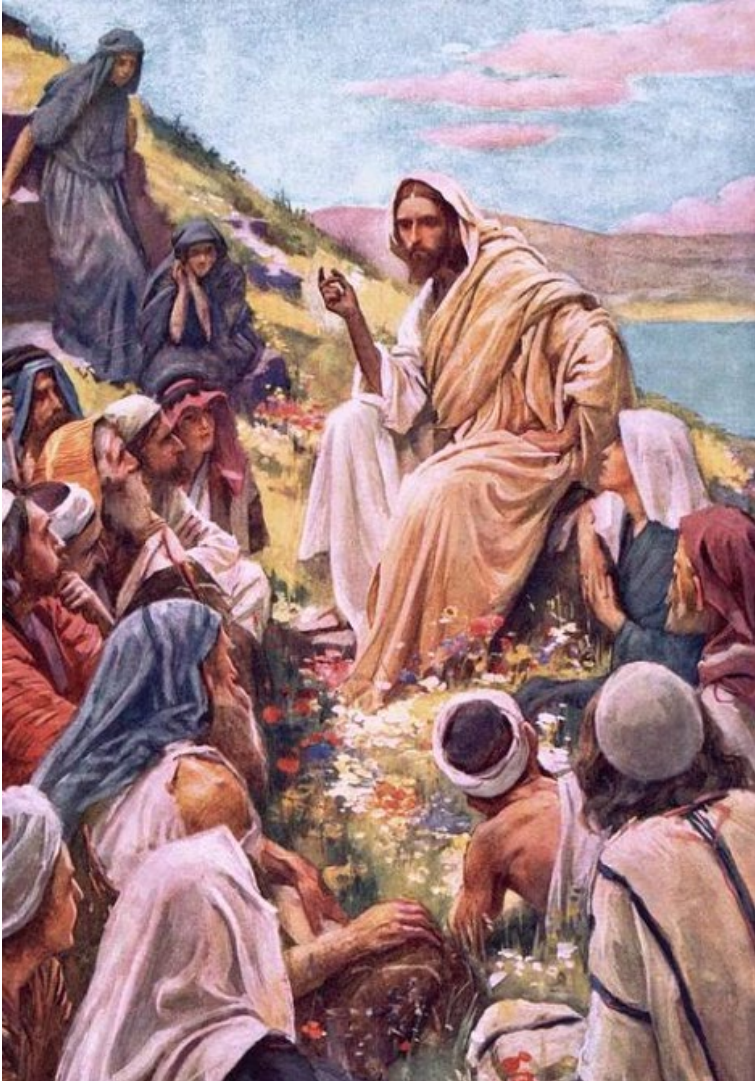


*You have heard that it was declared...
but I say to you...*



Week 1: Introduction and Murder

Matthew 5:21-24

21 You have heard that it was declared by the ancients, Thou shalt not murder¹; and whoever shall murder shall be subject to the judgment².

22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother rashly shall be subject to the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be subject to the council; and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be subject to the gehenna³ of fire.

23 If therefore thou offer thy gift on the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee,

24 leave there thy gift in front of the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift.

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¹ *Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17*

² For an example of such judgment, see *Exodus 21:12*.

³ “Gehenna” is a hell (see AC 826 and elsewhere). The name comes from Hebrew, Ge Hinnom, a deep ravine just south of Jerusalem, where there was a leper colony.

DAY ONE: THE INTERNAL AND THE EXTERNAL

Apocalypse Explained 746:17

Whoever does and teaches, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. I say to you, Unless your justice shall exceed the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. You have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not murder, but whoever shall murder shall be liable to the judgment. But I say to you, that whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to the judgment; but whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the council; but whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be liable to the hell of fire. If thou offer thy gift upon the altar, and shalt there remember that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there the gift before the altar, and go; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming offer thy gift (Matt. 5:19-24).

This whole chapter treats of the interior life of man, which is the life of his soul, consequently of his will and thought from it. Thus, it deals with the life of charity, which is the spiritual moral life. The sons of Jacob knew nothing about this life before, because from their fathers down they were external men. For this reason also, they were kept in the observance of external worship, according to statutes that were external, representing the internal things of worship and of the church. But in this chapter the Lord teaches that the interior things of the church must not only be represented by external acts, but must also be loved and done from the soul and heart. Therefore “whoever does and teaches, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens,” signifies that he will be saved who from *interior* life does and teaches the external things of the church.

