

A TEMPLE IN HEAVEN

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One day there appeared to me a magnificent temple, square in form. The roof was crown-shaped, arched above and raised round about. Its walls were continuous windows of crystal. Its door was of a pearly substance. Inside, on the south side, toward the west, was a pulpit, on the right-hand side of which lay the open Word enveloped in a sphere of light, the splendor of which surrounded and illuminated the whole pulpit. In the center of the temple was a sanctuary, before which there was a veil, at that time raised, and there a golden cherub stood with a sword turning hither and thither in his hand.

Afterward, when I drew nearer, I saw this inscription above the door, *Nunc Licet*—It is now permitted—which meant that it is now permitted to enter with the understanding into the mysteries of faith.

After this I saw above my head something like an infant, holding in his hand a piece of paper. As he drew near to me, he increased to the stature of a medium-sized man. He was an angel from the third heaven, where all at a distance look like infants. When he came to me, he handed me the paper; but as the writing was in rounded letters, such as they have in that heaven, I returned the paper, and asked him to explain to me the meaning of the words there written, in terms adapted to the ideas of my thought. He replied, “This is what is here written: ‘Enter hereafter into the mysteries of the Word, which has been heretofore shut up; for the particular truths therein are so many mirrors of the Lord’” (from *True Christian Religion* 508:1,3,6).

We all have something that we are curious to know.

Just imagine if there was a building in your community that had never been opened. The doors were closed, the windows were all closed up so you could not see in. I think you would want to know—“What is in that building?” It would be a mystery to you. You would want to peek inside and find out what was inside. But no, the building was closed up, and you could not see anything in it. That would make your mind curious.

Today we read a story about a wonderful temple in the spiritual world. I want to talk about the difference between the temple that we read about today, called the *Nunc Licet* temple, and the Tabernacle that the Children of Israel had. What is the difference?

Do you remember that in the tabernacle the ark of the Lord, with the Ten Commandments in it, was put in a place called the “holy of holies”? It was surrounded by a wooden wall, and there were curtains over it. There was a veil hanging down in front of the ark, so that it was completely dark in the holy of

holies. No one was allow to go in there except the high priest once or twice a year. The Lord's commandments were put away in a dark room in a dark building.

Now, think of the description of the temple in heaven. That temple was not dark and all closed up; it was not a mysterious place. It was a temple that was opened up. In fact, it had windows all around it. Everywhere around this temple there were windows so that it was full of light.

But the greatest light came from within the temple itself. On the south side, toward the west, there was a pulpit. A pulpit is a place where a minister preaches. Beside the pulpit, the Word was opened. From the Word there came a wonderful light that covered over everything near that pulpit. So, if you went into that temple in heaven, what you would see is the light coming from the Word, shining and making the temple bright.

There was also a sanctuary in this temple—a little bit like the holy of holies—but here the veil was lifted up. You could see inside the sanctuary where there was a gold cherub, or angel with a sword, turning hither and thither.

Now remember the words on the door of that temple, in Latin, that said, "Now it is permitted." What was permitted? It was permitted to enter into that temple and learn about the Lord.

In the New Church, at the beginning of every worship service, the first thing we do is open the Lord's Word. Why? Because we want to teach about the Lord; we want to know about the Lord. The Lord gave this church so that there would be no mysteries and no secrets about Him. He wants us all to enter into His Word and read it to find out about Him. That is the difference between the Tabernacle of the Children of Israel (and other ancient temples on this earth) and the wonderful, new temple that was seen in the spiritual world.

That temple also represents our minds, how the Lord wants to lead us to learn about Him. He has opened up His Word and so, there are many secret things about Him that we can now learn. We may not understand them all, but the Lord has opened them up for us to see.

This is one of the wonderful things about the New Church. In it, the Lord has opened up the mysteries of heaven. The secret things which people could not see before, have now been revealed to us in His Word so that we may enter, with our understanding, into those mysteries of faith, and learn to see the Lord for ourselves so that we may love Him and follow Him.

Amen.