

A WIFE FOR ADAM

Genesis 2:8-25

This in the letter is a very short and striking story. In all classes it might be well to start by rereading the entire assignment from the Word. Only the very youngest children will be likely to accept the literal story without question, and questions should be welcomed; for the more children question, the more interested they are. Swedenborg says (AC 155): “The words ‘a rib was built into a woman,’ have more things inmostly concealed in them than it is possible for anyone ever to discover from the letter; for the Word is such that its inmost contents regard the Lord Himself and His kingdom, and from this comes all the life of the Word.”

Doctrinal Points

All true life comes from the Lord.

The wonderful meaning revealed in parts of the Bible which are puzzling in the letter is in itself sufficient proof that Swedenborg was illumined by the Lord.

In the Most Ancient Church truth could be given men directly from heaven because their hearts were good.

Marriage is eternal. A true marriage is the highest possible human state, but it can be attained only when both husband and wife are trying to serve the Lord together, each desiring the other's happiness more than his own.

Notes for Parents

The story of the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam, which has puzzled many lovers of the Bible and has been pointed to by the unbelieving in support of their lack of faith, is another symbol story with a deep lesson hidden within it. You have seen your children pass from babyhood to the age when they wanted their own way. This is a natural development, and none of us would

want our children to remain babies forever. The human race passed through this same change. In the beginning they were innocent and trustful and depended upon the Lord as a little baby depends on its mother. They were not savages, as some would have us think, but lived in harmony and peace and looked to the Lord for everything. This was the state of the first church which developed on earth, which is called the Most Ancient Church. It was the Golden Age of mythology, and in the Bible it is described in symbol language as the Garden of Eden. *Eden* means “delight.”

But the race had to grow up just as a child does. Men and women had to begin to think of themselves as independent human beings who could make their own decisions. They had to become self-conscious. There are two kinds of self-consciousness, a good and a bad. We sometimes say a child or a grown person is “too self-conscious,” meaning that he is never able to forget himself. This is a form of selfishness, and is to be avoided. But we must all recognize that every individual is important. Each of us has certain abilities, a particular use to perform, and a particular place to fill in the world. The difference between the selfish person and the helpful, outgoing person is like the difference between Adam’s rib when it was a mere lifeless bone inside of him and the same rib after the Lord had drawn it out and breathed His life into it. Children should be taught that they will find their highest happiness in serving the Lord and helping other people. It is only selfishness which makes us unhappy. This is the real lesson of our story. We should know that the word *Adam* is merely the Hebrew word for mankind. It is the same word which is used in Genesis 1:27 near the end of the Creation story: “So God created *man* in his own image . . . male and female created he them.”

Primary

Here the lesson to emphasize is that Adam needed a help *meet* (i.e., *suitable*) for him. The need of companionship and the right attitude among playmates—one of helpfulness and happiness and sharing—is a good lesson for this age.

Anything deeper in the story should be given only in response to questions, and should be kept as simple as possible.

We have learned that God made everything in the world: the heavens and the earth, the oceans, the wonderful sun that gives us light all day and warms the earth so that the seeds can grow to give us grain and fruit, the moon which gives light at night, and the stars which help the sailors at sea to guide their ships.

God is our Heavenly Father who made us, too, and put us in the beautiful world He had prepared for us, and that we should always be thankful to Him and try to please Him by doing what He says is right.

Now we shall read about something else the Lord did for people after He had made them. He had given them a beautiful garden to live in called the Garden of Eden, and He had put everything in the garden which they would need, but there was still something more they wanted.

Have you ever been lonely? Has there, perhaps, been a morning when the day was beautiful and you could play outdoors, you had just the kind of breakfast you liked, and you had some fine new toys to play with, and still you were not quite satisfied because you were all by yourself? Then you know how Adam felt in our story.

The Lord knew just how Adam felt, and planned to give him that one thing he wanted. First He brought to Adam all the animals and birds in the garden and let Adam give them names. "And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." But none of the animals or birds was just the companion Adam wanted. He wanted a help "meet" for him: that means a companion who just suited him.

