

# FROM THE LORD'S WORD

## OLD TESTAMENT

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,  
The fruit of the womb is His reward (Psalm 127:3).

He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.  
(Psalm 91:11)

“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;  
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.  
Cease to do evil, learn to do good....  
Come now, and let us reason together.”  
(Isaiah 1:16-18)

How can a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed according to Your word.  
With my whole heart I have sought You;  
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!  
(Psalm 119:9,10)

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean....  
I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you....  
I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,  
and you will keep My judgments and do them (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Teach me Your way, O Lord;  
I will walk in Your truth....  
(Psalm 86:11)

## NEW TESTAMENT

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11).

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16).

“They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads” (Revelation 22:4).

“I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5).

Then they brought young children to Him, that He might touch them.... And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them (Mark 10: 13,16).

“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 18: 10).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 19-20).

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5-6).

## **HEAVENLY DOCTRINE**

### **BAPTISM COMMANDED BY THE LORD**

That baptism was commanded is made clearly evident by John’s baptizing in Jordan (Matt. 3:5, 6; Mark 1:4, 5), that the Lord our Savior Himself was baptized by John (Matt. 3:13-17), and finally that He commanded His disciples to baptize all nations (Matt. 28:19). Who does not see that there is something Divine in that institution? (see *True Christian Religion* 668).

Since the waters of the Jordan river symbolized truths that introduce into the church, which are concepts of truth and goodness gained from the Word, and since washing in those waters symbolized purification from falsities, and thus reformation and regeneration by the Lord, therefore baptism was instituted, which was first performed in the Jordan by John (Matthew 28:19, Mark 1:4-13). And this symbolized people's being introduced into concepts from the Word regarding the Lord, His advent, and salvation by Him. Moreover, because a person is reformed and regenerated by the Lord through truths gained from the Word, the Lord therefore commanded baptism (Matthew 28:19). For truths gained from the Word are the means by which a person is reformed and regenerated...” (*Apocalypse Explained* 475:19).

### **BAPTISM BY JOHN THE BAPTIST**

The way was prepared by the baptism of John, because by means of that baptism people were introduced into the future church of the Lord, and in heaven were inserted among those who were there looking for and longing for the Messiah. They were thus guarded by angels, that devils from hell might not break forth and destroy them (*True Christian Religion* 669).

John only introduced people into knowledges from the Word respecting the Lord, and thus prepared them to receive Him. But the Lord Himself regenerates a person by means of Divine truth and Divine good proceeding from Him (*Apocalypse Explained* 475:20).

## THE LORD'S BAPTISM

When Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened and John saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21; John 1:32, 33). This was because baptism stands for regeneration and cleansing, and so does a dove. Who cannot see that the dove was not the Holy Spirit, nor was the Holy Spirit in the dove? In heaven doves are often to be seen, and the angels know that they are correspondences of affections and consequently of thoughts about regeneration and cleansing... (*True Christian Religion* 144).

A dove symbolizes purification and regeneration by Divine Truth (*Doctrine of the Lord* 51:4).

The difference between the baptism with which the Lord was baptized and the baptism with which people are baptized is similar to the difference between glorification and regeneration. By means of temptations the Lord glorified His Human by His own power, but people are regenerated, not by their own power but by the Lord. For "baptism" symbolizes being regenerated by temptations, but the Lord's baptism symbolizes the glorification of His Human by temptations (*Apocalypse Explained* 893:5).

## THE USES OF BAPTISM

The first use of baptism is that the person may be called a Christian. The second is that he may know and acknowledge the Lord the Redeemer, Regenerator and Savior. And the third is that he may be regenerated by Him. When this is done a person is redeemed and saved (see *True Christian Religion* 685).

Baptism is for a sign that a person is of the church, where the Lord is acknowledged, from whom is regeneration, and which has the Word, from which are the truths of faith, by which regeneration is effected. Baptism gives neither faith nor salvation, but testifies that faith and salvation will be received by those who are regenerated (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 209).

A person may be baptized when he is a young child, or as an adult (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10390).

## BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

With baptism infants are introduced into the Christian heaven, and angels are there assigned them by the Lord, to take care of them. Therefore as soon as infants are baptized, angels are appointed over them, by whom they are kept in a state to receive faith in the Lord. But as they grow up, and begin to exercise self-control and be governed by their own reason, these guardian angels leave them, and they draw into association with themselves such spirits as make one with their life and faith. From all this it is clear that baptism is insertion among Christians in the spiritual world also (*True Christian Religion* 677:5).

The [angelic spirits] said that immediately after [young children] are born on earth, angels from the heaven of innocence are present with them. Then...angels from the heaven of the serenity of peace. After that angels from the communities of charity. Then, as innocence and charity diminish when they are older children, different angels again are present with them (*Arcana Coelestia* 2303).

Some believe that only children born within the church go to heaven, and that those born out of the church do not, and for the reason that the children within the church are baptized. No one has heaven or faith through baptism. And every little child, whether within the Church or outside it, whether of pious or impious parents, is received when he dies by the Lord and educated in heaven. He is taught and imbued with affections of good, and through these with cognitions of what is true. Afterwards, as he is perfected in intelligence and wisdom he is introduced into heaven and becomes an angel (see *Heaven and Hell* 329).