“Unless your justice shall exceed the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens,” signifies that unless the life is internal, and from that is external, heaven is not in man and man is not received into heaven.

DAY ONE: THE INTERNAL AND THE EXTERNAL

“Justice” signifies the good of life from the good of charity, and “to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees” signifies that the life must be internal, and not external without internal. The scribes and Pharisees were only in representative externals, and not in internals.

External life from the internal is taught in the commandment of the Decalogue, “Thou shalt not murder,” but they did not know that wishing to murder a man is murdering him. Therefore it is first said, “You have heard that it was said to them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not murder,’ and whoever shall murder shall be liable to the judgment.” For the doctrine had prevailed with the Jews from ancient time that it was admissible to murder those who injured them, especially Gentiles, and that they were to be punished for this lightly or grievously according to the circumstances of the hostility, consequently in reference to the body only and not as to the soul. This is meant by “he shall be liable to the judgment.”

Arcana Coelestia 4903

No one can see from the external alone whether a thing is false or true, but only from the internal. There must be an internal sight which shall judge concerning those things which are of external sight, and in order to do this the internal sight must be wholly in the light of heaven. And it is not in the light of heaven unless it is in faith in the Lord, and from this faith reads the Word.

That the Jewish nation were in the external without the internal, and therefore believed truth to be falsity, and falsity truth, is evident from their teaching that it was allowable to hate an enemy; and also from their life, in that they hated all who were not of their religiosity. They even believed that they were pleasing and serving Jehovah when they treated the Gentiles with barbarity and cruelty, exposing their bodies after they had been slain to be devoured by birds and wild beasts, cutting them in two with saws while alive, lacerating them with harrows and axes of iron, and making them pass through the brick-kiln (2 Sam. 12:31). Moreover, it was in accordance with their teachings to treat in almost the same way a

DAY ONE: THE INTERNAL AND THE EXTERNAL

companion who for any cause was declared an enemy. Thus it is plainly evident that there was nothing internal in their religiosity. If anyone had then said to them that such things are contrary to the internal of the church, they would have replied that this was false. That they were merely in externals, were wholly ignorant of what the internal is, and led a life contrary to the internal, is plain also from what the Lord teaches in Matthew, chapter 5, verses 21 to 48.

Questions and Comments

1. What does it mean to be in only “representative externals” as it says in *Apocalypse Explained* 746:17? Can that happen to us?
2. How do we develop internal sight as it is described in *Arcana Coelestia* 4903?
3. As we can see from 2 Samuel 12:31 (referenced in *Arcana Coelestia* 4903), an external [religious practice] without an internal [love and charity] leads to horrific practices. This can help us see what the world would be like without what the Lord taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT MURDER

Matthew 5:21

You have heard that it was declared by the ancients, Thou shalt not murder; and whoever shall murder shall be subject to the judgment.

True Christian Religion 309

In the natural sense, this commandment, “Thou shalt not murder,” means not to murder a man, and not to inflict upon him any wound from which he may die, also not to maim his body. It means also not to inflict any deadly harm upon his name and fame, since with many, fame and life go hand in hand.

In a broader natural sense, murder means enmity, hatred, and revenge, which breathe slaughter; for in them murder lies concealed as fire in wood under ashes. Infernal fire is nothing else; hence the expressions, to be inflamed with hatred, to burn with revenge. These passions are murder in intention, not in act; but if fear of the law or of retaliation and revenge were removed from them, they would break forth into act, especially if there is treachery or ferocity in the intention.

That hatred is murder, is evident from these words of the Lord:

You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not murder; and whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whoever is angry with his brother rashly shall be in danger of the judgment. But whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire (Matt. 5:21, 22).

This is because whatever pertains to the intention pertains also to the will, and so essentially to the deed.

True Christian Religion 310

In the spiritual sense, murder means all modes of killing and destroying the souls of men. These modes are various and manifold, as for example, turning men away from God, religion,

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT MURDER

and Divine worship by insinuating scandalous thoughts against these, or by inducing such persuasions as cause aversion and even abhorrence. Such murderers are all the devils and satans in hell, with whom those in this world who violate and prostitute the sanctities of the church are in conjunction....

