

Quotes from the Word: The Tabernacle of the Lord

OLD TESTAMENT

“Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.”

“And they shall make an ark of acacia wood and you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it and you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. And you shall make two cherubim of gold you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there will I meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold. You shall make seven lamps for it. And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain” (see Exodus 25:8-11, 17-22, 31, 37, 40).

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain) that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

And Moses spoke to the all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, “This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying: ‘Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord.’” Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments (see Exodus 34: 27-29; Exodus 35:4-5, 21).

According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the Lord commanded, just so they had done it. So Moses raised up the tabernacle and he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar. So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Exodus 39:42-43; Exodus 40: 18, 33-34).

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?
He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart (Psalm 15:1-2).

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Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle (Psalm 43:3).

I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah (Psalm 61:4).

How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God (Psalm 84:1-2).

NEW TESTAMENT

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body (John 2:19-21).

And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them (Matthew 21:13-14).

He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it (Matthew 23:21).

After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, having their chests girded with golden bands (Revelation 15:4-6).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

BUILD A TABERNACLE

The Lord commanded Moses to erect a tabernacle, in which all things of heaven and the church were represented (*Apocalypse Revealed* 585:3).

“A tabernacle” signifies the church in respect to doctrine and worship. The church is a church from a life according to doctrine, and a life according to doctrine is worship. A “tabernacle” signifies the church consisting of those who are in the good of love to the Lord; and the “tent” signifies the church consisting of those who are in truths from that good (see *Apocalypse Explained* 99).

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The tent or tabernacle represented the form of heaven, and that, together with the court, it represented the three heavens, and that the Holy of Holies, which was the inmost, where the ark was, within which were the tables of the law, represented the third or inmost heaven, and that the law or testimony represented the Lord Himself. The tabernacle was called the dwelling place of Jehovah God, as heaven itself is also called. The very holiness of the whole tabernacle was from the testimony, that is, from the two tables of stone on which the law was inscribed, because the law signified the Lord as to Divine Truth, and thus as to the Word, for this is Divine Truth (see *Apocalypse Explained* 700:1-6).

The reason why the inmost heaven was meant by 'the ark' was that all the tabernacle or tent represented the whole angelic heaven, the lowest part of it being represented by the court, the middle part of it by the dwelling-place where the priest ministered, and the inmost by the dwelling-place inside the veil where the ark containing the Testimony was (*Arcana Coelestia* 9485:3).

By celestial good is meant the good of love from the Lord to the Lord, and by spiritual good is meant the good of charity toward the neighbor from the Lord. The very good of love to the Lord from the Lord is "holy of holies," because through it the Lord conjoins Himself immediately; but the good of charity toward the neighbor is "holy," because through it the Lord conjoins Himself mediately, and He conjoins Himself insofar as it has in it the good of love from the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 10129:9).

MOSES

Moses represents that external of the Word, of the church, and of worship, which receives Divine truth (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10607:2).

'And so it was, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai' means the flow of what is inward into the outward form that the Word, the Church, and worship take.' And behold, the skin of his face gleamed' means that what is inward shines forth through what is outward (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10684).

A SANCTUARY OR DWELLING PLACE FOR THE LORD

The reason why heaven is a sanctuary is that heaven is heaven by virtue of what is Divine there. For the Lord dwells with angels, and so in heaven, in what is His own, thus in what is Divine. The fact that 'a sanctuary' in the highest sense means the Lord, because He alone is holy and that alone is holy which emanates from Him, and also the fact that 'a sanctuary' means heaven, and the Church as well, and that sanctuaries are those realities of which the Lord is the source in heaven and the Church (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9479).

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On account of the holiness of that Law, and the presence of the Lord in it, the Lord spoke with Moses above the mercy-seat between the cherubs, and the ark was called “Jehovah there”. On account of the Lord’s presence in that Law and around it, miracles were wrought by the ark in which was that Law (see *Doctrine of Life* 55:2-3).

The presence of Jehovah, that is, of the Lord, appearing like a cloud and like fire upon the mount, is here called “the glory of Jehovah” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8427:2).

HOLY OF HOLIES—THE ARK WITH CHERUBIM

‘And you shall put into the ark the Testimony’ means Divine Truth, which is the Lord in heaven. This is clear from the meaning of ‘the ark’ as heaven, dealt with above; and from the meaning of ‘the Testimony’ as Divine Truth, thus the Lord in heaven (*Arcana Coelestia* 9503).

By the “testimony” or “law” in the ark is signified the Lord, for the reason that the “testimony” denotes the Divine truth, and Divine truth is the Lord in heaven. It is from this that the ark signifies the inmost heaven; and therefore it was a most holy thing, and was worshiped by the people as Jehovah; for it was believed that Jehovah dwelt there, and between the cherubs... (*Arcana Coelestia* 9485).

The very holiness of the whole tabernacle was from the testimony, that is, from the two tables of stone on which the law was inscribed, because the law signified the Lord as to Divine Truth, and thus as to the Word, for this is Divine Truth. The Lord spoke to Moses from there, because the law was there, and the law, in a broad sense, signifies the Lord as to the Word; and from the Word the Lord speaks with people. It was from above the mercy seat between the two cherubim, because the mercy seat signifies the removal of falsities that are from evil loves, and at the same time reception and hearing, while the cherubim signify protection, lest He should be approached except through the good of love (see *Apocalypse Explained* 700:1-6).

