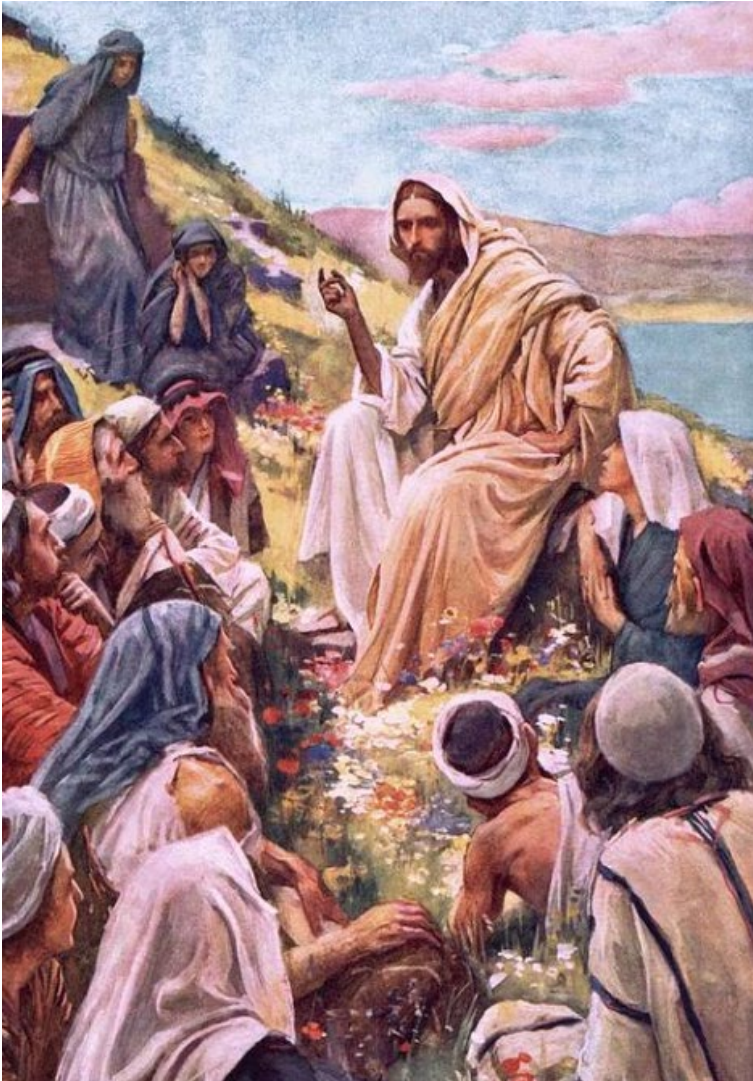


*You have heard that it was declared...
but I say to you...*



Week 2: Adultery

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DAY ONE: THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Matthew 5:27-30

You have heard that it was declared to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at another woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.¹ And if thy right eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is beneficial for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into gehenna. And if thy right hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is beneficial for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into gehenna.

Deuteronomy 5:18, 21 (also Exodus 20:14, 17)

And thou shalt not commit adultery.

And thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. And thou shalt not lust after thy neighbor's house, his field, nor his servant, nor his maidservant, his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Leviticus 20:10 (also Deuteronomy 22:22)

And the man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* who commits adultery with the wife of his companion, the adulterer and the adulteress dying shall be put to death.

Matthew 19:3-6

And the Pharisees came to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, "Is it permitted for a man to send away his wife for every cause?" And He answering said to them, "Have you not read that He who made [them] from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'On this account shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

¹The Heavenly Doctrine in quoting this verse always adds "another" or "of another." The Greek word for "woman" is also the word for "wife" and is translated *uxor* (wife) in TCR 326.

DAY ONE: THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Matthew 15:1-20

Then came to Jesus the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.

But He answering said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother; and he who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But you say, Whoever shall say to father or mother, It is a gift to the temple, whatever thou mightest have profited by me; and he in no way honors his father or his mother. And you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, saying, This people is near to me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me, and in vain do they serve Me, teaching teachings which are the precepts of men.

And calling the crowd, He said unto them, **Hear and understand. Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which goes forth out of the mouth, this defiles the man.**

Then His disciples coming said to Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees, hearing the word, were offended?

But He answering said, Every planting which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out. Leave them; they are blind guides of the blind; and if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.

And Peter answering said to Him, Explain to us this parable.

And Jesus said, Are you also yet without understanding? **Do you not yet consider, that everything going into the mouth departs into the belly, and is cast out into the latrine? But the things going out from the mouth come forth from the heart, and these defile man; for out of the heart come forth evil reasonings, murders, adulteries, harlotries, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.**

DAY ONE: THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Questions and Comments

1. What does it mean “to look at another woman to lust after her”?
2. What is “committing adultery in the heart”?
3. What is the relationship between what God has joined together and the sin of adultery?
4. How does adultery proceed from the heart?
5. Can lust enter from without?

