

# THE GIFT OF CONJUGIAL LOVE



## **Bird's Eye View of Lesson**

The Heavenly Doctrine reveals a special kind of love that can exist between a husband and a wife—conjugal love—and describes how it differs from other good loves such as mutual love—which is the bond that exists in all healthy friendship. *Mutual love* looks for good qualities in others and loves others on account of their good qualities. *Conjugal love* comes at its highest level good loves and true ideas in the Lord. A person who loves true ideas from the Lord and applies them to life will receive this love. When a married partner dedicates his or her life to the Lord, and wisely loves his or her partner in the light of this love, that person can receive conjugal love and its blessings. In fact conjugal love is the basis for *all* other heavenly loves. People in this love experience something of the peace and happiness of heaven.

## READINGS FROM THE WORD

*The Heavenly Doctrine describes two important loves—conjugal love and mutual love. What are these loves, and how are they different?*

### **What Is Conjugal Love?**

Have you ever wondered if you will find a marriage partner who is perfectly suited to you? We live at a time when there is much confusion about marriage. Popular culture glamorizes relationships that bring instant pleasure rather than long term commitment. The Heavenly Doctrine provides new ideas about a married love that has the potential to bring tremendous happiness. This love is called *conjugal* love. (It is not to be confused with *conjugal* love—which means to be *yoked together* in marriage.) Conjugal love is a special marriage love that has existed since ancient times but is so rare today that most people are not aware of it. The Heavenly Doctrine tells us that:

Conjugal love has its origin in the marriage of Divine good and truth and so in the Lord Himself. The union of good loves and true ideas in heaven is compared to a marriage, and is called a marriage. When good loves united to truth flows down it may be seen as a union of minds, and when it flows down still further, it may be seen as a marriage between two people. As a consequence the union of minds springing from good united to truth from the Lord is conjugal love itself (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2728).

Conjugal love exists in the mind of a person who obeys the Lord by marrying the true ideas he or she knows and believes with love in doing wisely charitable actions.

### **The Heavenly Marriage of One Man and One Woman**

Any person can experience some of the qualities of conjugal love when his or her actions are formed from combining (or marrying) a desire to do good things and the true ideas that person believes. But conjugal love is most *fully* experienced by married couples



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whose minds are united not only by their love for each other but also by their shared love for what is true and good.

True marriage is a marriage of one man and one wife. This marriage is representative of the heavenly marriage, and as a consequence can contain heavenly happiness (see *Arcana Coelestia* 865:2).

This marriage is between a man and a woman because of the complementary nature of men and women. Over time the goodness of a wife is married more and more closely to the wisdom of her husband so that eventually they become like one angel. They form a unit that works together as closely as the heart and the lungs do in the body (see *Conjugal Love* 75).

### A Picture of Conjugal Love in Heaven

Swedenborg once saw a married couple who had lived in heaven for thousands of years. From a distance they appeared as one person, but as they came closer he could distinguish that it was really a husband and wife.

They said, "We have lived a blessed life in heaven from the earliest time, remaining forever in the same flower of youth that you see us in today." I looked at them closely, because I perceived that they represented conjugal love in their life as shown in their faces, and in their outward appearance as shown in the clothing they wore. The husband's eyes flashed a light sparkling with the wisdom of love. His face seemed to be inmosty radiant with this light, and because of the radiance from within, outwardly his skin virtually shone. In the case of the wife, the bright glow of a blazing light, shone in her face, so that I was simply amazed by it. Noticing this, the wife spoke to me, saying, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see only conjugal love and a picture of it"(see *Conjugal Love* 42:2-4).

Conjugal love is possible between one husband and one wife because this marriage relationship is in the image of the heavenly marriage of good and truth.

### Conjugal Love Is the Foundation of All Other Heavenly Loves

What a person loves most forms the foundation of his or her life. When conjugal love is at the heart of a person's life, it forms the basis for everything heavenly in that person.

Since natural loves spring from spiritual loves, and spiritual loves from celestial ones...we say that conjugal love is the fundamental love of all celestial and spiritual loves, and so then of natural loves (*Conjugal Love* 67).

### Blessings of Conjugal Love

*Conjugal Love* 180 describes the blessings that the Lord gives people through conjugal love:

The states produced by this love are innocence, peace, tranquility, inmost friendship, complete trust, a mutual desire of the mind and heart to do the other every good; also, as a result of all these, bliss, felicity, delight, pleasure, and, owing to an eternal enjoyment of states like this, the happiness of heaven....