On account of this holiness of the tabernacle from the Law in the ark, the whole people of Israel, by command, encamped around it in the order of their tribes, and marched in order after it, and there was then a cloud over it by day, and a fire by night (*Doctrine of Life* 55:2, 3).

It is clear from places in the Word where ‘cherubs’ are mentioned that they mean watchfulness and providence, guarding against access to the Lord or to heaven except through the good of love, that is, except by those governed by the good of love, and also guarding against any harm being done to the good from the Lord which is present in heaven and with a person (*Arcana Coelestia* 9509:3).

Heaven and the Church, or the angels of heaven and members of the Church, receive protection from the Lord by having their interiors raised toward Him; and when they are raised they are suffused with the good of love to Him and the good of love toward the neighbor. This is what being raised toward the Lord is; and in this way, as has been stated, angels in heaven and members of the Church receive protection. Those who are raised by the Lord turn their

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face constantly toward the Lord, because the Lord keeps them joined to Himself through the good of love, whereas those who are not raised turn their face away from the Lord. All this shows what is meant by the requirement that the faces of the cherubs should be ‘toward the mercy-seat’ (*Arcana Coelestia* 9517:2).

HOLY PLACE—THE LAMP STAND

That celestial love is signified by fire in the Word, is clear, first from the signification of the fire of the altar, which denotes celestial love, or love to the Lord. So also the Lord was seen by Moses and all the Israelitish people when He descended upon Mount Sinai in fire. Since fire in the highest sense signifies the Divine Love, therefore a lampstand was placed in the tent of assembly, on which were seven lamps, which were kept burning continually. The fire of the altar signified celestial Divine Love, and the fire of the lampstand, which was flame, signified spiritual Divine Love; and therefore the oil, from which the fire of the flame arose in the lamps of the lampstand, signifies the Divine Love (see *Apocalypse Explained* 504:2,6).

The lampstand is the Divine Spiritual on account of the light it sheds; for Divine Truth which emanates from the Lord’s Divine Good is what shines in heaven. There is no other source from which angels receive light. This is why in the Word the Lord is called the Light, and why ‘light’ means faith, also an intelligent understanding of truth and a wise discernment of good, which come from the Lord alone. ‘A lampstand’ means the spiritual heaven by virtue of Divine Truth which is present there from the Lord, and therefore also means the Church; and ‘a lamp’ means faith, also an intelligent understanding of truth and a wise discernment of good, which come from the Lord alone (*Arcana Coelestia* 9548).

Consecrations were carried out with the use of oil, as at the consecration of the tent and everything there, of the altar, Aaron and his sons, also their garments, and later on of kings, on account of which they were called the anointed. For ‘oil’ means the good of love (*Arcana Coelestia* 9569).

‘Oil for the light’ means internal good present within mutual love and charity. This is clear from the meaning of ‘oil’ as the good of love and from the meaning of ‘the light’ as mutual love and charity. ‘The light’ is mutual love by virtue of the flame by which that love is meant, and it is charity by virtue of the heat and light from the flame. For spiritual heat is the good of charity, and spiritual light is the truth of faith (*Arcana Coelestia* 9473).

COURT—THE LAVER

By “washing” is signified purification; by “waters” are signified the truths of faith; and by the “laver” containing the water is signified the natural, because all spiritual purification is effected in the natural. A person has an external and an internal; the external is called the natural and the internal is called the spiritual. Both the internal and the external of a person are purified,

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the internal in heaven, and the external while the person lives in the world (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10236).

The reason why the laver was set between the Tent of meeting and the altar, and Aaron and his sons there washed their hands and their feet, was that there might be represented the purification of the heart, and regeneration, which in its essence is the conjunction of truth and good; for the conjunction of truth and good is heaven itself with a person. This conjunction is effected by means of the truths of faith, because these teach how a person ought to live; and when he lives according to the truths of faith, the conjunction of truth and good is effected (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10237a).

Baptism is called the laver of regeneration and of faith (*Apocalypse Revealed* 0).

QUOTES ABOUT THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH DEPENDS ON THE WORD

The church depends on the Word, and what the church is like in the case of each person depends on how he understands the Word (*True Christian Religion* 243, Chadwick).

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. They who are of the church, or in whom the church is, are in the affection of truth for the sake of truth, that is, they love truth because it is truth (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

THE CHURCH WITH PEOPLE

The communion called the church consists of all people in whom the church is, and 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).

That the Church of the Lord is spread over all the globe, and is thus universal; and that all those are in it who have lived in the good of charity in accordance with their religious belief; and that the Church, where the Word is and by means of it the Lord is known, is in relation to those who are outside the Church like the heart and lungs in a person (*Heaven and Hell* 328).

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The church and religion make one like truth and good. The church is a church from its doctrine; and religion is religion from life according to doctrine. And the doctrine must be of truths, and the life must be of goods (see *Doctrine of Charity* 212).

The Church, like heaven, is in a person (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

All are initiated into the church by knowing evil and not doing it, because it is against God (*The Doctrine of Charity* 27).

THE CHURCH AND HEAVEN

The Church is the foundation of heaven (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

Heaven and the church are like a single containing house. The church is the foundation and substructure, and heaven is its superstructure and roof; and the inhabitants are consociated like members of a family with household help (*5 Memorable Relations*).