

ADAM

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Lesson: Genesis 2

The Writings teach us that the Lord alone is Man. What does this mean? It means that of Himself, or by Himself, or apart from the universe and all things in it which He has created, He is MAN. The Writings teach also that people, whom we call men, are men from what they receive from the Lord. It is not their bodies, it is not any of the things they get from the world, it is not anything of their own, which makes them men, but only what they get from the Lord, because He alone is MAN. People are wild animals from what they get from the world, if at the same time they get nothing from the Lord.

Listen to the very words of the Writings about what makes a man to be truly a man. "Stupid people suppose that man is man from his outward form, ...those less stupid say man is man because he can speak; and those still less stupid, that man is man because he can think. But man is not man from these things, but from the fact that he can think what is true and will what is good, and that when he thinks truth and wills good he can look up to the Divine and perceptibly receive it. It is in this that man is distinguished from the brute animals" (AC 5302).

You often ask about some man or woman, boy or girl, of whom you hear, or about whom you read in a story: "Was he good?" "Wasn't he very bad?" You want to know just what kind of a man he was. You like to read stories about heroes and their victories over difficulties and especially over villains or bad men. And such stories teach you that whatever is good and true in a man makes him truly a man, because the good and true are from the Lord alone. On the other hand, whatever is false and evil in a man makes him an evil man, because the false and evil are from hell and are opposed to the Lord. At the same time you should remember that you cannot judge whether a man is really good or evil and so you are not to try to judge any man. The Lord tells us, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Again He says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment." And again He says, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." Because the Lord judges no man, we are not to judge any man. Yet the Lord says it is right for one man to separate himself from another who appears to be bad; and so it is right for children to stay away from other children who always do bad things and want them also to do bad things. And so it is right for you to say of a man in the stories you read, "He seems a good man," and "He seems to be a very bad man."

The Word is full of stories about men and women, and all the men and women in those stories are types of good and evil, thus of good and evil men. They are also types of the Church. And they are even types of the Lord Himself. By them, that is, by those stories, the Lord teaches us about people, about His Church, and about Himself. There are the stories of Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth; and hundreds more. All those men and women stand for good and evil qualities which we have to know in order to shun evil and do good. They also stand for some quality of the Church, and in them, as in so many mirrors of different sizes, shapes, glass, and with varying light, we can see the Church reflected. But above all they stand for the Lord Himself and help us to know and see Him in His Divine Human.

Let us take as an example Adam. What does he stand for? He is a type of the Lord, of the Church, and of the celestial man. Of him it is written, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The Lord then put Adam in the Garden of Eden to look after it, and made beasts and birds for him, and Adam named them. The Lord God also made a woman for him, and he married her, and they lived happily together. While living in the Garden of Eden Adam believed that he was wise and did good from the Lord, and not at all from himself. This is what is meant by eating of the tree of life which stood in the middle of the garden. And so Adam stands for the best kind of man, for the best kind of Church, and for the Lord Himself.

But there is another story about Adam, or a second chapter to the story we have just told. It is about Adam as a type of a disobedient man, and of a disobedient Church, and of the body which the Lord took on from Mary. This Adam disobeyed the Lord by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a tree which at first stood in the border of the Garden of Eden, but which later Adam and Eve made the middle of their garden because he disobeyed the Lord. Adam hid from the Lord; but the Lord found him, punished him, and drove him out of the garden. This Adam wanted to be wise and to love from his own self, and not from the Lord, and so he fell from wisdom and love, and was cast out of Paradise, or the Garden of Eden; or he was accursed because he believed that he was wise and did good from himself, which is meant by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And this Adam had three sons: Cain and Abel, and afterwards Seth in place of Abel whom Cain killed; and still later sons and daughters.

Adam, then, is a type of the obedient man and of the disobedient man. He obeyed the Lord while he believed that he was a man only from what he received from the Lord, but he disobeyed the Lord when he believed that he was wise and did good, that is, that he was a man, from himself. And because Adam and all other men, and women also, in the stories of the Word are types of men, of the Church, and supremely of the Lord, we can understand a little of

the meaning of the words of the eighth Psalm, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." *Amen.*