True Christian Religion 311

In the celestial sense, to kill means to be rashly angry with the Lord, to hate Him, and to wish to blot out His name....

True Christian Religion 312

The nature of man's internal, unless it is reformed by the Lord, has been made evident to me from seeing the devils and satans in hell. For they have it constantly in mind to kill the Lord, and as they cannot do this, they are in the endeavor to kill those who are devoted to the Lord. But since they cannot do this, as men can in the world, they make every effort to destroy their souls, that is, to destroy faith and charity in them.

With such, hatred itself and revenge itself appear like lurid and glowing fires—hatred like a lurid fire, and revenge like a glowing fire—yet these are not fires, but appearances. The cruelties of their hearts sometimes appear above them in the air like contests with angels and their slaughter and overthrow. It is their anger and hatred for heaven that causes such horrible scenes to be staged.

Moreover, at a distance, these same spirits appear like wild beasts of every kind, like tigers, leopards, wolves, foxes, dogs, crocodiles, and all kinds of serpents; and when they see gentle animals in representative forms, they rush upon them in fantasy and strive to tear them in pieces. They came to my sight like dragons standing near women with whom there were little children, whom they were endeavoring, as it were, to devour (according to what is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Revelation). But these were nothing else than representations of hatred against the Lord and His New Church.

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT MURDER

That men in the world who wish to destroy the Lord's church are like these spirits is not evident to their companions. And this is for the reason that their bodies, through which they practice the duties of morality, absorb and conceal these things. But to the angels, who behold their spirits and not their bodies, they appear in forms like those of the devils described above. Who could have known such things had not the Lord opened the sight of someone, and given him the ability to look into the spiritual world? Otherwise, would not these, together with other most important matters, have lain concealed from man forever?

Questions and Comments

1. In addition to killing the body, what kinds of actions violate the commandment against murder on the natural level?
2. TCR 309 says, "Whatever pertains to the intention pertains also to the will, and so essentially to the deed." What does that mean for us as far as what we need to repent for?
3. What does it mean to murder in the spiritual and celestial senses?
4. What kind of murder strikes you as being committed the most often?

DAY THREE: BEING ANGRY WITH ONE'S BROTHER

Matthew 5:22

I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother rashly shall be subject to the judgment.

Apocalypse Explained 693:8

It is to be known that in all evil there is anger against the Lord and against the holy things of the church. That this is so has been made clearly evident to me from the hells, in which all are in evils, and from which are all evils. For there, when they merely hear the Lord named, they become inflamed with vehement anger, not only against Him, but also against all who confess Him. Thence it is that hell is the diametrical opposite of heaven, and is in the perpetual effort to destroy heaven, and to extinguish the Divine things in it, which are the goods of love and the truths of faith.

This shows why evils are angry with goods, and falsities of evil with truths; this is why “anger” in the Word signifies evil in the whole complex.... [As] in Matthew:

Jesus said, It was said to them of old, Whoever shall kill shall be liable to the judgment; but I say to you, Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to the judgment (Matt. 5:21, 22).

“To be angry with his brother without cause” here also signifies enmity and hatred against good and truth. Those also who have such enmity and such hatred commit murder continually in mind, intention and will, and would murder actually if it were permitted, that is, if they were not hindered by the laws and the consequent fear of punishment and loss of life or of reputation, honor, or gain. For what a man cherishes in his mind, that he does when it is permissible.

“He who is angry with his brother without cause is liable to the judgment,” the same as he who murders, because “to be angry” signifies to think, intend, and will evil to another. And all evil of the will is in the life of man's spirit and returns after death, and this is why he is then “liable to the judgment,” for what belongs to the intention and will is judged like deeds.... It is self-evident that

DAY THREE: BEING ANGRY WITH ONE'S BROTHER

every evil conceals in itself anger against good, for it wills to extinguish what is good, and even to murder him in whom there is good, if not as to the body, still as to the soul; and this is altogether done from anger and with anger.

