

The Book of Revelation

Chapter 2 – Handout

Generals:

“This and the following chapter treat of the seven churches, by which are described all those in the Christian church who have any religion, and out of whom the New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, can be formed; and this is formed of those who approach the Lord alone, and at the same time perform repentance from evil works. The rest, who do not approach the Lord alone, from the confirmed denial of the Divinity of His human, and who do not perform repentance from evil works, are indeed in the church, but have nothing of the church in them.” (AR 69)

“Since the Lord alone is acknowledged as the God of heaven and earth by those who are of His New Church in the heavens, and by those who will be of His New Church upon earth; therefore, in the first chapter of Revelation the Lord alone is treated of; and in the two following chapters, it is He alone who speaks to the churches, and He alone who will give the happy things of eternal life.” (AR 70)

“The Lord appears according to the state of each person.” (AC 1838)

Nicolaitans: See the book of Acts 6:5.

Antipas: A man slain for acknowledging the Lord’s Divine Human. According to Christian tradition, John the Apostle ordained Antipas as bishop of the Pergamon during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian. The traditional account goes on to say Antipas was martyred in ca. 92 AD by burning in a brazen bull-shaped altar used for casting out demons worshiped by the local population.

- ““Antipas” is named from the spiritual or angelic language. Since by “Antipas the martyr” is signified a confessor of the truth, and, abstractly, the truth itself.” (AR 112)

Balaam: A hypocritical diviner who spoke well of the Children of Israel from Jehovah but wanted to destroy them in his heart (see Numbers 22-24).

Jezebel: Wife of King Ahab who brought the kingdom of Israel very heavily into the worship of Baal (see 1 Kings 16:31).

Ephesus

“Few know what is meant by works. This is known, that ten men can do works which externally appear alike, but which yet are dissimilar with them all; and this because they proceed from different ends and different causes, the end and the cause rendering the works either good or evil; for every work is a work of the mind, therefore, such as is the quality of the mind, such is the work. If the mind is charity, the work becomes charity; but if the mind is not charity, the work does not become charity; still, however, they may both appear alike in externals. Works appear to men in external form, but to angels in internal form; and to the Lord their quality is apparent from inmost to outmosts. . . . Such are all works, the internal quality of which the Lord alone sees, and which the angels also perceive from the Lord, when man is doing them.” (AR 76)

“That by "liars" are meant they who are in falsities, and, abstractly, the falsities themselves, may appear from many places in the Word, where "liars" and "lies" are mentioned, which, if they were adduced, would fill pages; "lies" in the spiritual sense, are nothing else than falsities. From these considerations it may appear, that by "thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," is signified that they scrutinize those things in the church which are called goods and truths, but which nevertheless are evils and falsities.” (AR 79)

“This is said to this church, because by it are meant those in the church who primarily or in the first place regard the truths of doctrine, and not the goods of life; when yet the goods of life are to be regarded in the first place, that is, primarily; for in proportion as a man is in the goods of life, in the same proportion he is really in the truths of doctrine, but not the reverse. The reason is, that the goods of life open the interiors of the mind, and these being opened, truths appear in their own light, whence they are not only understood, but also loved. It is otherwise when doctrinals are regarded primarily or in the first place. Truths may indeed then be known, but they are not seen interiorly and loved from spiritual affection; but this may be seen illustrated above. Every church in its beginning, regards the goods of life in the first place, and the truths of doctrine in the second; but as the church declines, it begins to regard the truths of doctrine in the first place, and the goods of life in the second; and at length in the end it regards faith alone, and then it not only separates the goods of charity from faith, but also omits them.” (AR 82)

“If truths of doctrine are regarded primarily, or in the first place, they may indeed be known, but not seen interiorly, and loved from spiritual affection, therefore they successively perish; for to see truths from their own light, is to see them from man's interior mind, which is called the spiritual mind, and this mind is opened by charity; and when it is opened, light and the affection of understanding truths flow in out of heaven from the Lord. Thence is enlightenment. The man who is in this enlightenment, acknowledges truths as soon as he reads or hears them; but not he whose spiritual mind is not opened, who is one that is not in the goods of charity, however he may be in the truths of doctrine.” (AR 85)