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This powerful love wants to share everything with the partner it loves, and to bring him or her joy. And the Divine love in the Lord wants to shower us with love infinitely more love—which is why He created men and women the way He did.

On the deepest levels He infused into people conjugal love to which He could impart all kinds of bliss, felicity, delight and pleasure, states which, together with life, proceed and flow in solely from the Lord's Divine love through His Divine wisdom. Consequently they flow into people who are in a state of truly conjugal love, because they alone are receptive of them (*Conjugal Love* 180).

A person who centers his or her life on the marriage of good loves and true ideas has the potential to receive the Lord's deepest blessings.

### **Mutual Love—Another Heavenly Love**

Most adults enjoy wider circles of friendship than their special friendship with a husband or wife. How are these friendships different than the friendship within a marriage?

The Heavenly Doctrine calls the spiritually healthy love we share with others outside of marriage *mutual* love. This heavenly love comes from the good of love to the Lord, and prompts us to selflessly do good deeds for others. The main difference between conjugal love and mutual love is that:

Mutual love wants to give all that is his or hers to another person, except his or her own life—which is what conjugal love wills to give (see *Spiritual Experiences* 4436).

People experience joy and happiness when they do good deeds and useful services for others from mutual love—rather than for self-centered or worldly gain. Mutual love flows from conjugal love and brings joy and happiness.

### **OPTIONAL READING**

With those who live in conjugal love the interior parts of the mind are open through heaven even to the Lord, for that love flows in from the Lord through that which is inmost in people. From this influx of that love they have the Lord's kingdom within them, and from it they have genuine love towards little children, for the sake of the Lord's kingdom. From that influx also they are receptive of heavenly loves more than anybody else, and with them more than anybody else mutual love is present, for mutual love flows from conjugal love as a stream from its source (*Arcana Coelestia* 2737).



## FOCUS POINTS

1. We are told that conjugal love existed with people during the early parts of human history, but that it is virtually unknown today. How would you explain the concept of conjugal love to someone who has never heard about it?
2. Swedenborg saw a couple from the Golden Age. Why did they appear as a single angel when they were far away?
3. What distinguishes conjugal love from mutual love in relationships between people?

### Complete the Sentence

Identify whether the following sentences describe *mutual* or *conjugal* love by adding the word mutual or conjugal at the beginning.

\_\_\_\_\_ love can exist between members of the same sex.

\_\_\_\_\_ love can be shared between people who are not married to each other.

\_\_\_\_\_ love comes from the marriage of good ideas and true loves in the Lord.

\_\_\_\_\_ love wants to give everything to another person except his or her life.

\_\_\_\_\_ love is only possible in a marriage relationship between people who are members of opposite sexes.

\_\_\_\_\_ love is the source of all other loves.

## Activity 1

# Will I Find a Partner?



What are your chances of finding a marriage partner who is perfectly suited to you out of the six billion people on earth? We live at a time when there is much confusion about marriage. Movies and popular culture glamorize behaviors that do not lead to lasting happiness. Many people believe this is the way to live—it may even feel like “everyone” lives that way. So what are the chances of meeting a partner who embraces your values?

The Heavenly Doctrine makes the following statements:

The source of human attraction and repulsion is feelings that emanate from people’s minds. These feelings attract others who have similar feelings and repel other who do not. Although these emanations are countless and are not picked up by any physical sensation, they are perceived by the sensation of our soul as a single thing. *True Christianity* 365:4

Some similarities and dissimilarities are internal, and some are external. Internal ones trace their origin solely from religion. In contrast, external similarities and dissimilarities are qualities not of souls but of dispositions. By dispositions we mean people’s outward affections and consequent inclinations which are implanted after birth chiefly through their upbringings, associations, and resulting habits. It is the same with dissimilarities in manners. As for example, in the marriage of a quarrelsome man or woman with one who is peaceable—in short, in the marriage of an unmannerly man or woman with one who is well-mannered. In human beings dissimilarities show in habits of behavior. *Conjugal Love* 246 (excerpts)

For people who desire truly conjugal love, the Lord provides similar partners, and if they are not found on earth, He provides them in heaven. This results from the fact that all marriages of truly conjugal love are provided by the Lord. *Conjugal Love* 229

Focusing on becoming the kind of person we hope to marry is a healthy way to address concerns about whether or not we will find a partner. The Lord certainly wants to bless each person with His gift of marriage. And the Heavenly Doctrines do promise that there *is* a partner for each person—whether or not we meet and marry a partner on earth. Cultivating habits that support the marriage we want can help us recognize these qualities in others too.