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

True Christian Religion 313

In the **natural sense**, this commandment means **not only not to commit adultery, but it refers also to willing and doing obscene things and thinking and speaking about lascivious things.** That merely to lust is to commit adultery, is evident from the Lord's words:

You have heard that it was said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you
that everyone that looks on another man's wife to
lust after her has committed adultery with her
already in his heart (Matt. 5:27, 28).

The reason for this is that **when lust enters the will it becomes, as it were, a deed; for allurements enter into the understanding only, but intention enters into the will, and the intention of a lust is a deed.**

True Christian Religion 314

In the **spiritual sense**, "to commit adultery" means to **adulterate the goods of the Word and to falsify its truths.** That "to commit adultery" means this also has been unknown until now, because up to this time, the spiritual sense of the Word has been concealed.

True Christian Religion 315

In the **celestial sense**, "to commit adultery" means to **deny the holiness of the Word, and to profane it.** This meaning follows from the preceding spiritual meaning, which is to adulterate its goods and to falsify its truths. **The holiness of the Word is denied and profaned by those who in heart ridicule all things of the church and of religion,** for in the Christian world all things of the church and of religion are from the Word.

True Christian Religion 316

There are **many causes which make a man to seem chaste, not only to others but also to himself, when, in fact, he is wholly unchaste;** for he does not know that **when a lust occupies the will, it is a**

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

deed, and it cannot be removed except by the Lord after repentance.

A man is not made chaste by abstaining from doing, but by abstaining from willing because it is a sin, when the doing is possible. Just so far as anyone abstains from adulteries and whoredoms, solely from fear of the civil law and its penalties; from fear of the loss of reputation and thus of honor; from fear of the diseases arising from them; from fear of the wife's upbraidings at home, and the consequent intranquility of life; from fear of the vengeance of the husband and relatives, or of being beaten by their servants; or because of avarice, or any infirmity caused by disease or abuse or age or any other cause of impotence; even if he abstains on account of any natural or moral law, and not at the same time on account of spiritual law; he is nevertheless inwardly an adulterer and a fornicator. For he nonetheless believes that adulteries and whoredoms are not sins, and therefore he does not in his spirit make them unlawful before God; and thus in spirit he commits them, even if he does not commit them in the body before the world. And in consequence, when after death he becomes a spirit, he speaks openly in favor of them.

Furthermore, adulterers may be compared to covenant-breakers who violate compacts; also to the satyrs and priapi of the ancients, who roamed in forests, crying out, "Where are there virgins, betrothed maidens, and wives, to have fun with?" Moreover, in the spiritual world adulterers actually appear like satyrs and priapi.

DAY TWO: THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

Questions and Comments

1. How is the lust of adultery removed by repentance?
2. How does one examine oneself as to the will?
(See *True Christian Religion* 532-534.)
3. How do we shun an evil as a sin in the will,
after self-examination? (See *True Christian Religion* 535.)

DAY THREE: THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

John 8:1-11

And Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him, and sitting down He taught them.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, and standing her in the midst, they say to Him, Teacher, this woman was taken committing adultery, in the very deed. And Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned; what then sayest Thou?

But this they said, tempting Him, that they might have reason to accuse Him. But Jesus, stooping down, with His finger wrote in the earth.

And as they continued asking Him, He stood up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her.

And again stooping down, He wrote in the earth. And they, having heard, and being reproved by conscience, went out one by one, beginning from the elders until the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

And Jesus, standing up and observing no one but the woman, said to her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Has no one condemned thee?

And she said, No one, Lord.

And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.

Apocalypse Explained 222:7

This makes clear what is signified by the Lord's writing with His finger in the earth in John 8:1-11.

The Lord's "writing in the earth" signifies the same as in Jeremiah: "They that depart from Me shall be written in the earth," namely, that they also were condemned on account of adulteries. Therefore, He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The Lord's writing twice in the earth in the temple signified their condemnation for adulteries in the spiritual sense. For the Scribes and Pharisees were those who adulterated

DAY THREE: THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

the goods and falsified the truths of the Word, thus of the church; and “adulteries” in the spiritual sense are adulterations of good and falsifications of truth... Therefore that nation was also called by the Lord,

An adulterous and sinful generation (Mark 8:38).

Apocalypse Explained 815:5

One of the ten lepers that were healed by the Lord, who was a Samaritan, returned and fell upon his face at the feet of Jesus; and Jesus said to him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith has made thee whole (Luke 17:15, 16, 19).