“That "the works of the Nicolaitans" are meritorious works, it has been given to know from revelation. It is said, that they hate those works, because the church from the truths of its doctrine knows this, and thence does not will it; therefore it is said, "this thou hast." Yet all those make works meritorious who put the truths of faith in the first place, and the goods of charity in the second; but not those who put the goods of charity in the first place. The reason is, that genuine charity does not wish to merit, for it loves to do good, for it is in it and acts from it; and from good it looks to the Lord; and from truths it knows that all good is from Him; it therefore has an aversion to merit.” (AR 86)

“"To eat" in the Word signifies to appropriate; and "the tree of life" signifies the Lord as to the good of love; therefore by "eating of the tree of life" is signified the appropriation of the good of love from the Lord. "To eat" signifies to appropriate, because as natural food when it is eaten is appropriated to the life of man's body, so spiritual food when it is received is appropriated to the life of his soul. "The tree of life" signifies the Lord as to the good of love, because nothing else is signified by the tree of life in the garden of Eden; also because man has celestial and spiritual life from the good of love and charity which is received from the Lord.” (AR 89)

“"Garden" in the Word signifies wisdom and intelligence, because "trees" signify the men of the church, and their "fruits" the goods of life; nothing else is signified by "the garden of Eden," for by it is described the wisdom of Adam.” (AR 90)

Smyrna

“Why these and the preceding things are said, is, because the primary falsity of those who are described by this church, is, that they do not acknowledge the Lord's Divine Human, and therefore do not approach Him.” (AR 93)

“He who does not know that by "Jews," in the Word, are meant those who are of the Lord's celestial church, who are they that are in love to Him, may fall into many mistakes when reading the Word in the prophets.” (AR 96)

“All the good of worship is formed by truths, and all truth is formed from good, therefore good without truth is not good, neither is truth, without good, truth; they appear indeed in external form to be so, but still they are not. The conjunction of good and truth is called the heavenly marriage; from this is the church with man, and it is heaven with him. If therefore there are falsities instead of truths with man, then he does the good of falsity, which is not good, for it is either pharisaical or meritorious, or innate natural good.

But examples will illustrate this. He who is in this falsity, that he believes he does good from himself, because he has the faculty of doing good; his good is not good, because he himself is in it, and not the Lord. He who is in this falsity, that he can do good which is in itself good, without a knowledge of what evil is in himself, thus without repentance, although he appears to do good, yet he does not do good, because without repentance he is in evil. He who is in this falsity, that good purifies him from evils, and does not know anything of the evils in which he is, he does no other good than spurious good, which is inwardly contaminated by his evils. He who is in this falsity, that there are many gods, and confirms himself in this, the good which he does is divided good, and divided good is not good. He who is in this falsity, that he believes the Divine in the Lord's Human is not like the soul in the body, cannot do good from Him, and good not from the Lord is not good, for it is contrary to these words of the Lord: Except one abide in Me and I in Him, he cannot bring forth any fruit; for without Me ye cannot do anything. Except one abide in Me, he is cast forth as a dried branch, and is cast into the fire and burned (John 15:4-6; and in many other passages). For good derives its quality from truths, and truths derive their esse from good.

Who does not know, that the church is not a church without doctrine; and doctrine must teach how a man shall think of God and from God; and how he shall act from God and with God; therefore doctrine must be from truths, to act according to which is called good; whence it follows, that to act according to falsities is not good. It is believed, that in the good which a man does, there is not anything from truths or falsities, when yet the quality of good is from no other source, for they cohere together like love and wisdom, and also like love and foolishness; it is the love of the wise which does good, but the love of the foolish does what is like good in externals, but totally unlike it in internals; therefore the good of the wise is like pure gold, but the good of the foolish is like gold covering over dung.” (AR 97)

“To be cast "into custody" or "prison," is to be infested, because they who are infested by evils from hell are as if they were bound in prison, for they cannot think anything but evil, when yet they will good; hence there is combat and interior anxiety, from which they cannot be released, being scarcely otherwise than like persons who are in chains; the reason is, that their good is not good so far as it coheres with falsities, and so far as it coheres with falsities evil is in it; therefore this is what is infested.

