burning as a furnace, and all the proud and every worker of wickedness shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall set them on fire (Malachi 4 verse 1).

Babylon is become a habitation of demons. They cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning. Her smoke goeth up unto the ages of the ages (Revelation 18 verses 2, 18; 19 verse 3).

He opened the pit of the abyss, and there went up a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun was darkened, and the air, by the smoke of the pit (Revelation 9 verse 2).

Out of the mouth of the horses went forth fire and smoke and brimstone; by these was the third part of men killed, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone (Revelation 4 verses 17, 18).

If any one adores the beast he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God mixed with unmixed wine in the cup of His anger, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone (Revelation 16 verses 9, 10).

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire; therefore men were scorched with great heat (Revelation 16 verses 8, 9).

They were cast into a lake burning with fire and brimstone (Revelation 19 verse 20; 20 verses 14, 15; 21 verse 8).

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire (Matthew 3 verse 10; Luke 3 verse 9).

The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire (Matthew 13 verses 41, 42, 50).

The King shall say to them that are on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25 verse 41).

They shall be sent into everlasting fire, into the hell of fire, where their worm shall not die, and the fire shall not be quenched (Matthew 18 verses 8, 9; Mark 9 verses 43 to 49).

The rich man in hell said to Abraham that he was tormented in flame (Luke 16 verse 24).

In these and in many other passages "fire" means the lust pertaining to love of self and love of the world, and the "smoke" therefrom means falsity from evil.

571. As the lust of doing the evils that are from the love of self and of the world is meant by "infernal fire," and as such is the lust of all in the hells (as shown in the foregoing chapter) so when the hells are opened there is an appearance of fire with smoke, such as is seen in conflagrations, a dense fire from the hells where the love of self prevails, and a flaming fire from the hells where love of the world prevails. But when the hells are closed this fiery appearance is not seen, but in its place there is a kind of obscurity like a condensation of smoke; although the fire still rages within, as can be seen by the heat exhaling therefrom, which is like the heat from the burnt ruins after a fire, and in some places like the heat from a heated furnace, in others like the heat from a hot bath. When this heat flows into man it excites lusts in him, and in evil men hatred and revenge, and in the sick insanities. Such is the fire or such the heat that affects those who are in the above-mentioned loves, because in respect to their spirit they are

attached to those hells, even while living in the body. But it must be understood that those who are in the hells are not in fire; the fire is an appearance; those there are conscious of no burning, but only of a warmth like that which they had felt when in the world. This appearance of fire is from correspondence, since love corresponds to fire, and all things seen in the spiritual world are seen in accordance with correspondences.

572. It must be noted that this infernal fire or heat is changed into intense cold when heat from heaven flows in; and those who are in it then shiver like those seized with chills and fever, and are inwardly distressed; and for the reason that they are in direct opposition to the Divine; and the heat of heaven (which is Divine love) extinguishes the heat of hell (which is the love of self), and with it the fire of their life; and this is the cause of such cold and consequent shivering and distress. This is accompanied by thick darkness and by infatuation and mutual blindness therefrom. But this rarely happens, and only when outbreaks that have increased beyond measure need to be repressed.

573. Since infernal fire means every lust for doing evil that flows forth from the love of self, this fire means also such torment as exists in the hells. For the lust from that love is a lust for injuring others who do not honor, venerate and worship oneself; and in proportion to the anger thereby excited, and the hatred and revenge from that anger, is there a lust for venting one's rage upon them. When such lust is active in everyone in a society, and is restrained by no external bond, such as the fear of the law, and of the loss of reputation, honor, gain, and life, everyone from the impulse of his own evil rushes upon another; and so far as he prevails subjugates the rest and subjects them to his dominion, and vents his rage with delight upon those who do not submit themselves. This delight is so intimately united with the delight of bearing rule that they exist in the same measure, since the delight of doing harm is contained in all enmity, envy, hatred, and revenge, which as said above, are the evils of that love. All the hells are such societies, and in consequence everyone there bears hatred in his heart against others, and from hatred bursts forth into cruelty so far as he has power. These cruelties and their torments are also meant by infernal fire, since they are the effects of lusts.

