

Notes from Kurt Ho. Asplundh
Shift notes – Week 2 – day 1

After Jacob stole Esau's blessing, his older brother vowed to kill him. Rebekah, frightened by this threat, told Jacob to flee to Haran where he should stay with her brother Laban until Esau's anger cooled.

The internal sense of Esau's murderous intention reveals a remarkable providence. The intention is not to kill but to remove the good that does not properly belong, thereby opening the way for influx of genuine good from the Lord. The Writings explain:

AC 3607 ...'killing Jacob his brother' does not mean in the internal sense killing but the removal of that life which does not properly belong to truth.... for when truth seems to possess life from itself it does not possess any life at all other than that which is not life in itself. But when that life from itself is removed, life itself is then conferred on it, that is to say, the life received by way of good from the Lord, who is life itself... bringing with it wisdom and intelligence that are beyond description.

The Writings call this the “conjugal principle” or “conjugal relationship.”

AC 3610 [4] (Elliot) The conjugal relationship which exists between good and truth lies concealed for a long time but is nevertheless present as the effort within the efficient cause and from this within the effect itself. But it does not appear until everything has been properly ordered, and once everything has been properly ordered only then does it emerge and manifest itself. This effort is what is meant by the intention to invert the state and to remove from truth the life from itself. From this it is evident that the note which is sounded in the internal sense is altogether different from that in the sense of the letter; that is to say, it speaks of truth being brought into order and receiving life, not of the destruction and removal of life from it.

Yes, the Lord is present throughout our life, leading us away from evil and to good. He does this in secret ways over a long period of time. Rebekah's lament reveals more:

3617. 'Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?' means that otherwise there would be no conjunction. This is clear from the fact that if those events that are represented in the internal sense in what follows below by Jacob's residing with Laban had not taken place truth could not have been joined to good, and so good could not have been united to truth in the natural, and the rational would consequently have been made bereft of both. For without the joining of truth to good, and the uniting of good to truth in the natural, no regeneration, which in this chapter has been the subject in the relative sense, would take place.

Shift notes – Week 2 – day 2

Genesis 28: 1-5 – Jacob, blessed again, is sent to Laban in Padan-aram.

AC 3656. The subject here in the highest sense is the way the Lord began to make Divine both the truth and the good of His Natural.... But in the representative sense the subject is the way in which the Lord regenerates or makes new both the truth and the good of the natural man....

The interactions described here between Jacob, Esau, Isaac and Rebekah carry a deep reality. Even setting aside the interior message about the Lord, it presents the account of human development in the process of regeneration.

We are created “vessels of life.” Yet the Lord gives us the appearance of self-life. By our hereditary decline, we have become “inverted vessels,” non-receptive of the Lord’s inflowing life. The twin sons, Esau and Jacob, represent the partnership of the human will and understanding, the good and truth of the natural degree. These two should work together, should be conjoined, for there cannot be truth without good or good without truth. This is the “conjugal relationship” mentioned in AC 3610. It develops slowly.

Jacob, as the second born, represented truth in the natural, but now represents the good of that truth because “he has now carried off the birthright of Esau, and also his blessing, and has thereby put on the person of Esau” (AC 3659). Jacob will spend years in exile with Laban. During this time, a miracle of inversion and conjunction will take place.

AC 3665 [2] The case herein is this: When man is being regenerated, he is at first led by the Lord as an infant, then as a child, afterwards as a youth, and at last as an adult. The truths he learns as an infant child are altogether external and corporeal, for as yet he is unable to apprehend interior truths.

[3] The knowledges which are learned from infancy to childhood are like most general vessels, which are to be filled with goods, and in proportion as they are filled the man is enlightened. If the vessels are such as to admit into them genuine goods, then the man is enlightened from the Divine that is within them, and this successively more and more; but if they are such that genuine goods cannot be in them, then the man is not enlightened.

[5] With regard to these very knowledges of external or corporeal truth ...they are in general such as are contained in the historicals of the Word.... When such knowledges as these are known and thought of by a young child, the angels who are with him think of the Divine things which they represent and signify; and because the angels are affected therewith, their affection is communicated, and causes the delight and pleasure which the child experiences therein; and prepares his mind to receive genuine truths and goods. Such and very many others are the knowledges of external and corporeal truth....

Concerning “collateral good.”