But this infestation does not exist in the natural world, but in the spiritual world, thus after death. It has often been granted me to see their infestations. They lament, saying that they have done good, and wish to do good, and yet now they cannot, because of the evils which surround them. But still they are not all infested alike, but more severely according as they have confirmed themselves in falsities, therefore it is said "the devil shall cast some of you into prison." That the confirmation of what is false is hurtful, may be seen in 'The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture (n. 91-97).’ (AR 99)

“By the first death is meant the death of the body, and by the "second death" is meant the death of the soul, which is damnation; and because "Be thou faithful unto death," signifies that they ought to acknowledge truths till by their means falsities are removed, it follows, that by "not being hurt of the second death," is signified that afterwards they shall not succumb under evils and falsities from hell, for thereby they are exempted from damnation.” (AR 106)

Pergamos

“But something must be premised concerning these, that it may be known who they are in the church, and what is their quality. There are two kinds of men of whom the Christian church at this day for the most part consists; one, who are in works alone, and in no truths; the other, who are in worship alone, and neither in works nor in truths; the former are here treated of; the latter in what is written to the church in Sardis. They who are in works alone and in no truths, are like those who act and do not understand, and deeds without understanding are inanimate. They appear before the angels like images carved out of wood; and they who have placed merit in their works, appear like those carved images, naked, without any covering whatever; they appear also like sheep without wool; and they who place merit in them, like such sheep covered with dung; for all works are done from the will by the understanding, and in the understanding they receive life, and at the same time clothing; hence it is, as was said, that they appear to the angels as things inanimate and naked.” (AR 107)

“But by thick darkness here is not meant that they are in mere falsities, but that they are in no truths of doctrine; for truths of the doctrine, which are from the Word, are in light, therefore not to be in truths is not to be in light, consequently to be in thick darkness....

The Word in many places treats of those who are in "darkness," in "the shadow of death," and in "thick darkness," whose eyes the Lord will open; and by them are meant the Gentiles, who were in good works, but not in any truths, because they did not know the Lord, nor did they have the Word. Exactly similar to these are they in the Christian world, who are in works alone and in no truths of doctrine, therefore they cannot be called anything else than Gentiles; they know the Lord indeed, but yet do not approach Him, and they have the Word, but yet do not search for the truths therein.” (AR 110)

“By "faith," here is not meant that which exists in the church at this day, but the Divine truth, because faith is of truth and truth is of faith; nothing else is meant by "faith" in heaven, nor by the "faith of God" in the Word; hence it is that faith and truth are expressed in the Hebrew language by one and the same word, and are called Amuna. Since then by "the faith of God" is meant the Divine truth, and the Word is Divine truth itself, it is evident that by "thou hast not denied My faith," is meant, that they acknowledge that the Word is the Divine truth.” (AR 111)

“Among those who place the all of the church and of salvation in good works, and not anything in truths of doctrine, who are those who are meant by "the church in Pergamos," there are some who do hypocritical works and also meritorious works, but still not all; therefore it is said, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam;" as also, "So thou hast, even thou, them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans;" and all works of worship are either good, or meritorious, or hypocritical, therefore the two latter are here spoken of, and good works afterwards in what follows.” (AR 115)

“By "the hidden manna," which they will have who are in good works, and who at the same time adjoin the truths of doctrine to works, is meant hidden wisdom of a quality like that which they have who are in the third heaven. For these, because they were in good works, and at the same time in truths of doctrine in the world, are in wisdom above other angels, but in hidden wisdom, for it is written in their life and not so much on their memory; therefore they are of such a nature that they do not talk of the truths of doctrine, but do them, and they do them because they know them, and also see them when others speak them. That the good of love is appropriated to them, and the Lord conjoins Himself with those who adjoin truths of doctrine to good works, and thus gives them wisdom in their good, and that this is "giving to eat of the hidden manna," may appear from these words of the Lord: The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life; your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that he who eateth thereof may not die. I am the living bread, that came down from heaven; if anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever (John 6:31-51). From which it is evident, that the Lord Himself is "the hidden manna" which will be in their works, if they approach Him alone. Whether you say "the Lord" or "the good of celestial love," and "the wisdom of that love," it is the same. But this is an arcanum which enters with difficulty into the natural idea of anyone, so long as it is veiled over with a cloud from worldly things; but it does enter when the mind is serene and in the sunshine, as may be seen in The Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom from beginning to end.” (AR 120)

“"A white stone" signifies this because in judgments votes were collected by stones, and by white stones those which were affirmative; that it is affirmative truths which are signified is, because "white" is predicated of truths; hence it is, that by a "white stone" are signified truths favoring good; the reason why they are also united to good, is, because good invites and unites them to itself; for all good loves truth and conjoins to itself such as agrees with itself, especially the good of celestial love; this so unites truths to itself, that they altogether make a one. Hence it is, that they see truths from good alone.” (AR 121)