574. It has been shown above (see number 548) that an evil spirit casts himself into hell of his own accord. It shall now be told in a few words how this comes about, when yet there are in hell such torments. From every hell there exhales a sphere of the lusts of those who are in it. Whenever this sphere is perceived by one who is in a like lust he is affected at heart and filled with delight, for lust and its delight make one, since whatever one lusts after is delightful to him; and because of this a spirit turns himself hellwards, and from delight of heart lusts to go thither, since he does not yet know that such torments exist there, although he who knows it still lusts to go there. For no one in the spiritual world can resist his lust, because his lust belongs to his love, and his love belongs to his will, and his will belongs to his nature, and everyone there acts from his nature. [2] When, therefore, a spirit of his own accord and from his freedom drifts towards his hell and enters it, he is received at first in a friendly manner, which makes him believe that he has come among friends. But this continues for a few hours only. In the meanwhile he is explored in respect to his astuteness and consequent ability; and when this has been done they begin to infest him, and this by various methods, and with gradually greater severity and

vehemence. This is accomplished by introducing him more interiorly and deeply into hell; for the more interior and deeper the hell the more malignant are the spirits. After these infestations they begin to treat him cruelly by punishments, and this goes on until he is reduced to the condition of a slave. [3] But rebellious movements are continually springing up there, since everyone wishes to be greatest, and burns with hatred against the others; and in consequence new uprisings occur, and thus one scene is changed into another, and those who are made slaves are delivered that they may assist some new devil to subjugate others; and again those who refuse to submit and render implicit obedience are tormented in various ways; and so on continually. Such torments are the torments of hell, which are called hell fire.

575. Gnashing of teeth is the continual contention and combat of falsities with each other, consequently of those who are in falsities, joined with contempt of others, with enmity, mockery, ridicule, blaspheming; and these evils burst forth into lacerations of various kinds; since everyone fights for his own falsity and calls it truth. These contentions and combats are heard outside of these hells like the gnashings of teeth; and are also turned into gnashings of teeth when truths from heaven flow in among them. In these hells are all who have acknowledged nature and have denied the Divine. In the deeper of these hells are those that have confirmed themselves in such denials. As such are unable to receive any thing of light from heaven, and are thus unable to see any thing inwardly in themselves, they are for the most part corporeal sensual spirits, who believe nothing except what they see with their eyes and touch with their hands. Therefore all the fallacies of the senses are truths to them; and it is from these that they dispute. This is why their contentions are heard as gnashings of teeth; for in the spiritual world all falsities give a grating sound, and the teeth correspond to the outmost things in nature and to the outmost things in man, which are corporeal sensual.[1] (That there is gnashing of teeth in the hells may be seen in Matthew 8 verse 12; 13 verses 42, 50; 22 verse 13; 24 verse 51; 25 verse 30; Luke 13 verse 28.)

[1] The correspondence of the teeth (numbers 5565-5568).

Those who are purely sensual and have scarcely anything of spiritual light correspond to the teeth (see number 5565).

In the Word a tooth signifies the sensual, which is the outmost of the life of man (see numbers 9052, 9062).

Gnashing of teeth in the other life comes from those who believe that nature is everything and the Divine nothing (see number 5568).

576. THE MALICE AND HEINOUS ARTIFICES OF INFERNAL SPIRITS

In what way spirits are superior to men everyone can see and comprehend who thinks interiorly and knows any thing of the operation of his own mind; for in his mind he can consider, evolve, and form conclusions upon more subjects in a single moment than he can utter or express in writing in half an hour. This shows the superiority of man when he is in his spirit, and therefore when he becomes a spirit. For it is the spirit that thinks, and it is the body by which the spirit expresses its thoughts in speech or writing. In consequence of this, when man after death becomes an angel he is in intelligence and wisdom ineffable in comparison with his intelligence and wisdom while he lived in the world; for while he lived in the world his spirit was bound to his body, and was thereby in the natural world; and therefore whatever he thought spiritually flowed into natural ideas, which are comparatively general, gross, and obscure, and which are incapable of receiving innumerable things that pertain to spiritual thought; and which infold spiritual thought in the obscurities

that arise from worldly cares. It is otherwise when the spirit is released from the body and comes into its spiritual state, which takes place when it passes out of the natural world into the spiritual world to which it belongs. From what has already been said it is evident that the state of its thoughts and affections is then immeasurably superior to its former state. Because of this the thoughts of angels are ineffable and inexpressible, and are therefore incapable of entering into the natural thoughts of man; and yet every angel was born a man, and has lived as a man, and he then seemed to himself to be no wiser than any other like man.