Read verses 21, 22, and 23 and see how the Lord provided the helper suitable for Adam.

Because of this story a wife is sometimes called a "helpmeet."

Every good wife is a helper for her husband.

Men and women were created to help each other.

Helping each other takes practice; so we should begin helping each other when we are very young.

When you are older, you will learn what the deeper meaning of this story is.

And do you know something else? In heaven a man and his true wife, when they are a little way off from other angels, look to other people like one angel instead of two.

Junior

It would be impossible to teach this lesson to children of this age without giving them something of the internal meaning. Their inquiring minds would not stop in the literal sense. In their notes the effort has been made to give them the simplest interpretation applicable to their age, and there are also lessons there which should be helpful to any Junior group, but the teacher may find further lessons in the other notes which he feels his class could understand.

What is the first chapter of the Bible about?

Who made the world and everything in it?

Who is God?

Did the Lord write this first chapter of the Bible to teach us about the creation of the natural world?

What does it really teach us?

In a past lesson we thought about how our souls develop, and especially about the part which the light of understanding plays in this development. But there is another meaning with that story which we need to think about today. It is the story of how the human race developed. The human race in the beginning was in very much the same condition as a little baby. The people were simple and trustful and ignorant, and the Lord had to take care of them—just as we have to take care of a little baby—until He could teach them gradually to take care of themselves. Then they learned about their Heavenly Father, just as children do, and began to try to live as He taught them; and those who continued to look to Him for guidance became a very good and happy race of people. Their life was like a beautiful garden in which they could live in peace and happiness with everything they needed provided for them by the Lord. In the Bible story this is called the *Garden of Eden*, which means “the garden of delight.” Mythology calls this

beautiful early state the *Golden Age*. Swedenborg calls it the *Most Ancient Church*.

But men had, you remember, an “earth” side to their natures, and they could choose between serving God and serving themselves, just as we can today. We can be selfish or unselfish about everything we think and do, and no one makes us *be* one or the other, although we often have to *behave* as if we were unselfish when we do not really feel that way. The Lord, however, knows just what our temptations are, and always tries to help us choose the unselfish way. Our story for today about Adam (*Adam* is the Hebrew word for *man*) in the Garden of Eden is another parable. It seems to be about the creation of woman, but you remember that in verse 27 of the first chapter of Genesis we read: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” The story of the creation of woman out of the rib of man must therefore have some inner meaning. It is given in the Bible to tell us how the Lord always provides that each of us shall have someone outside of himself to love, so that his thoughts will be taken away from himself and he will have the opportunity of becoming a really unselfish person.

Men and women were made to help each other. They need each other all through their lives. You know that your father has certain responsibilities in providing for his family and taking care of it, and your mother has different things to do. Both are needed, and neither one is comfortable or happy without the other, and you need both of them to take good care of you. Men and women, boys and girls, are different—but neither is better than the other, and if they are both willing to help each other, the family will be a happy one.

If this story seems to you a strange way for the Lord to choose to teach such a simple lesson, remember that there are still deeper meanings in it which you will learn when you are older. In every story in the Word there are deeper and deeper lessons wrapped up within waiting for us to grow old enough to understand them, and if we continue to study the Word, we shall never stop growing,

even after we go from this world into the spiritual world. The Lord always has something for us to look forward to. But unless we know the story, as He gives it to us, we shall not be able to find the deeper meanings.

Another reason why we need to read and reread these chapters in the beginning of the Bible is that they are so often referred to later in the Word. Read what the Lord said to the Pharisees in Matthew 19:3-8. You see that in order to understand what the Lord was telling them you need to know the lesson we are studying today, and you also need to know about Moses and the laws given to the Jews through him. And because we cannot any of us learn too much at once, we need to be reading the Bible all through our lives.

What does the Bible call the state in which the first fully developed people lived?