Arcana Coelestia 1010

“Shedding blood” in the literal sense is killing, but in the internal sense it is bearing hatred against the neighbor, as the Lord teaches in Matthew [5:21-22]

Here “being angry” signifies receding from charity... and consequently hatred. He who is in hatred, not only has no charity, but also inflicts violence on charity, that is, “sheds blood.” In hatred lies actual murder, as is manifest from this, that he who is in hatred desires nothing so much as that the one he hates should be killed; and if he were not withheld by outward restraints, he would kill him. For this reason the “killing of a brother and the shedding of his blood” is hatred; and since it is hatred, there is this hatred in every one of his ideas against him.

It is the same with profanation. He who profanes the Word, as has been said, not only holds truth in hatred, but also extinguishes or kills it. This is manifest from those in the other life who have committed profanation. No matter how upright, wise, and devout they have appeared outwardly during their life in the body, in the other life they hold the Lord in deadly hatred, and also all the goods of love and truths of faith, for the reason that these are opposed to their inward hatred, robbery, and adultery, which they have veiled with a show of holiness, and while adulterating the goods of love and truths of faith to favor themselves.

DAY THREE: BEING ANGRY WITH ONE’S BROTHER

Questions and Comments

1. When we get angry, perhaps *Apocalypse Explained* 693 and *Arcana Coelestia* 1010 can help us identify what exactly we are angry about.
2. *Apocalypse Explained* 693 states that “evils are angry with goods, and falsities of evil with truths.” What do you think this means and what are examples of this?
3. *Arcana Coelestia* 1010 states that “‘being angry’ signifies receding from charity.” How do we recede from charity when we get angry? (And how do we return to charity?)

DAY FOUR: BEING SUBJECT TO THE JUDGMENT, COUNCIL OR GEHENNA OF FIRE

Matthew 5:22

I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother rashly shall be subject to the judgment. Whoever shall say to his brother, Raca⁴, shall be subject to the council; and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be subject to the gehenna of fire.

Arcana Coelestia 374

Whoever bears hatred toward his brother, kills him in his heart, as the Lord teaches:

You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not murder, and whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whoever is angry with his brother rashly shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire (Matt. 5:21, 22).

By these words are meant the degrees of hatred. Hatred is contrary to charity, and kills in whatever way it can, if not with the hand, yet in spirit, and is withheld from the deed of the hand only by external restraints.

Apocalypse Explained 746:18

That one who thinks ill of his neighbor without adequate cause and turns himself away from the good of charity will be punished lightly as to his soul, is signified by “Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to the judgment.” “To be angry,” signifies to think ill, for it is distinguished from “saying Raca,” and “saying, Thou fool.” “Brother” means the neighbor, and also the good of charity, and “to be liable to the judgment” means to be examined and to be punished according to circumstances.

⁴ which means “empty, worthless” (see AE 746:18 on next page)

DAY FOUR: BEING SUBJECT TO THE JUDGMENT, COUNCIL OR GEHENNA OF FIRE

That one who from wrong thought slanders the neighbor, and thus despises the good of charity as of little value, will be punished grievously, is signified by “whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the council,” for “to say Raca” signifies to slander the neighbor from evil thought, thus to hold the good of charity to be of little value, for “to say Raca” means to hold as useless and as of little value, and “brother” means the good of charity.

That one who hates the neighbor, that is, one who is altogether averse to the good of charity, is condemned to hell, is signified by “Whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be liable to the hell of fire.” To say “Thou fool” means to be altogether averse to; “brother” means the good of charity; and “the hell of fire” is the hell where those are who hate that good and thence hate the neighbor.

These three describe three degrees of hatred: the first is from evil thought, which is “to be angry,” the second is from consequent evil intention, which is “to say Raca,” and the third is from an evil will, which is “to say Thou fool.” All these are degrees of hatred against the good of charity, for hatred is the opposite of the good of charity. The three degrees of punishment are signified by “the judgment,” “the council,” and “the hell of fire.” The punishments for lighter evils are signified by “the judgment,” the punishments for the more grievous evils by “the council,” and the punishments for the most grievous evils, by “the hell of fire.”