577. In the same degree in which angels have wisdom and intelligence infernal spirits have malice and cunning; for the case is the same, since the spirit of man when released from the body is in his good or in his evil - if an angelic spirit in his good, and if an infernal spirit in his evil. Every spirit is his own good or his own evil because he is his own love, as has been often said and shown above. Therefore as an angelic spirit thinks, wills, speaks, and acts, from his good, an infernal spirit does this from his evil; and to think, will, speak, and act from evil itself, is to think, will, speak, and act from all things included in the evil. [2] So long as man lived in the body it was different, since the evil of the spirit was then under the restraints that every man feels from the law, from hope of gain, from honor, from reputation, and from the fear of losing these; and therefore the evil of his spirit could not then burst forth and show what it was in itself. Moreover, the evil of the spirit of man then lay wrapped up and veiled in outward probity, honesty, justice, and affection for truth and good, which such a man professes and counterfeits for the sake of the world; and under these semblances the evil has lain so concealed and obscured that he himself scarcely knew that his spirit contained so much malice and craftiness, that is, that in himself he was such a devil as he becomes after death, when his spirit comes into itself and into its own nature. [3] Such malice then manifests itself as exceeds all belief. There are thousands of evils that then burst forth from evil itself, among which are such as cannot be described in the words of any language. What they are has been granted me to know and also to perceive by much experience, since it has been granted me by the Lord to be in the spiritual world in respect to my spirit and at the same time in the natural world in respect to my body. This I can testify, that their malice is so great that it is hardly possible to describe even a thousandth part of it; and so great that if man were not protected by the Lord he could never be rescued from hell; for with every man there are spirits from hell as well as angels from heaven (see above, numbers 292, 293); and yet the Lord cannot protect man unless he acknowledges the Divine and lives a life of faith and charity; for otherwise man turns himself away from the Lord and turns himself to infernal spirits, and thus his spirit becomes imbued with a malice like theirs. [4] Nevertheless, man is continually withdrawn by the Lord from the evils that he attaches and as it were attracts to himself by his affiliation with infernal spirits. If he is not withdrawn by the internal bonds of conscience, which he fails to receive if he denies a Divine, he is nevertheless withdrawn by external bonds, which are, as said above, fears in respect to the law and its penalties, and fears of the loss of gain and the deprivation of honor and reputation. In fact, such a man may be withdrawn from evils by means of the delights of his love and through fear of the loss or deprivation of those delights; but he cannot be led thereby into spiritual goods. For as soon as such a man is led into these he begins to give his thought to pretenses and devices by simulating or counterfeiting what is good, honest, and just, for the purpose of

persuading and thus deceiving. Such cunning adjoins itself to the evil of his spirit and gives form to it, causing his evil to be of the same nature as itself.

578. Those are the worst of all who have been in evils from love of self and at the same time inwardly in themselves have acted from deceit; for deceit penetrates more deeply into the thoughts and intentions than other evils, and infects them with poison and thus wholly destroys the spiritual life of man. Most of these spirits are in the hells behind the back, and are called genii; and there they delight to make themselves invisible, and to flutter about others like phantoms secretly infusing evil into them, which they spread around like the poison of a viper. These are more direfully tormented than others. But those who are not deceitful, and who have not been so filled with malignant craftiness, and yet are in the evils derived from the love of self, are also in the hells behind, but in those less deep. On the other hand, those that have been in evils from the love of the world are in the hells in front, and are called spirits. These spirits are not such forms of evil, that is, of hatred and revenge, as those are who are in evils from the love of self; and therefore do not have such malice and cunning; and in consequence their hells are milder.