### Discussion

1. What attracts us to others? Why can qualities quite different from our own be attractive?
2. What personal qualities do you envision in your future partner?
3. Is it possible to fall in love with *any* person and receive conjugal love? After all, developing a personal faith and acting lovingly and wisely takes a lifetime. Can partners develop conjugal love *within* their relationship?
4. Which is more important—to share the same fundamental values and beliefs with a partner, or to love the same kinds of music, clothing and activities?
5. What kinds of indicators tell us whether a person will make a good marriage partner?



## MARRIAGE AFTER DEATH

When married partners love each other tenderly, they think of eternity in regard to the marriage covenant, and not at all of its being terminated by death (*Conjugal Love* 216:4).

Jesus' words from Mark 12:25, "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage..." have left many people confused. Many marriage ceremonies end with the words "until death do us part." Some people have thought that there is always something spiritually unhealthy about sexuality and that in the next life people cease being masculine or feminine.

The New Church teaches what many couples instinctively feel when they fall in love: marriage lasts forever. When New Church couples exchange vows they do so with the hope of *eternal* marriage. After death, people who truly love each other meet again and live in heaven as married partners. The Heavenly Doctrine teaches: "People who are in marriage love, love to think and will each as the other, and so to become like one person. The image and likeness of one is in the mind of the other, and they live together in all things of love even to the inmost. People who live together like this on earth live together as angels after death" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2732).

The Heavenly Doctrine explains how Jesus' words from Mark 12 fit in with the concept of eternal marriage. These words were spoken a group of Sadducees, who did not believe in life after death. The Heavenly Doctrine explains "When a person does not believe he will live after death, he also disbelieves that there is anything spiritual.... People like this live a life of the body and of the world" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1201). We picture marriage love as love between two people, but on a deeper level it involves our "marriage" with the Lord—learning about Him, loving Him and doing His will. Lives lacking this love are selfish and empty. They are not part of the kingdom of heaven. They "neither marry or nor are given in marriage." Only people who work on the heavenly marriage of good and truth inside themselves while alive on earth may bring this marriage into heaven after death.

Not all marriages last—and some people die before they are old enough to marry, or do not find an appropriate partner on earth. People who lead good lives but do not find an eternal partner in this world are led to an eternal partner after death. Swedenborg describes both married partners meeting again after death and also couples meeting for the first time, falling in love and being married in beautiful wedding ceremonies in heaven (see *Conjugal Love* 45-54).

### Speak Up

1. How might believing either that marriage ends with death or that marriage can last to eternity affect the ways in which married partners treat each other?
2. Explain the Lord's statement "when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage...." Imagine you are talking to someone who has been taught that it is literally true.
3. A person you are dating believes there is no marriage after death. What might you tell him or her?

### Activity 3

# MY IDEAL PARTNER



## Visualize

What qualities do you want your married partner to have? Visualize 10-12 personal qualities e.g. understanding, spiritual, caring, funny. Write these qualities below.

## Rank

Now rank these qualities in order of importance to you.

1.	5.	9.
2.	6.	10.
3.	7.	11.
4.	8.	12.



## Organize

Create a word cloud from the ranked qualities (see sample). Make high ranking words larger and bolder and low ranking words smaller. (Explore this activity online at [www.wordle.com](http://www.wordle.com). Look for a variety of color schemes, fonts, layouts and special effects!)