Arcana Coelestia 8902

Thou shalt not murder. That this signifies not to take away spiritual life from anyone, also not to extinguish faith and charity, as well as not to hold the neighbor in hatred, is evident from the signification of “murdering,” as being to deprive of spiritual life. That “murdering” means this in the internal sense, is because in this sense spiritual life, or the life of heaven with man, is treated of. And spiritual life, or the life of heaven with man, is the life of faith and of charity. Therefore by “not to murder” is signified also not to extinguish faith and charity in anyone. The reason why “not to

DAY FOUR: BEING SUBJECT TO THE JUDGMENT, COUNCIL OR GEHENNA OF FIRE

murder” is also in the internal sense not to hold the neighbor in hatred, is that he who holds in hatred continually wishes to murder, and also would murder in act unless prevented by the fear of the penalty, of the loss of life, of reputation, and the like. For hatred is of evil, is contrary to charity, and breathes nothing but the murder of him whom it hates: in the world the murder of his body; in the other life the murder of his soul. This is meant by the words of the Lord in Matthew [5:21, 22]

Hatred against the neighbor is meant by being “angry with the brother rashly,” and the degrees of its increase are described by saying to him “Raca,” and by calling him “a fool.” (That anger is a turning away from charity, and is from evil, thus that it is hatred, see n. 357, 4164, 5034, 5798, 5887, 5888.)

Questions and Comments

1. *Arcana Coelestia* 374 mentions that external restraints can prevent “the deed of the hand.” What sorts of external restraints are appropriate when it comes to the different kinds of murder? Some are listed in *Arcana Coelestia* 8902.
2. What are the three degrees of hatred according to *Apocalypse Explained* 746:18? What should we do with the knowledge of these degrees?

DAY FIVE: OFFERING THY GIFT ON THE ALTAR

Matthew 5:23-24

If therefore thou offer thy gift on the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy gift in front of the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift.

Apocalypse Explained 746:19-20

As the universal heaven is in the good of charity towards the neighbor, and the universal hell is in anger, enmity, and hatred against the neighbor, and hence these are the opposites of that good; and as worship of the Lord, because it is internal, is worship from heaven, but it is no worship if anything of it is from hell, and yet from hell there is external worship without internal, therefore it is said, “If thou offer thy gift upon the altar, and shalt there remember that thy brother has anything against thee, go, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming offer thy gift upon the altar.” “The gift upon the altar” signifies the worship of the Lord from love and charity, “brother” meaning the neighbor, and in an abstract sense the good of charity. “Having anything against thee” signifies anger, enmity, or hatred; and “to be reconciled” is the dispersion of these and the consequent conjunction by love.

From this it can be seen that the Lord, by “brother,” means the like as by “neighbor,” and “neighbor” signifies in the spiritual sense good in the whole complex, and good in the whole complex is the good of charity. “Brother” has a similar meaning in the spiritual sense in many passages in the Old Testament. As in Moses:

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart (Lev. 19:17).

In David:

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Ps. 133:1).

In this sense, also, Lot called the inhabitants of Sodom brethren (Gen. 19:7). And this is meant by:

The covenant of brethren between the sons of Israel and Edom (Amos 1:9).

DAY FIVE: OFFERING THY GIFT ON THE ALTAR

And by the brotherhood between Judah and Israel (Zech. 11:14).

For by “the sons of Israel and Edom,” as well as by “Judah and Israel,” these are not meant in the spiritual sense, but the goods and truths of heaven and the church, all of which are conjoined with each other.

Apocalypse Explained 391:20

In Matthew... “to offer a gift upon the altar” means in the spiritual sense to worship God, and to worship God means worship that is both internal and external, namely, from love and from faith, and thus from the life. This is meant because in the Jewish Church, worship consisted chiefly in offering sacrifices or gifts upon the altar, and the chief thing is taken for the whole. From this the meaning of these words of the Lord in the spiritual sense can be seen, namely, that Divine worship consists primarily in charity towards the neighbor, and not in piety without charity. “To offer a gift upon the altar” means worship from piety, and “to be reconciled to a brother” means worship from charity, and this is truly worship, and such as this is, such is the worship from piety. (On this see *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem*, n. 123-129; and in the work *Heaven and Hell*, n. 222, 224, 358-360, 528, 529, 535; and above, n. 325.)

Arcana Coelestia 9293

With gifts... it is the will in these which the Lord looks at. Consequently, by the gifts offered to Jehovah—that is, to the Lord—are signified such things as are of the will, or of the heart. Man’s will is what is called in the Word his “heart.” From all this it is also evident how it is to be understood that everyone will receive judgment in the other life according to his deeds or works (Matt. 16:27); namely, that it will be according to those things which are of the heart, and from this of the life.