579. I have been permitted to learn by experience what kind of malice those possess who are called genii. Genii act upon and flow into the affections, and not the thoughts. They perceive and smell out the affections as dogs do wild beasts in the forest. Good affections, when they perceive them in another, they turn instantly into evil affections, leading and bending them in a wonderful manner by means of the other's delights; and this so secretly and with such malignant skill that the other knows nothing of it, for they most carefully guard against anything entering into the thought, as thereby they would be manifested. The seat of these in man is beneath the back part of the head. In the world they were such as deceitfully captivated the minds of others, leading and persuading them by the delights of their affections or lusts. But such spirits are not permitted by the Lord to come near to any man of whose reformation there is any hope; for they have the ability not only to destroy the conscience, but also to stir up in man his inherited evils, which otherwise lie hidden. Therefore to prevent man's being led into these evils, these hells, by the Lord's provision, are entirely closed up; and when any man of such a character comes after death into the other life, he is at once cast into their hell. When the deceit and craftiness of these spirits are clearly seen they appear as vipers.

580. The kind of malice infernal spirits possess is evident from their nefarious arts, which are so many that to enumerate them would fill a volume, and to describe them would fill many volumes. These arts are mostly unknown in the world. One kind relates to abuses of correspondences; a second to abuses of the outmosts of Divine order; a third to the communication and influx of thoughts and affections by means of turning towards another, fixing the sight upon another, and by the instrumentality of other spirits apart from themselves, and spirits sent out by themselves; a fourth to operations by phantasies; a fifth to a kind of casting themselves out beyond themselves and consequent presence elsewhere than where they are in the body; a sixth to pretenses, persuasion, and lies. The spirit of an evil man enters of itself into these arts when he is released from his body, for they are inherent in the nature of the evil in which he then is. By these arts they torment each other in the hells. But as all of these arts, except those that are

effected by pretenses, persuasions, and lies, are unknown in the world, I will not here describe them in detail, both because they would not be comprehended, and because they are too abominable to be told.

581. The Lord permits torments in the hells because in no other way can evils be restrained and subdued. The only means of restraining and subduing evils and of keeping the infernal crew in bonds is the fear of punishment. It can be done in no other way; for without the fear of punishment and torment evil would burst forth into madness, and everything would go to pieces, like a kingdom on earth where there is no law and there are no penalties.

582. THE APPEARANCE, SITUATION, AND NUMBER OF THE HELLS.

In the spiritual world, that is, in the world where spirits and angels are, the same objects appear as in the natural world, that is, where men are. In external appearance there is no difference. In that world plains and mountains, hills and rocks, and valleys between them are seen; also waters, and many other things that are seen on earth. And yet all these things are from a spiritual origin, and all are therefore seen by the eyes of spirits and angels, and not by the eyes of men, because men are in the natural world. Spiritual beings see such things as are from a spiritual origin, and natural beings such things as are from a natural origin. Consequently man with his eyes can in no way see the objects that are in the spiritual world unless he is permitted to be in the spirit, or after death when he becomes a spirit. On the other hand, an angel or a spirit is unable to see any thing at all in the natural world unless he is with a man who is permitted to speak with him. For the eyes of man are fitted to receive the light of the natural world, and the eyes of angels and spirits are fitted to receive the light of the spiritual world; although the eyes of the two are exactly alike in appearance. That the spiritual world is such the natural man cannot comprehend, and least of all the sensual man, who believes nothing except what he sees with his bodily eyes and touches with his hands, and therefore takes in by sight and touch. As his thought is from such things it is material and not spiritual. Such being the likeness between the spiritual world and the natural world, man can hardly believe after death that he is not in the world where he was born, and from which he has departed. For this reason death is called simply a translation from one world into another like it. (That the two worlds are thus alike can be seen above, where representatives and appearances in heaven have been treated of, n. 170-176.)