How was the Garden of Eden watered?

What two trees are mentioned?

What does Swedenborg call this period?

What does mythology call it?

In the Bible story, what did the Lord see that Adam needed?

In what state was Adam when his helper was created?

What did the Lord take out of Adam?

What did the Lord do with the rib?

What did Adam say of the woman?

What does this story teach us?



Intermediate

The Intermediates, as usual, should be given at least the outline of the spiritual sense, and there are a number of correspondences, suggested in these notes, which should be especially developed. They are just at the age when they are wishing to be independent; so the lesson about the wrong and the right kind of independence should be valuable—and also helpful to their parents.

The Creation story is a picture of how our lives develop from infancy to adulthood. Swedenborg tells us that the human race developed in this same order from the darkness of ignorance to

knowledge of the Lord and the love of doing His will, which is true manhood and womanhood. The Garden of Eden, of which the second chapter of Genesis tells us, is a picture of the happy, peaceful state of these people after they had learned enough to become a church—the Most Ancient Church. Their lives were like a fruitful garden, full of beautiful thoughts and good affections. Swedenborg says they had open communication with the heavens, and that they thought very little about the earthly part of their lives, but lived close to the Lord and knew that everything they had came from Him. He calls them “celestial” people. As our chapter tells, the garden was watered by four rivers, truth for all planes of man’s mind; and in the center was the tree of life, the perception that all life, knowledge, and power are from the Lord.

But we remember that these people did have an earthly side as well as a heavenly side. It was natural that as time went on they should think more and more about themselves as independent human beings and want to decide things for themselves instead of accepting all their ideas from the Lord. This is also a stage in our own development. You know that you are approaching the time when you will have to “live your own lives”—to make your own decisions, no longer depending on your parents to guide you. In fact, you already sometimes want to do this, don’t you? The Lord knew just how these early people felt, and He knows just how you feel. You don’t mean to be bad. You mean to be good—to obey the Lord—but you want to decide things for yourselves. Your parents know this, too, and they try to let you make your own decisions in matters in which you are wise enough to do so.

This is what is meant in our story by the words, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” To understand how this can be, we must know that in the Word “to be alone” means to be led entirely by the Lord instead of being what we mean when we use the expression “a man among men.” (Cf. Num. 23:9, Deut. 33:28, Jer. 49:31, AC 139.) To be alone with the Lord in that sense is the highest state of which we are capable—what Swedenborg calls the

“celestial” state—and those who, through obedience to the Lord, come to love Him more than everything else, reach that state in heaven. But we must choose by our own wills to serve the Lord, and we cannot do that without at least thinking of ourselves as independent individuals. So the Lord made provision that men could so think of themselves.

But there are two kinds of independence—a right and a wrong kind. When you decide something for yourself, trying to decide on what is really right according to all you have been taught of right and wrong, you are using your independence as it should be used. But when you forget about right and wrong and decide to do what you think will give you the most pleasure at the moment, you are using your independence in the wrong way. Our story this week gives us the picture of the right kind of independence.

First we read that the Lord brought to Adam all the animals and birds to see what he would call them, and that Adam gave names to them all. The animals and birds in the garden are pictures of our affections and thoughts. The Lord shows us just what affections and thoughts are in us and asks us to think about them and judge them. That is what we are doing in Sunday School and what your parents try to help you to do as you grow up. Giving a name to something is deciding just what it really is and trying to describe it. You probably call several of your friends by names which are not the ones they were given by their parents. Their “nicknames” frequently describe some quality which their friends see in them.