That such things are signified by the gifts offered to Jehovah, is plain from the Word, as in the following passages:

DAY FIVE: OFFERING THY GIFT ON THE ALTAR

Sacrifice and gift Thou hast not desired, burnt-offering and sacrifice for sin Thou hast not required. I have longed to do Thy will, O my God (Ps. 40:6, 8).

Jehovah your God, He is God of gods, and Lord of lords, who does not accept faces, and does not take a gift (Deut. 10:17).

If thou offer thy gift upon the altar, and with this remember that thy brother has something against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go away; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matt. 5:23, 24).

From this it is evident that gifts offered to the Lord were testifications of such things as are offered by the heart, which are those of faith and of charity; being “reconciled to a brother” denotes charity toward the neighbor.

Questions and Comments

1. What does it mean for us to “offer a gift on the altar”?
2. How can we “offer a gift on the altar” both internally and externally?
3. How can worship help us reflect on and identify situations in which we need to be reconciled with a brother?

DAY SIX: BEING RECONCILED WITH THY BROTHER

Matthew 5:23-24

If therefore thou offer thy gift on the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy gift in front of the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift.

Doctrine of Life 73

The Lord teaches the good of love in many places in the Word. He teaches it in Matthew by what He says about reconciliation with the neighbor:

If thou art offering thy gift upon the altar, and there remember that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Be well-minded to thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not come out from there till thou hast paid the last farthing (Matt. 5:23-26).

To be “reconciled to one’s brother” is to shun enmity, hatred, and revenge; that it is to shun them as sin is evident.

The Lord also teaches in Matthew: All things whatever you will that men should do to you, you do also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets (7:12); thus, that we should not do evil. He teaches the same in many other places.

The Lord also teaches that to be angry with one’s brother or the neighbor rashly, and to hold him as an enemy, is also to commit murder (Matt. 5:21-22).

Diary of Spiritual Experiences Minor 4775

That in the other life, those who hated each other in the life of the body meet together. (There were many evil spirits who lay concealed for a long time, enclosed in a peculiar hell, out of which

DAY SIX: BEING RECONCILED WITH THY BROTHER

they were, for a considerable time, unable to break out. On several occasions I wondered who they were. One evening they were let out, and then was heard their great noise beneath me, like a riot, which lasted the whole night. And when the ability was given them, I heard revilings against me and I observed their effort, [namely] that they wished to ascend and to destroy me. I asked the angels the reason. They said that they held me in hatred when they were alive; and yet, they were such as I had in no respect injured. I was informed also that, when they but perceive the sphere of him whom they have held in hatred, they rage, and breathe his destruction; but they were again sent to their hell.

That those who have held each other in mutual hatred meet together in the other life, and on both sides, attempt many evils against each other, was made known to me by many examples. For hatred corresponds to antipathy, and, as it were, becomes spiritual antipathy; for, as soon as they perceive the sphere of him [whom they hate], they come into fury. Hence it may be manifest what it involves, that the Lord says, concerning those who are enemies, that they ought to be reconciled: “If thou hast anything against thy brother, go,” etc.

Matthew 18

15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go thy way and reprove him between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 And if he shall not hear, take with thee yet one or two, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every saying may be established.

17 And if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he also neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee just as a gentile and a publican.

Apocalypse Explained 746:15

In Matthew 18:15-17, “brother” means the neighbor in general, thus every man. But in particular it means one who is in the good of charity and thence in faith from the Lord, whoever he may be.

DAY SIX: BEING RECONCILED WITH THY BROTHER

For these passages treat of the good of charity, since to forgive one who sins against you is of charity. Also it is said, “if he hear, thou hast gained thy brother,” which signifies, if he acknowledges his trespasses and is converted.

Questions and Comments

1. What should we do if we want to be reconciled with a brother?
2. The passage from the *Diary of Spiritual Experiences* helps us see what happens if we hold on to hatred and let it grow and fester.
3. *Matthew* 18 lays out a process for being reconciled. Sometimes it can be really hard to do it this way. Should we do it in every case where reconciliation is needed?
4. How does *Apocalypse Explained* 746:15 help us understand the reconciliation process given in *Matthew* 18?