*Donnette Alfelt shares thoughts on marriage from the vantage point of an older person who is at the "top of the yardstick" of life.*

## Marriage

Excerpted from "*From the Top of the Yardstick*" by Donnette Alfelt  
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Just now, the time for finding the right person or planning your wedding day may seem very distant. However if you honor and long for a marriage of trust and commitment to one partner, now is the time to begin working on it. There are things you can do now based on your beliefs and hopes about the marriage covenant:

- Get to know who you are and what you value.
- Avoid influences and actions that might degrade the ideals of marriage.
- Work on qualities in yourself that you will be looking for in a partner. The moral virtues of honesty, chastity, communication skills, loyalty, compassion, etc.
- Learn to understand and appreciate how the sexes differ and how they can complement each other.
- Learn practical skills that will help make your future home run more smoothly.
- Improve your mind through education so that you will be able to work if desired or necessary and so that you can become a more informed, interesting and useful partner.
- Work on healthy friendships with both sexes in preparation for a friendship with your married partner.
- Practice kindness and communication skills with family and friends who are in your life now.
- Learn to deal with the unexpected.
- Look for mentors.
- Trust in the Lord and follow His leading.

Of course all of these things will lead to a more interesting and happy life even apart from marriage.

You live in a culture that for the most part doesn't seem to value marriage. It will often be very difficult to rise above the influences that bombard you with messages that dishonor and disrespect the marriage vows.



## Further Reading

# THE IDEAL OF MARRIAGE TO ETERNITY

A Sermon by the Rev. Douglas M. Taylor

"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (*Matthew 22:30*).

For centuries there has been but one standard interpretation of this teaching given by the Lord. It has been regarded as unassailable proof that there was no such thing as a married couple in heaven, that angels are not characterized or distinguished by sexes, that consequently all marriages are dissolved at death, and are never to be resumed in the other life.

This is the way that people have thought when thinking from the doctrine of their church, though many, when thinking from common perception or common sense, have expressed belief in the idea that they will be re-united with their married partners. When thinking in this way, they invariably, and rightly, think of the partner as remaining of the same gender as he or she was while on earth. The notion, that men in the other life are anything else but men or women anything else but women, mercifully does not then enter their heads.

Nor does the doctrine that prevails in the Christian world concerning our text come into the thought while one is thinking from common perception. It is good that this is so, that common perception prevails over the common doctrine, because few things destroy a marriage of love truly conjugal more readily than does the notion that there is to be no marriage lasting into eternity. The teaching on this point ought to be clear, and indeed it is; for we are definitely taught that unless there is in the mind an idea of what is eternal in marriage, that is, an eternal companionship, the woman becomes less than a wife, and the man something less than a husband, and conjugal love perishes (see *Spiritual Experiences* 6110:16, *Conjugal Love* 216).

### God Intends Us to Marry

Yet the error of supposing that there are no married partners in heaven, while very serious, is nonetheless understandable. If one believes that a human being is a human being from ones body rather than from ones mind or spirit, then it is fatally easy to fall further into error, thinking that with bodily differences erased by death, those in the other world will be neither male nor female. If, further, it is thought that the married state is less than perfect, that it is a kind of natural permission for the sake of the propagation of the human race on earth (e.g. if marriage is held to be inferior to the state of celibacy, as has been taught for centuries and is still being taught) then it is only to be expected that people would believe that angels would certainly not have anything to do with marriage. Such false and twisted ideas concerning life's most precious jewel, a marriage of love truly conjugal, act like a pair of distorting spectacles before the eyes of many who read in the Word that the Lord said: "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (*Matthew 22:30*).

Such false assumptions distort the vision of many readers of these words, causing them to see things there that were never written. For example, it is not said there, nor anywhere else in the Word, that there are *no married partners in heaven*. It is said that after death they are like

"the angels of God in heaven." It is *not* said that the angels are a race apart from the human race, or that they live in a state of celibacy. That is an assumption that has been made unthinkingly for hundreds of years. Yet this is nowhere stated. The text does not say that there is no such thing as the state of marriage in the other life. For all joys from first to last, we are taught in the Writings for the New Church, are gathered into conjugal love; it is the container of all other delights.

So it is that all in heaven are in the married state, and that in the Word, heaven is actually compared to a marriage (see Matthew 22:2). If married couples, while living together on earth, have begun to receive from the Lord a spiritual love of marriage, i.e. conjugal love, and if they have continued steadfastly in it and in the Lord's commandments until the end of their days on earth, then their marriage will be resumed in the other world. They enter into heaven married. It is not necessary for them to marry or be given in marriage, for they are as the angels of God in heaven.