583. The heavens are in the higher parts of the spiritual world, the world of spirits in the lower parts, and under both are the hells. The heavens are visible to spirits in the world of spirits only when their interior sight is opened; although they sometimes see them as mists or as bright clouds. This is because the angels of heaven are in an interior state in respect to intelligence and wisdom; and for this reason they are above the sight of those who are in the world of spirits. But spirits who dwell in the plains and valleys see one another; and yet when they are separated there, which takes place when they are let into their interiors, the evil spirits do not see the good spirits; but the good spirits can see the evil spirits. Nevertheless, the good spirits turn themselves away from the evil spirits; and when spirits turn themselves away they become invisible. But the hells are not seen because they are closed up. Only the entrances, which are called gates, are seen when they are opened to let in other like spirits. All the gates to the hells open from the world of spirits, and none of them from heaven.

584. The hells are everywhere, both under the mountains, hills, and rocks, and under the plains and valleys. The openings or gates to the hells that are under the mountains, hills, and rocks, appear to the sight like holes and clefts in the rocks, some extended and wide, and some straitened and narrow, and many of them rugged. They all, when looked into, appear dark and dusky; but the infernal spirits that are in them are in such a luminosity as arises from burning coals. Their eyes are adapted to the reception of that light, and for the reason that while they lived in the world they were in thick darkness in respect to Divine truths, because of their denying them, and were in a sort of light in respect to falsities because of their affirming them. In this way did the sight of their eyes become so formed. And for the same reason the light of heaven is thick darkness to them, and therefore when they go out of their dens they see nothing. All this makes it abundantly clear that man comes into the light of heaven just to the extent that he acknowledges the Divine, and establishes in himself the things of heaven and the church; and that he comes into the thick darkness of hell just to the extent that he denies the Divine, and establishes in himself what is contrary to the truths of heaven and the church.

585. The openings or gates to the hells that are beneath the plains and valleys present to the sight different appearances. Some resemble those that are beneath the mountains, hills and rocks; some resemble dens and caverns, some great chasms and whirlpools; some resemble bogs, and some standing water. They are all covered, and are opened only when evil spirits from the world of spirits are cast in; and when they are opened there bursts forth from them either something like the fire and smoke that is seen in the air from burning buildings, or like a flame without smoke, or like soot such as comes from a burning chimney, or like a mist and thick cloud. I have heard that the infernal spirits neither see nor feel these things, because when they are in them they are as in their own atmosphere, and thus in the delight of their life; and this for the reason that these things correspond to the evils and falsities in which they are, fire corresponding to hatred and revenge, smoke and soot to the falsities therefrom, flame to the evils of the love of self, and a mist or thick cloud to falsities from that love.

586. I have also been permitted to look into the hells and to see what they are within; for when the Lord wills, the sight of a spirit or angel from above may penetrate into the lowest depths beneath and explore their character, notwithstanding the coverings. In this way I have been permitted to look into them. Some of the hells appeared to the view like caverns and dens in rocks extending inward and then downward into an abyss, either obliquely or vertically. Some of the hells appeared to the view like the dens and caves of wild beasts in forests; some like the hollow caverns and passages that are seen in mines, with caverns extending towards the lower regions. Most of the hells are threefold, the upper one appearing within to be in dense darkness, because inhabited by those who are in the falsities of evil; while the lower ones appear fiery, because inhabited by those who are in evils themselves, dense darkness corresponding to the falsities of evil, and fire to evils themselves. Those that have acted interiorly from evil are in the deeper hells, and those that have acted exteriorly from evil, that is, from the falsities of evil, are in the hells that are less deep. Some hells present an appearance like the ruins of houses and cities after conflagrations, in which infernal spirits dwell and hide themselves. In the milder hells there is an appearance of rude huts, in some cases

contiguous in the form of a city with lanes and streets, and within the houses are infernal spirits engaged in unceasing quarrels, enmities, fightings, and brutalities; while in the streets and lanes robberies and depredations are committed. In some of the hells there are nothing but brothels, disgusting to the sight and filled with every kind of filth and excrement. Again, there are dark forests, in which infernal spirits roam like wild beasts and where, too, there are underground dens into which those flee who are pursued by others. There are also deserts, where all is barren and sandy, and where in some places there are ragged rocks in which there are caverns, and in some places huts. Into these desert places those are cast out from the hells who have suffered every extremity of punishment, especially those who in the world have been more cunning than others in undertaking and contriving intrigues and deceits. Such a life is their final lot.