In this section we find the term “collateral good” and the phrase “collateral good of a common stock. Bishop Pendleton speaks of this toward the end of his second article on The Natural Man series. The following passage also gives light on this subject:

AC 3778 [B]ecause the representative Jewish Church commenced in Abraham, and was renewed among his descendants from Jacob, therefore Terah and his three sons put on the representation of churches-Abram the representation of a genuine church, such as exists with those who have the Word; but Nahor his brother the representation of a church such as exists among the Gentiles who have not the Word.... [2] This therefore is the reason why by Nahor, his son Bethuel, and Bethuel's son Laban, there is represented the collateral good of a common stock, that is, the good in which they are who are of the Lord's church among the Gentiles. This good differs from the good of a common stock in the direct line of descent, in this respect-that the truths which are conjoined with their good are not genuine, but most of them are external appearances which are called fallacies of the senses; for these Gentiles have not the Word whereby they can be enlightened. In its essence indeed good is only one, but it receives its quality from the truths implanted in it, and thereby becomes various. The truths that to the Gentiles appear as truths are in general that they should worship some God from whom they seek their good and to whom they attribute it, and so long as they live in the world they do not know that this God is the Lord; also that they should adore their God under images, which they account holy; besides many other things. Nevertheless these things are no hindrance to their being saved equally with Christians, provided they live in love to their God and in love toward the neighbor; for thus in the other life they have a capacity to receive interior truths (see n. 932, 1032, 1059, 2049, 2051, 2284, 2589-2604, 2861, 2863, 3263).

As we shall see later in the story, the goods signified by Laban are a means for Jacob's enrichment. But eventually, there is a separation of Jacob from Laban. In the process of regeneration apparent truths must give way to genuine truths.

AC 3982 it is necessary to have a clear notion of the goods represented by both Laban and Jacob; and it must be remembered that the good represented by Laban is of such a nature as to be useful merely to introduce genuine goods and truths; and that when it has performed this useful service it is left behind.... When a man is being born anew by the Lord, he is led by various affections of good and truth which are not affections of genuine good and truth, but are of use merely to enable us to apprehend these, and then to enable us to become imbued with them; and when this has been done the previous affections are forgotten and left behind, because they had served merely as means. The case is the same with the collateral good signified by "Laban," in respect to the good of truth signified by "Jacob."

Shift notes – Week 2 – day 3

The text for today, Gen. 28: 10-15, gives the account of Jacob's dream of the ladder (stairway) from earth to heaven with the angels ascending and descending upon it.

TCR 24: [2] It is said that the man rises; but the meaning is that he is raised up by God. For in acquiring knowledges for himself man exercises his freedom of choice; but as he acquires for himself knowledges from the Word by means of his understanding he prepares the way by which God comes down and raises him up. The knowledges by means of which the human understanding rises, God holding it in His hand and leading it, may be likened to the steps of the ladder seen by Jacob, which was set upon the earth with the top of it reaching to heaven, by which the angels ascended while Jehovah stood above it (Gen. 28:12, 13). It is wholly different when these knowledges are lacking, or when man despises them.

AC 3702 The arcanum which lies concealed in the internal sense of these words, is that all goods and truths descend from the Lord, and ascend to Him; that is, that He is the first and the last; for man has been so created that the Divine things of the Lord may descend through him down to the ultimates of nature, and from the ultimates of nature may ascend to Him; so that man might be a medium that unites the Divine with the world of nature, and the world of nature with the Divine; and that thus the very ultimate of nature might live from the Divine through man as the uniting medium; which would be the case if man had lived according to Divine order.

AC 3709e Truths of the good of doctrine are the doctrinal things of love to the Lord and of charity toward the neighbor, which are said to be conjoined with good in the natural man when to know them for the sake of doing them is a pleasure and a delight.

Concerning the stone that was Jacob's pillow:

AC 1298. Stones have signified truth for the reason that the boundaries of the most ancient people were marked off by stones, and that they set up stones as witnesses that the case was so and so, or that it was true; as is evident from the stone that Jacob set up for a pillar

AC 3726. The ascent is now treated of; namely, that it is from the ultimate of order (concerning which see above, n. 3720, 3721); in the present verse that it is truth which is the ultimate of order. It is this ultimate which is called a holy boundary, and is signified by the stone which Jacob took and set for a pillar. That truth is the ultimate of order, may be seen from the fact that good cannot terminate in good, but in truth, for truth is the recipient of good (n. 2261, 2434, 3049, 3068, 3180, 3318, 3387, 3470, 3570).