### **Our Life on Earth Determines Our Married State after Death**

However, if a married couple, believing in the eternity of marriage and having love truly conjugal as their ideal, nevertheless find in the other life that there is a hitherto unsuspected internal dissimilarity that separates them, they will each be provided with a suitable partner with whom they may live as married partners in heaven. But note: it is not that they married or were given in marriage in heaven. The suitable partner is provided on the basis of the person's ruling love, on the basis of the love that he or she attained while on earth. The partner has to be suitable to our degree of regeneration, for regeneration and acquiring conjugal love walk hand in hand. So the criterion is the same; it is our life on earth that determines the nature and quality of our married state in the other life. The marriage takes place before we come into heaven or it does not take place at all. "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (text).

### **Marriage in the Human Mind**

This leads us to consider another kind of marriage that is also to be understood by the Lord's words on this occasion. What the Lord was referring to inmosty was the marriage that has to take place in every human mind: the marriage or wedding of the will to the understanding. The mind consists of two parts, the will or affectional side, and the understanding or thinking side. The will is made up of affections or feelings, while the understanding is made up of thoughts and reasonings. The whole effort of our life on earth should be to make these two—the will side of the mind and the understanding—to act as one, to be no longer two but one flesh.

This is done when we act according to what we believe and understand to be good and true. The understanding is first instructed in what is good and true, and then begins the struggle to bring the will into line with this new vision of heavenly life. What the understanding sees as the true and good way of life, the will must learn to love and live. Or, as the Writings express it, the doctrine of life in the understanding must become the life of doctrine in the will. In this way, when every deed matches our creed, our mind is united and at peace. One part is no longer battling with the other; the will and understanding work together in conjunction. They are wedded together, married to eternity.

It was this kind of marriage to which the Lord was primarily referring when He said that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." This marriage of good and truth, of will and understanding, of deed and creed, must take place in this life or it will never take place. In the resurrection it will be too late. After

death, the will and the understanding do not marry nor are they given in marriage. They must be united in this life.

### **Why Did the Lord Explain It This Way?**

But why did not the Lord explain this to the Sadducees when they tried to trap Him with their question about marriage in the afterlife? Why did not the Lord explain plainly that there is certainly a heavenly marriage, though it differs from an earthly one? Why did He allow the Christian Church, founded upon the words of His Gospel, to remain in such obscurity with regard to marriage? Could He not have given (at that time) the unambiguous explanation He has now given in the Heavenly Doctrines?

Actually, that would have been worse than useless. The Lord in His infinite wisdom and mercy could perceive that mankind in general was incapable at that time of seeing such interior truths. Even the disciples, who were allowed to see more than the multitude, were unable to see the heavenly meaning of the parable of the sower, and needed to have it explained to them (see Luke 8:9). There were many things that they could not understand, including the doctrine about the spiritual marriage of good and truth, and the idea of a happy marriage to eternity. This was simply over the heads of the disciples.

Still less could the natural minded Sadducees have grasped even an introductory idea of a spiritual marriage. They completely denied the afterlife. Concerning the nature of such people, we read: "When a man is such that he does not believe that he will live after death, he also disbelieves that there is anything internal which is spiritual and celestial; and such are those who live in mere lusts, because they live a mere life of the body and of the world, especially those who are immersed in loathsome avarice" (*Arcana Coelestia* 1201).

### **Better no Marriage instead of a Wrong Idea of Marriage**

The Sadducees were like this, and because their idea of marriage was manifestly restricted to the plane of the body, the concept of conjugal love, a love pure and clean above any other love of which mankind is capable, the concept of a spiritual kind of marriage was beyond them. Even the Lord's Divine wisdom itself on this subject would have been like thick darkness to their carnal minds. It was better, to let them think that there was no marriage in heaven than to have them defile the idea of a heavenly marriage with their natural ideas.

For certain it is that there is no such thing in heaven as the kind of marriage the Sadducees had in mind. There is no such thing in heaven as marriage simply and solely for the sake of the propagation of physical offspring. The Lord's words were literally true when applied to the Sadducees' concept of marriage, and that is another reason for His speaking in the way He did.

### **People Are Married in Heaven**

In the work *Heaven and Hell* there is a passage explaining these words of the Lord with regard to marriage in the afterlife, in which it is said that while there are indeed married people in heaven, such marriages differ from those on earth. They differ principally in this, that there is no propagation of offspring. We read: "The procreation of offspring is another purpose of marriages on earth, but not of marriages in heaven, since in heaven the procreation of good and truth takes the place of the procreation of offspring ... In heaven marriages are spiritual, and cannot properly be called marriages, but conjunctions of minds from the conjunction of good and truth. But on earth there are marriages, because these are not of the spirit alone but also of the flesh" (*Heaven and Hell* 382b).