Then we are told that a deep sleep fell upon Adam. When these early people decided that they wanted to be independent, their minds were closed to the open vision they had had of the heavens, and this new state was like a sleep. And we are told that the Lord took one of Adam’s own ribs and made it into a woman to be a help “meet” or fit for him. *Meet* means exactly suited to his needs. We know that our bones have very little life in them and yet are very necessary to us. They compose the structure which gives us our form, and they support and protect the more important and living parts of the body. So the bones picture what really belongs

to us as individuals. Swedenborg calls them man's *Own*, or *proprium*. Without life constantly flowing in from the Lord, this selfhood or *proprium* is as dead as a skeleton. But the Lord can give it life and make it beautiful and useful. Do you see now what is meant by the creation of Eve out of the rib taken from Adam? When we know and believe that everything that is one's own is really dead apart from the Lord, and when we look to the Lord for life and guidance and try to make our *proprium* serve Him, then our individuality becomes a beautiful and useful thing and helps us and the world. This is the right kind of independence which does good instead of harm. So these people, even though they had declined from their first celestial state, could still be innocent, and this is pictured in the last verse of our chapter. If you remember your Bible story, you will recall that after the temptation of the serpent (discussed in our next lesson), Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness.

We should not leave this story without thinking of it in another connection—as it relates to marriage. A married pair should be perfectly united to each other in their thought and feeling, as Adam and Eve were in the story. Read what the Lord has to say about this in Matthew 19:3-9. Marriage comes from the Lord and is holy, and a true marriage is the most desirable thing in life. But many marriages, which have been entered into without sufficient knowledge and preparation, are not true marriages, and lead to disaster. Remember this, and never let yourselves be deceived by the careless and foolish talk of people who have never had the great happiness of a true marriage.

Basic Correspondences

to be alone = to look only to the Lord
for guidance

sleep = unconsciousness of heavenly things

the bones = what is man's *Own* (*proprium*)

Senior

Two aspects of the story should be stressed: information given us through Swedenborg about the primitive state of mankind, and the lesson in regard to marriage. The teacher should develop the latter as fully as he feels the class is able to receive it. Boy and girl relations at the senior high school level are a crucial problem, and our young people should be helped as much as possible to keep their ideals high and their thought and speech and conduct pure. They are very well aware of some of the actual difficulties which arise from improper relations between boys and girls, but they need to understand the underlying reasons for keeping themselves strong and clean in this respect. They should be impressed with the thought that their influence among their schoolmates can be important.

In *Arcana Coelestia*, n. 152 Swedenborg says: “It requires but little attention in anyone to discern that woman was not formed out of the rib of a man, and that deeper arcana are here implied than any person has heretofore been aware of.”

Our story for today is a very familiar one, and one which has puzzled those people who wish to believe in the Bible but cannot close their eyes to facts. That Swedenborg was such a man is evident from the quotation above. He was constantly finding things in the letter of Scripture which did not seem sensible; yet, knowing the power and effect of the Bible, he recognized that it must be from God and, instead of rejecting it, as some do, he went to work with his scientific mind to study it more deeply in an effort to find out its true meaning. In time this meaning was revealed to him. The wonderful content of a story such as this one today is in itself proof of the validity of Swedenborg’s illumination.

We have previously considered the Creation story particularly as it applies to us as individuals. But we said that it also had its application to the race as a whole. In six general stages the Lord developed the race of men He had placed on the earth until they were capable of being a “church.” The church is wherever the Lord’s love and wisdom are accepted and responded to by men. We are told that an individual is a church in its least form, and that a group of such individuals constitutes the church in its larger form. Swedenborg tells us that there is but one true church on earth at a

time—that group which has accepted the Lord’s truth as He has given it for that particular age and state of the race—and that from this church, as from the heart and lungs of a man, the life-blood goes forth throughout the rest of the body of good men and women in the world. The first three chapters of Genesis treat of the first church on earth, the Most Ancient Church: its rise (chapter 1), its time of flourishing (chapter 2), and its decline (chapter 3). The description of the Garden of Eden is a description of the beautiful state in which the people of this first church lived. It was a celestial church: that is, a church in which men could be governed by their hearts because the desire of their hearts was only to know and serve the Lord. They had open communication with the heavens, and thought very little about their earthly condition and life.

