

Quotes from the Word: The Way to Heaven

OLD TESTAMENT

Show me Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truths and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation....
(Psalm 25:4-5)

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,
And He delights in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the Lord upholds him with His hand...
The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide...
Wait on the Lord,
And keep His way;
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land.
(Psalm 37:23-25, 31, 34)

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:8)

You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
(Psalm 16:11)

He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.
(Isaiah 2:3)

NEW TESTAMENT

“I am the way, the truth and the life” (Matthew 3:3).

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

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HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE HEAVEN OR HELL

Every person is born for heaven and he who receives heaven in himself in the world, is received (see *Heaven and Hell* 420).

Every person, so long as he is living in the world, walks midway between heaven and hell and is thereby in equilibrium, and thus in freedom of choice either to look upwards to God or downwards to hell. If he looks upwards to God, he acknowledges that all wisdom is from God, and in spirit he is actually with the angels in heaven. He who looks downward (as everyone does who is in falsities from evil) is in spirit actually with the devils in hell (*True Christian Religion* 69:3).

A spiritual equilibrium in its essence is freedom because it is an equilibrium between good and evil. This freedom is given to every person by the Lord, and is never taken away. This is done that a person may be reformed and saved. For without freedom there can be no reformation or salvation (see *Heaven and Hell* 597).

The Lord imputes good to every person and evil to none, consequently He does not condemn anyone to hell, but so far as a person follows raises all to heaven (*True Christian Religion* 652).

WALKING WITH THE LORD

The universe was created for the sake of the human race, in order that from it an angelic heaven might be formed. Religion promotes and accomplishes this end, and religion is walking with God (see *Coronis* 40).

Heaven is granted only to those who know the way to it and walk in that way.... [N]o one becomes an angel or comes into heaven except one who brings an angelic character with him from the world. Present in an angelic character is a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it. The spiritual world also has in it actual paths which lead to every society of heaven and to every society; and everyone sees his own path as though of himself. He sees it because there are paths there for every love, and love reveals the path and leads a person to his fellows. No one sees any other paths than those of his own love (*Divine Providence* 60).

The Lord has provided and ordained that in so far as a person allows heaven to guide his thinking and willing, to that extent his spiritual person is opened up and developed. A path is opened to heaven reaching to the Lord, and his development is to conform with what is heavenly. On the other hand, however, in so far as a person allows not heaven but the world to guide his thinking and willing, to that extent his internal spiritual person is shut off (*True Christian Religion* 401).

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The thoughts of a person that proceed from his intention or will are represented in the other life by ways. And ways are visibly presented there in exact accord with those thoughts of intention. And in accord with his *thoughts that proceed from intention*, everyone walks (*Heaven and Hell* 534, emphasis added).

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

The Lord alone is the God of heaven and earth. They therefore who do not directly approach Him, cannot see the way to heaven (*Apocalypse Revealed* 176).

Acknowledgment of the Lord, faith in Him, and love to Him, are the way to heaven; and the Word is what teaches the way. Without the Lord, by means of the Word, there is no salvation (see *Last Judgment* 55).

The life of heaven consists in being led by the Lord through good. And if a person is to attain that life, good must be implanted through truth.... As long as this is being done a person is on the road to heaven, but is not as yet in heaven. In order that the truths of faith may be corroborated and also linked to good, a person is pitched into temptations, for these serve as the means by which goodness and truth are joined together (*Arcana Coelestia* 8559).

No one can be introduced into the church and formed for heaven, except by knowledges from the Word. Without these a person does not know the way to heaven, and without these the Lord cannot dwell with him. Without the knowledges of truth and good from the Word no one can know anything of the Lord, of the angelic heaven, or of charity and faith; and that which a person does not know he cannot think, thus cannot will, and accordingly cannot believe and love. It is evident, therefore, that by means of knowledges a person learns the way to heaven (*Apocalypse Explained* 112:3).

MY YOKE IS EASY

It is not so difficult to live the life of heaven as some believe. When any thing presents itself to a person that he knows to be dishonest and unjust...it is simply necessary for him to think that it ought not to be done because it is opposed to the Divine laws. When a person has made a beginning the Lord stimulates all that is good in him, and helps him to see evils to be evils, to refrain from willing them, and finally to turn away from them (*Heaven and Hell* 533).

Since a person can live outwardly as others do, can grow rich, keep a plentiful table, dwell in an elegant house and wear fine clothing, enjoy delights, 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 (see *Heaven and Hell* 359).

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ENTERING HEAVEN

Every person is introduced into his place by the Lord in accordance with his life.... Because a person's freedom is never taken away, he can be led and taught only to the extent of his reception [of what is from the Lord] as though of himself. People who are receptive are conveyed to their places by endless roundabout ways, as though by meandering journeys (see *Divine Providence* 164).

All who have been prepared for heaven (which is done in the world of spirits, which is intermediate between heaven and hell), when the time is completed wish for heaven with great longing; and soon their eyes are opened and they see a path leading to some society in heaven; they take this path and ascend (*True Christian Religion* 622).

If a person's life is according to the truths of the Word, the way to hell and from hell is closed, and the way to the Lord and from the Lord is opened, and the person's life becomes the life of the Lord with him. This is what is meant by the Lord's words in John: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). On the other hand, if a person's life is contrary to the truths of the Word, the way from heaven and to heaven is closed, and the way to hell and from hell is opened (*Divine Wisdom* 10).

When spirits have been prepared for heaven by instruction in the places above described, which is effected in a short time on account of their being in spiritual ideas that comprehend many particulars together, they are clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly glowing white as if made of fine linen. They are brought to the way that leads upwards towards heaven, 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 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 (see *Heaven and Hell* 519).