## Male and Female after Death

It should not be supposed from this, however, that in the other world the inhabitants are bodiless minds without shape or form. Let us recall the familiar teaching that there is a spiritual body as well as a natural body, and that when the natural body is put off by death, we live in the spiritual body, and this is an exact replica of the mind, a beautiful mind being represented or manifested by a beautiful spiritual body, a masculine mind being manifested in a male spiritual body, a feminine mind in a female spiritual body. So it is that in the heavens also, the conjunction of minds resulting from the conjunction of good and truth descends into the body, the spiritual body, the only difference being that there is, in the nature of the case, no propagation of physical offspring. Instead the propagation of spiritual offspring, that is, of new affections and delights belonging to good and truth. These and many other detailed teachings about marriages in heaven are given in the Writings, notably in the works *Heaven and Hell* and *Conjugal Love*, in both of which works a whole chapter is devoted to the subject. Besides this, there are sundry other references scattered throughout the Writings. It is of utmost importance for the men and women of the New Church to understand this teaching and the implications of it, so that they can use it, because it is promised that to the New Jerusalem will be restored that precious jewel of life, conjugal love.

## We Receive Conjugal Love by Shunning Things that Destroy It

But this is not attained simply by being a member of a church organization. Conjugal love is given by the Lord according to His laws, according to His way of operation. It is received by mankind only in the proportion that what is contrary to conjugal love is shunned and rejected. And one of the forces most destructive of conjugal love in the world is the notion that there is no marriage in the afterlife, that marriage has nothing of eternity in it.

Likewise, in a particular marriage, the failure to keep before the mind the ideal of a happy marriage continuing into eternity causes the loss of conjugal love in that marriage. To entertain constantly the idea that one's married partner in this life is probably not going to be one's conjugal partner in the spiritual world is to cause conjugal love to dry up in that particular marriage, leaving an inward coldness even if outwardly there is agreement. Such is the teaching of the Writings, especially in the following passage:

"The reason why those who are in love truly conjugal look to what is eternal is that there is eternity in that love; and its eternity is from the fact that this love with the wife and wisdom with the husband increase to eternity, and in their increase or progression married partners enter more and more deeply into the blessings of heaven, which their wisdom and its love at the same time store up within them. If therefore the idea of what is eternal were eradicated, or if in any case it were to escape from their minds, it would be as if they were cast down from heaven ... They are disunited as far as conjugal love is concerned, though not at the same time as to friendship, for this dwells in external things, but [conjugal love] in internals. It is the same in marriages on earth. There, when married partners tenderly love each other, they have what is eternal in their thoughts with regard to the covenant, and nothing at all of its end by death; and if they do think of this, they grieve, and yet in thought are comforted with the hope of its continuance after death" (*Conjugal Love* 216a).

The same number from *Conjugal Love* goes on to give the experience of one couple in the spiritual world who sometimes believed that they would be eternal partners, but at other times lost this belief, the reason being that internally they were really dissimilar. When this became quite clear after death, they separated; but because they both believed in the eternity of marriage, each was provided with a partner who was internally similar.

So the conclusion is that it is the general denial of anything eternal in any marriage that destroys conjugal love. With regard to one's own married partner in this life, the thought that he or she is internally dissimilar and will not be one's eternal partner puts an end to any conjugal love in that particular marriage. However, if there remains the general acknowledgment that there is marriage in the heavens, a suitable partner can be provided in the other life; but under no circumstances can this be done if there is a confirmed denial of the eternity of conjugal love; for to deny this is to deny the inmost bliss of heaven.

The practical purpose for which the Lord has revealed so much about the nature of marriage in the heavens ought now to be clear. We are to hold steadfastly to the ideal of the eternity of marriage. We are to enter into our marriage with the conviction that it will last to eternity, and at all times we are to abhor the corroding thought that it will end at death. We are to act as if we know for certain that we are eternal partners, for only in this way can conjugal love, the container of all joys from first to last, be given by the Lord and preserved upon the earth. Amen.

*Lessons: Matthew 22:1-33; Heaven and Hell 382a&b, 383*