“That truths united to good are not inscribed on their memories, but on their lives, may be seen above, and what is inscribed on the life alone, and not on the memory, does not appear to anyone, not even to themselves, except from this, that they perceive whether it is true, and what is true, when they hear and read; for the interiors of their mind are open even unto the Lord; and because the Lord is in them, and He sees all things, therefore He causes them to see as from themselves; but yet from their wisdom they know that they do not see truths from themselves, but from the Lord. Hence, it may appear what is meant by all this, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it:" the sum of its signification is, that they will be angels of the third heaven, if they read the Word, draw therefrom truths of doctrine, and approach the Lord.” (AR 123)

Thyatira

“By "the last works more than the first," are meant all things of their charity and faith, for these are the interior things from which are works. These things increase when charity is in the first place and faith in the second; for charity is the spiritual affection of doing good, and from it comes the spiritual affection of knowing truth, for good loves truth as food does drink, for it desires to be nourished, and is nourished, by truths; hence it is, that they who are in genuine charity have a continual increase of truth. This then is what is signified by "I know thy works the last more than the first."” (AR 130)

“It is known that in the Reformed Christian church faith alone has been accepted as the only means of salvation, and that thence the works of charity have been separated from faith, as not saving; hence it is that the entire doctrine of the salvation of man, which is called theology, at this day is that faith, consequently "the woman Jezebel."” (AR 133)

“That this is signified by "committing whoredom," is, because in every particular of the Word there is the marriage of good and truth, and this marriage is broken when good is separated and taken away from truth....From this it is, that "to commit whoredom" signifies to adulterate the goods and falsify the truths of the Word; and because this is spiritual whoredom, therefore also they who from their own reason have falsified the Word, after death, when they come into the spiritual world, become whoremongers.” (AR 134)

“They who adulterate goods appropriate to themselves unclean things, by which they defile and profane worship.” (AR 135)

“That they see things contrary to their doctrine, is evident from a thousand passages in the Word, where it is said that evils are to be shunned, and that goods are to be done; also that they who do goods come into heaven, and they who do evils into hell, as also that faith without works is dead and diabolical. But it may be asked, what part of the Word have they falsified, or where have they spiritually committed whoredom with the Word? It may be answered, that they have falsified the whole Word; for the whole Word is nothing else but the doctrine of love to the Lord, and of love towards the neighbor, for the Lord says, that on the commandments concerning those two loves hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:40). There is also in the Word the doctrine of faith, yet not of such faith, but of the faith of love.” (AR 136)

“That by "Satan" is meant the hell of those who are in falsities, and abstractly, falsities, may be seen above; therefore by its "depths" are signified the interiors of the doctrine separated from charity, which are mere falsities. The depths and interiors of that doctrine are what are delivered in their books and lectures in the universities, and thence in their preachings, the nature of which is pointed out in what is prefixed to the first chapter, where their doctrines are quoted; and particularly in what is there adduced concerning Justification by Faith and concerning Good Works; where it may be seen stated that the clergy alone know the arcana of that doctrine, but not the laity, therefore the latter principally are meant by those "who have not known the depths of Satan."” (AR 143)

“These things are signified by "a rod or staff of iron" because "a rod or staff" in the Word signifies power, and "iron" signifies natural truth, consequently the natural sense of the Word, and at the same time the natural light of man; in these two consists the power of truth. That Divine truth in the natural sense of the Word, which is the sense of its letter is in its power, may be seen in Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture (n. 37-49); from this cause the literal sense is the basis, container, and support of its spiritual sense (n. 27-36). And that all power is in the ultimates which are called things natural, may be seen in Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Love and Wisdom (n. 205-221); consequently in the natural sense of the letter of the Word, and in the natural light of man. These, therefore, are "the rod of iron" by which He shall "rule the nations" that is, overcome the evils which are from hell.” (AR 148)

“That by "stars" are signified the knowledges of good and truth, may be seen above; and because by them is intelligence and wisdom, therefore these are signified by "the morning star." It is called "the morning star" because intelligence and wisdom will be given them by the Lord, when He shall come to establish the New Church, which is the New Jerusalem; for He says: That which ye have, hold fast till I come (Rev. 2:25). By which is signified, that they must retain the few truths which they know concerning charity and its faith from the Word, and live according to them, even until the New Heaven and the New Church are formed, which is the Coming of the Lord. It is called "the morning star" because by "morning" is signified the Coming of the Lord, when there is a New Church.” (AR 151)