But man was created to be a free agent, since only by choosing freely the way of unselfish love, which is the Divine way, could he be happy; and the Lord’s desire was to give him happiness. So man had an earthly as well as a heavenly side to his nature, and as time went on he naturally began to think more of himself and his earthly possibilities, and was no longer willing to live “alone” with the Lord. As Swedenborg states it, “This posterity of the Most Ancient Church was not disposed to dwell alone, that is, to be a celestial man, or to be led by the Lord as a celestial man, but, like the Jewish Church, desired to be among the nations. And because they desired this, it is said, ‘it is not good that the man should be alone,’ for he who desires is already in evil, and it is granted him” (AC 139). We all know the feeling, the desire to be like other people. The Lord knew all that was in man, and that he would decline from the celestial state, just as He knows that we shall not always be innocent, trustful little babies, but will grow up and want to make our own decisions. So He makes provision for this change in us, and in this story He tells us how we can become independent and still remain good; for independence, in the sense of going our own way, often leads to sin and unhappiness.

First the Lord brought to Adam all the beasts and fowl of the

Garden of Eden and told him to give them names. To give a name to something is to describe it as to its quality, and the beasts and fowl are our affections and thoughts. It is our duty to examine ourselves and study our affections and thoughts with a view to understanding them and their possibilities for good or evil. This prepares us to use our independence rightly.

But when the change was actually to be made, a “deep sleep” fell upon Adam. Swedenborg says: “By a ‘deep sleep’ is meant the state into which he was let so that he might seem to himself to have what is his own, which state resembles sleep” (AC 147). The rib which was taken from Adam, we are told, represents man’s “Own” or selfhood, of which he now wished to be especially conscious. Of itself it is nothing but a dead bone; yet if the Lord’s spirit is breathed into it, it can become a beautiful living thing, with the help of which he can live a useful, happy, spiritual life. (See the quotation from the *Arcana Coelestia* at the end of this lesson.)

This story is usually considered in its relation to the subject of marriage, and the Lord Himself so uses it in Matthew 19:3-9. The doctrines of the New Church teach that true marriage on earth is the ultimatum of the union of the Divine Love and Wisdom in the Lord; and the vivification of Eve by the Lord’s spirit is a picture of this, also. If you look about you in the world, you cannot fail to see that true marriage is the happiest and most desirable state which a man and woman can experience, and you can see also that the deepest sorrows, the ugliest states, and even the most horrible crimes are the fruits of the perversions of the true relation between men and women. A true marriage comes from the Lord. It exists only when husband and wife are seeking to serve the Lord together and so are true helpmeets. Each desires the other’s happiness more than his own, and both are in the effort to learn the Lord’s will and do it. Marriage is eternal. The true husband and wife in the other world are reckoned as one angel, and are even so seen from a little distance. One who wishes such a true marriage will keep his ideal of marriage sacred, avoiding everything which might tarnish

or spoil it, even if he never in this world finds his true mate. This world is only the beginning of life, and it is the character formed here which counts to eternity.

Adult

There is so much in this lesson that the teacher has a wide range of possible emphases. He should perhaps read to the class first the summary of the spiritual meaning of this lesson found in AC 131-136, and then let the class decide what particular phase of the subject they would like to discuss.

Of our lesson for today Swedenborg says (AC 137): “The first three chapters of Genesis treat in general of the Most Ancient Church which is called ‘Man’ (*homo*), from its first period to its last, when it perished: the preceding part of this chapter treats of its most flourishing state, when it was a celestial man; here it now treats of those who inclined to their Own, and of their posterity.”