587. As to the positions of the hells in detail, it is something wholly unknown even to the angels in heaven; it is known to the Lord alone. But their position in general is known from the quarters in which they are. For the hells, like the heavens, are distinguished by their quarters; and in the spiritual world quarters are determined in accordance with loves; for in heaven all the quarters begin from the Lord as the sun, who is the East; and as the hells are opposite to the heavens their quarters begin from the opposite point, that is, from the west. (On this see the chapter on the four quarters in heaven, n. 141-153.) [2] For this reason the hells in the western quarter are the worst of all, and the most horrible, becoming gradually worse and more horrible by degrees the more remote they are from the east. In the western hells are those who in the world were in the love of self, and in consequent contempt of others, and in enmity against those who did not favor them, also in hatred and revenge against those who did not render them respect and homage. In the most remote hells in that quarter are those that had belonged to the Catholic religion, so called, and that had wished to be worshiped as gods, and consequently had burned with hatred and revenge against all who did not acknowledge their power over the souls of men and over heaven. These continue to have the same disposition, that is, the same hatred and revenge against those who oppose them, that they had in the world. Their greatest delight is to practice cruelties; but in the other life this delight is turned against themselves; for in their hells, with which the western quarter is filled, one rages against everyone who detracts from his Divine power. (But more will be said about this in the treatise on The Last Judgment and the Destruction of Babylon.) [3] Nevertheless, no one can know how the hells in that quarter are arranged, except that the most dreadful hells of that kind are at the sides towards the northern quarter, and the less dreadful towards the southern quarter; thus the dreadfulfulness of the hells decreases from the northern quarter to the southern, and likewise by degrees towards the east. Towards the east are the dwelling places of the haughty, who have not believed in the Divine, and yet have not been in such hatred and revenge, or in such deceit, as those have who are in a greater depth in the western quarter. [4] In the eastern quarter there are at present no hells, those that were there having been transferred to the western quarter in front. In the northern and southern quarters there are many hells; and in them are those who while in the world were in love of the world, and in various kinds of evil therefrom, such as enmity, hostility, theft, robbery, cunning, avarice, and unmercifulness. The worst hells of this kind are in the northern quarter, the milder in the southern. Their dreadfulfulness increases as they are nearer to the western quarter, and also as they are farther away from the southern quarter, and decreases towards the eastern

quarter and towards the southern quarter. Behind the hells that are in the western quarter there are dark forests, in which malignant spirits roam like wild beasts; and it is the same behind the hells in the northern quarter. But behind the hells in the southern quarter there are deserts, which have been described just above. This much respecting the situation of the hells.

588. In regard to the number of the hells, there are as many of them as there are angelic societies in the heavens, since there is for every heavenly society a corresponding infernal society as its opposite. That the heavenly societies are numberless, and are all distinguished in accordance with the goods of love, charity, and faith, may be seen in the chapter that treats of the societies of which the heavens consist (numbers 41-50), and in the chapter on the immensity of heaven (numbers 415-420). The like is true, therefore, of the infernal societies, which are distinguished in accordance with the evils that are the opposites of those goods. [2] Every evil, as well as every good, is of infinite variety. That this is true is beyond the comprehension of those who have only a simple idea regarding every evil, such as contempt, enmity, hatred, revenge, deceit, and other like evils. But let them know that each one of these evils contains so many specific differences, and each of these again so many specific or particular differences, that a volume would not suffice to enumerate them. The hells are so distinctly arranged in order in accordance with the differences of every evil that nothing could be more perfectly ordered or more distinct. Evidently, then, the hells are innumerable, near to and remote from one another in accordance with the differences of evils generically, specifically, and particularly. [3] There are likewise hells beneath hells. Some communicate with others by passages, and more by exhalations, and this in exact accordance with the affinities of one kind or one species of evil with others. How great the number is of the hells I have been permitted to realize from knowing that there are hells under every mountain, hill, and rock, and likewise under every plain and valley, and that they stretch out beneath these in length and in breadth and in depth. In a word, the entire heaven and the entire world of spirits are, as it were, excavated beneath, and under them is a continuous hell. Thus much regarding the number of the hells.