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The highest level or inmost circle is the celestial heaven. This is a heavenly region or state in which people find themselves if their focus is on loving God because their feelings and affections lead them to live that way.

## Hell

There is also a general division between the ‘*heart kingdom*’ and the ‘*head kingdom*’ of Hell with the difference that, whereas good feelings and true thoughts lead a person in heaven, bad feelings and false thoughts lead a person in hell. Hell can therefore be thought of as the complete opposite of heaven – a mirror inversion.

There are also three levels in Hell – highest, intermediate and lowest.

The highest level is the inversion of the lowest or natural level of heaven and is the natural hell. This is a hellish region or state in which people find themselves if they fail to do good for others, either because they don’t feel the need to obey teachings like the Golden Rule or because they don’t think or believe that doing good for others is necessary.

The intermediate level is the inversion of the intermediate or spiritual level of heaven and is the satanical hell. This is a hellish region or state in which people find themselves if their focus is on loving the things of the world above all else because their thoughts and perceptions lead them to live that way.

The lowest level is the inversion of the highest level of heaven and is the diabolical hell. This is a hellish region or state in which people find themselves if their focus is on loving themselves above all else because their feelings and affections lead them to live that way.



*It is not so hard to lead a heaven-bound life as people think it is.*  
Heaven and Hell 528

*God does not throw anyone into hell. We throw ourselves in, not only while we are living in this world but after death as well, when we arrive among spirits.* Heaven and Hell 548

# The Spiritual World

What or where is the Spiritual World? Is the Spiritual World somewhere we reach when we die or are we, perhaps, already a part of the Spiritual World?

In Emanuel Swedenborg’s most popular book, *Heaven and Hell*, he describes the entirety of the Spiritual World from the highest Heaven to the lowest Hell. And he simply says - “*there is a spiritual world and a natural world within each of us*” – “*we are in the spiritual world as well as in the natural world*”.

In essence Swedenborg is telling us that we are living in two worlds at the same time – a natural world of which we are very much aware and a deeper inner spiritual world of which we normally have very little awareness. Whilst we can to some extent get in touch with our inner spiritual selves it is only when we die and leave behind the natural world that we truly awake to the reality of the spiritual world previously hidden within us.

But what is the structure of the Spiritual World – how is it organised? Well essentially it is divided into three parts – the World of Spirits, Heaven and Hell.

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## World of Spirits - an intermediate State

The world of spirits is neither Heaven nor Hell but a place or state between the two. It is the region or state of the spiritual world that lies alongside our natural or physical universe; we are living in it, as to our spirits, while we are alive in this world. Because of this it is the region of the spiritual world in which we awaken from death. Good and bad spirits from the World of Spirits are with every individual in this world. The good spirits provide an inflow of good feelings and thoughts to counteract the inflow of bad feelings and thoughts from bad spirits. As a result we are kept in a balance between the two. When we awaken from death in the World of Spirits our true character emerges and we freely enter Heaven or Hell as the result of choices for good or bad made during our life.

## Heaven

In this world we tend to be one of two types of people. We are either led by our 'hearts' - feelings and affections, or we are led by our 'heads' - thoughts and perceptions; and this shows, for example, in the way in which we make decisions in life. And the same is true of the spiritual world and Heaven in particular so there is a general division between the 'heart kingdom' and the 'head kingdom' of Heaven.

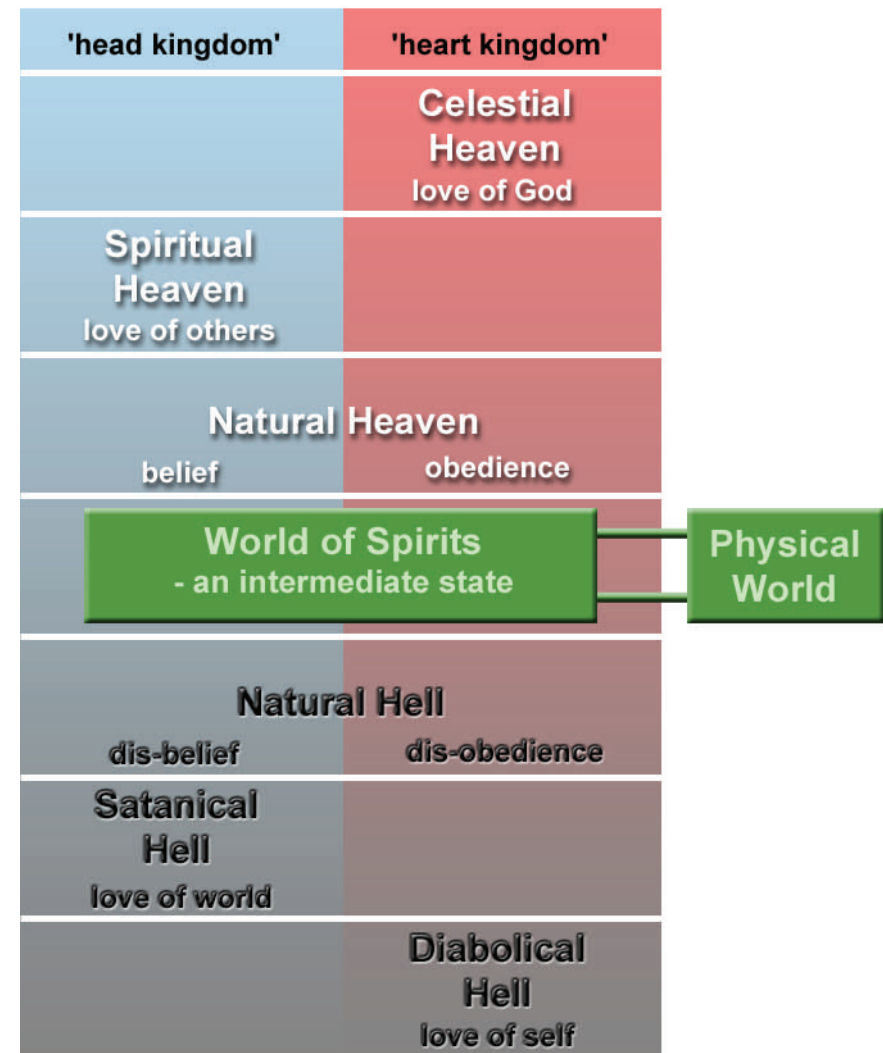
Heaven is also divided into three levels – lowest, intermediate and highest. Sometimes we tend to think about what is more perfect as being higher but at other times we think about perfection as being a more inner state. So the levels of Heaven can also be thought of as three circles – outer, inner and inmost.

The lowest level or outer circle is the natural heaven. This is a heavenly region or state in which people find themselves if they do good for others, either because they feel the need to obey teachings like the Golden Rule or because they think and believe it is right to do good for others.

The intermediate level or inner circle is the spiritual heaven. This is a heavenly region or state in which people find themselves if their focus is on loving others because their thoughts and perceptions lead them to live that way.

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# The Spiritual World



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