We have considered the Creation story in its relation to the regeneration of the individual, but it also treats of the development of the first people into a church—the Most Ancient Church. Of these first people, when they were placed on the earth, Swedenborg said (many years before Darwin) that their posture was not erect and that they lived an animal-like existence, but they were from the beginning men and not animals. It is interesting to compare the speculations of anthropologists with this statement from *The Divine Providence* (nn. 275-276): “The love into which man was created is love of the neighbor, to the end that he may wish as well to the neighbor as to himself and even better, and may be in the delight of that love when he is doing good to the neighbor; nearly the same as a parent’s love for his children. This love is truly human, for there is in it a spiritual [element] that distinguishes it from the natural love that belongs to brute animals. If man were born into that love he could not be born into the thick darkness of ignorance, as every man now is, but into a certain light of knowledge and intelligence therefrom; and into these he would quickly come. At first, of course, he would creep like a quadruped,

but with an inherent endeavor to raise himself up upon his feet; for however much like a quadruped he would not turn his face downward to the earth but forwards towards heaven, and would so raise himself up as to be able to look upwards. But when love of the neighbor was turned into love of self, and this love increased, human love was turned into animal love, and man from being a man became a beast, with the difference that he was able to think about what he felt in the body, and could rationally discriminate one thing from another, and could be taught, and could become a civil and moral man, and finally a spiritual man.” It is important to see the distinction between this idea—that the human race began as man and descended to the level of the beast in the period before our commonly accepted records begin—and the assumption of some evolutionists that the race began as an animal and worked itself up to its present state.

Our story for today, one of the best-known and perhaps most frequently ridiculed of the early stories of the Bible, treats of the beginning of the decline of the Most Ancient Church. The reason for this decline is stated very clearly in AC 139: “In ancient times those were said to ‘dwell alone’ who were under the Lord’s guidance as celestial men, because such were no longer infested by evils, or evil spirits.” But the Lord foresaw that men would not be content to “dwell alone” with Him. All along the way of the first development there were those who chose not to accept what the Lord taught them. But at this point in the story even the posterity wishing to be led by self was still in the desire to obey the Lord; therefore the Lord could vivify and enlighten the self to which these men looked for guidance. “That by ‘a help as with him’ (a helper suitable for him) is signified man’s Own, is evident both from the nature of this Own, and from what follows. As however the man of the church who is here treated of was well disposed, an Own was granted him, but of such a kind that it appeared as it were his own, and therefore it is said ‘a help as with him’” (AC 140). The Hebrew word here translated “as with” and in the King James version “meet for” actually means “opposite” or “comp-

lementary to.” In the relation of this story to the doctrine of marriage (see Matthew 19:3-9), this word indicates what husband and wife should be to each other. We know that a true human marriage is the highest ultimatum among men of the union of the Divine Love and Wisdom in the Lord. We should therefore seek in marriage nothing less than a perfect mating of hearts and minds, and we should hold this ideal before our children. This does not mean that there will never be differences of opinion between husband and wife, but that as both look to the Lord for guidance and hold the same basic principles, differences will be resolved amicably and with satisfaction to both. In AC 155 Swedenborg points out that inmosty this passage treats of the heavenly marriage between the Lord and His kingdom, which can be called the “bride and wife” of the Lord.

But the part of the story on which we perhaps need most to dwell is that which shows the nature of man’s Own or proprium and why it was taken out of him and made by the Lord into a living thing which he could love without harm. The Garden of Eden represents the state of the men of the Most Ancient Church. The four rivers represent truth from the Lord flowing into the various planes of the mind. The tree of life in the midst is the perception that all life, knowledge, and power are from the Lord, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil man’s power to choose between God and self. We note that first the Lord brought to Adam all the beasts and fowl of the garden that he might give them names. The beasts and fowl are men’s affections and thoughts. Thus Adam is asked to examine his affections and thoughts and determine their quality. “That to ‘call by name’ signifies to know the quality, is because the ancients, by the ‘name’ understood the essence of a thing, and by ‘seeing and calling by name,’ they understood to know the quality” (AC 144). We all, before we take any important step in life, need such self-examination.