A little child will be reformed and regenerated when, having grown up, he does the things that his sponsors promised on his behalf, which are two, repentance and faith in God. For they promise first that he shall renounce the devil and all his works, and second that he shall believe in God. All the little children in heaven are being initiated into these two, but to them the devil is hell, and God is the Lord. Besides, baptism is a sign in the presence of angels that a person belongs to the Church (*Apocalypse Revealed* 224:11).

### **WATER AND SPIRITUAL WASHING**

By “baptism” is meant spiritual washing, which is a washing from sins, and is called regeneration (*Doctrine of the Lord* 18:4).

“Water” in the spiritual sense is the truth of faith from the Word (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 204).

“Water” here as elsewhere in the Word means truth in the natural or external person and “spirit” means truth arising from good in the spiritual or internal person (*True Christian Religion* 144:2).

Truths are symbolized by the waters of a fountain, the waters of a river, the waters of rain, and by the waters of the washings in time past and the waters of baptism at this day.... [T]ruths purify a person’s soul from uncleanness as waters do his body; hence they are called “living waters” (*Coronis* 34).

The Lord washes or purifies a person by the Divine truth and the Divine good, and...John represented this by his baptism. For the “Holy Spirit” is the Divine truth, “fire” is the Divine good, and “water” is the representative of both. “Water” symbolizes the truth of the Word, which becomes good by a life according to it (*Apocalypse Revealed* 378:3).

### **REGENERATION AND REPENTANCE**

“Baptism” means regeneration by the Lord by means of Divine truths from the Word (*Apocalypse Explained* 475:19-20).

[W]hen baptism is performed, read of in the Word, or mentioned, the angels who are present do not understand baptism, but regeneration (*True Christian Religion* 685).

Let those who are baptized know, that baptism itself does not give faith nor salvation, but it testifies that people may receive faith and be saved, if they are regenerated (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 207).

Unless a person is regenerated by the truths of faith, and by a life according to them, he cannot be saved (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 209).

Every Christian is well aware that baptism involves purification from evils, and thus regeneration, for when he is baptized in infancy, the priest with his finger makes the sign of the cross, as a memorial of the Lord, on his forehead and breast, and afterwards turns to his sponsors and asks whether he renounces the devil and all his works, and accepts the faith; to which the sponsors, in the place of the infant, answer, "Yes." The renunciation of the devil, that is, of the evils that are from hell, and faith in the Lord, are what effect regeneration (*True Christian Religion* 685).

Repentance is the first stage in the development of the church in a person.... As a person advances into early adulthood there are many ways in which he is prepared for the church and brought into it; but it is acts of repentance which really bring this about in him. By acts of repentance are meant all that cause him not to will and commit evils which are sins against God (see *True Christian Religion* 510).

How is one to repent? In deed, that is, by examining oneself, recognizing and acknowledging one's sins, praying to the Lord, and starting a new life. Repentance is impossible without self-examination (see *True Christian Religion* 530).

### **BAPTISM IS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH**

[B]aptism is introduction into the church.... The Holy Supper is introduction into heaven.... These two sacraments, baptism and the Holy Supper, are like two gates to eternal life. By baptism, which is the first gate, every Christian is let into and introduced into what the church teaches from the Word respecting the other life, all of which teaching forms the means whereby a person can be prepared for and led to heaven. The second gate is the Holy Supper, by which every person who allows himself to be prepared and led by the Lord is admitted into and introduced into heaven (*True Christian Religion* 721).

[John the Baptist] baptized in Jordan for the reason that entrance into the land of Canaan was through that river, and "the land of Canaan" symbolized the church...and so "the Jordan" symbolized introduction into the church (*True Christian Religion* 677:4).

That repentance is the first thing of the church, is very evident from the Word. John the Baptist, who was sent beforehand to prepare people for the church which the Lord was about to establish, preached repentance at the same time he was baptizing.... The Lord Himself also preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins. By this He taught that repentance is the first thing of the church.... Still further, the Lord commanded His twelve apostles, and also the seventy whom He sent forth, to preach repentance. From all this it is clear that the first thing of the church is repentance (*True Christian Religion* 510:2).

### **THE CHURCH**

The church exists specifically where the Word is, and where the Lord is thereby known, and thus where Divine truths are revealed. Still they who are born where the Word is, and where the Lord is thereby known, are not of the church, but they who are regenerated by the Lord by the truths of the Word, that is, they who live the life of charity (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

The communion called the church consists of all people who have the church in them. The church enters into a person when he is becoming regenerate, and everyone becomes regenerate by abstaining from the evils of sin (*True Christian Religion* 510).

The Lord's Church is with all in the whole world who live in good according to their religious system. All who live in good—wherever they are—and acknowledge one God, are accepted by the Lord and come into heaven; for all who are in good acknowledge the Lord, because good is from the Lord, and the Lord is in good (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 246).