AC 147 gives in very simple terms the outline of the spiritual meaning of the crucial verse 21: “By a ‘rib’ which is a bone of the chest, is meant man’s Own, in which there is but little vitality, and

indeed an Own which is dear to him; by ‘flesh in the place of a rib,’ is meant an Own in which there is vitality; by a ‘deep sleep’ is meant the state into which he was let so that he might seem to himself to have what is his own, which state resembles sleep, because while in it he knows not but that he lives, thinks, speaks, and acts from himself. But when he begins to know that this is false, he is roused as it were out of sleep, and becomes awake.”

The bones, in which there is little life and yet which support and give form to the whole body and protect the delicate internal organs, naturally represent man’s Own, the proprium, by which each individual is distinguished from every other. We need to see this Own as it really is and then to see it as it can be when filled with the Lord’s spirit. “The Own of man, when viewed from heaven, appears like a something that is wholly bony, inanimate, and very ugly, consequently as being in itself dead, but when vivified by the Lord it looks like flesh. For man’s Own is a mere dead thing, although to him it appears as something, indeed as everything. Whatever lives in him is from the Lord’s life, and if this were withdrawn he would fall down as dead as a stone; for man is only an organ of life, and such as is the organ, such is the life’s affection” (AC 149²). “But truly the things of man’s Own that have been vivified by the Lord appear beautiful and lovely, with variety according to the life to which the celestial of the Lord can be applied” (AC 154).

The fact that the Lord Himself (Matthew 19:3-12) used a portion of today’s lesson to point out to the Pharisees the true nature of marriage should help us to realize that the basis of a true marriage must be a oneness of thought and purpose. We should bring up our children from the start to feel that marriage is a holy thing, that the Lord’s spirit must be in it in order that the married pair may respect and love each other and may stand before the world as one. It is very important that parents exhibit this oneness to their children, by forming their judgments on the basis of the same spiritual principles and by coming into agreement as to what they will and will not allow their children to do. Neither parent should

rule the other; rather, differences of opinion should be resolved by serious consideration from the common ground of their spiritual beliefs. And the children should be educated from the start in these spiritual beliefs.

From the Writings of Swedenborg

Arcana Coelestia, n. 154: “Nothing evil and false is ever possible which is not man’s Own, and from man’s Own, for the Own of man is evil itself, and consequently man is nothing but evil and falsity. This has been evident to me from the fact that when the things of man’s Own are presented to view in the world of spirits, they appear so deformed that it is impossible to depict anything more ugly, yet with a difference according to the nature of the Own, so that he to whom the things of the Own are visibly exhibited is struck with horror, and desires to flee from himself as from a devil. But truly the things of man’s Own that have been vivified by the Lord appear beautiful and lovely, with variety according to the life to which the celestial of the Lord can be applied; and indeed those who have been endowed with charity, or vivified by it, appear like boys and girls with most beautiful countenances; and those who are in innocence, like naked infants, variously adorned with garlands of flowers encircling their bosoms, and diadems upon their heads, living and sporting in a diamond-like aura, and having a perception of happiness from the very inmost.”

Suggested Questions on the Lesson

- P. What book are we studying? *Bible*
P. Who wrote it? *God*
J. What is the first chapter of the Bible about? *creation*
J. What does *Genesis* mean? *the beginning*
P. What beautiful place was given to the first people for their home? *Eden*
J. How was the Garden of Eden watered? *river*
P. How did the Lord provide for men there? *fruit trees, seed plants*
J. What two trees are specifically mentioned? *life, knowledge*
J. In our chapter by what name are the first people called? *Adam*
J. What one thing did Adam want that he did not have? *wife*
P. What did the Lord ask Adam to do with regard to the animals and birds?
name them
P. What did the Lord do when Adam was asleep? *took rib, formed woman*
J. What does mythology call the Garden of Eden? *Golden Age*

A WIFE FOR ADAM

- J. What does Swedenborg call it? *Most Ancient Church*
- I. What is meant by man's being "alone"? *close to God*
- S. What is meant by the rib? *sense of selfhood, proprium*
- I. What is meant by the rib's being built into a woman?
made beautiful by God
- S. What is the basis of a true marriage? *desire to serv. Lord together*