In the same [gospel]: Jesus said to the blind man, Thy faith has saved thee; and immediately he was able to see (Luke 18:42, 43).

In Mark: Jesus said [spoke] to the disciples, when they were unable to heal a certain man’s son who had a mute spirit. Jesus said to the man, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believes. The father of the boy, crying out with tears, said, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief; and [the boy] was healed (9:17, 23, 24).

There were three reasons why faith in the Lord healed these people: first, because they acknowledged His Divine omnipotence, and that He was God.

The second [was] because faith is acknowledgment, and from acknowledgment contemplation; and all contemplation from acknowledgment makes another to be present. This is a common thing in the spiritual world. So now, when a new church was to be established by the Lord, it was this contemplation, from an acknowledgment of the Lord’s omnipotence, from which they were first to look to the Lord; and from this it is clear what is here meant by faith.

The third reason was, that all the diseases healed by the Lord represented and thus signified the spiritual diseases that correspond to these natural diseases; and spiritual diseases can be healed only by the Lord, and in fact by looking to His Divine omnipotence and by repentance of life. This is why He sometimes said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee; go and sin no more.” This faith also was

DAY THREE: THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

represented and signified by their miraculous faith; but the faith by which spiritual diseases are healed by the Lord can be given only through truths from the Word and a life according to them. The truths themselves and the life itself according to them make the quality of the faith.

Questions and Comments

1. What was the spiritual adultery of the scribes and Pharisees? (See *True Christian Religion* 314 in Day Two.)
2. Are there ways that Western society promotes spiritual as well as natural adultery?
3. What is the relationship of the Lord's healing miracles and the Lord's command to sin no more? What is required to bring this connection to life?

DAY FOUR: REMOVING THE RIGHT EYE & RIGHT HAND

Arcana Coelestia 10061:5

[In] Matthew:

Jesus said, If thy right eye has caused thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee. And if thy right hand has caused thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into Gehenna (Matt. 5:29, 30).

Here the “right eye” denotes the understanding and faith of falsity from evil, and the “right hand,” the falsity itself from evil.

Everyone is able to know that by “eye” here is not meant the eye, nor by “right hand” the right hand; and that the eye that causes to stumble is not to be plucked out, nor the hand that causes to stumble to be cut off; for from this there would be nothing of salvation for man.

Apocalypse Explained 600:8

In Matthew:

If thy right eye has caused thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee. And if thy right hand has caused thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee (5:29, 30).

That by the “right eye” and the “right hand” the Lord did not mean the right eye and the right hand, anyone can see from its being said that the eye “must be plucked out” and the hand “must be cut off” if they cause to stumble. But as the “eye” signifies in the spiritual sense everything belonging to the understanding and to thought from it, and the “right hand” everything belonging to the will and to affection from it, it is evident that “if the right eye has caused thee to stumble it must be plucked out” signifies that if one thinks evil, the evil must be rejected from the thought. Also, “if the right hand has caused thee to stumble it must be cut off” signifies that if evil is willed, the evil of the will must be cast out. For the eye itself cannot cause to stumble, nor can the right hand, but the thought of

DAY FOUR: REMOVING THE RIGHT EYE & RIGHT HAND

the understanding and the affection of the will, to which they correspond, can.

It is said the “right eye” and the “right hand,” and not the left eye and the left hand, because the “right” signifies good, and in the contrary sense evil, while the “left” hand signifies truth, and in the contrary sense falsity, and all cause of stumbling comes from evil, not from falsity, unless the falsity is the falsity of evil.

That these things are said of the internal man, whose part it is to think and to will, and not of the external, whose part it is to see and to act, is evident also from the words that immediately precede respecting the “woman of another,” that merely looking upon her from lust is committing adultery.

Arcana Coelestia 2701:2

That the “eye” signifies the understanding is because the sight of the body corresponds to the sight of its spirit, which is the understanding; and because it corresponds, in the Word the understanding is signified by the “eye” in almost every place where it is mentioned, even where it is believed to be otherwise, as where the Lord says in Matthew... “If thy right eye causes thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee” (Matt. 5:29; 18:9). The “left eye” is the intellectual, but the “right eye” is its affection. That the right eye is to be plucked out means that the affection is to be subdued, if it causes stumbling.

Apocalypse Revealed 48

That in these passages, by “eyes” is signified the understanding, everyone sees. Hence it is evident what the Lord meant by “eye” in these places:

The lamp of the body is the eye; if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be light; if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darkened. If therefore the light [*lumen*] that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness (Matt. 6:22-23; Luke 11:34).

DAY FOUR: REMOVING THE RIGHT EYE & RIGHT HAND

If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast out into the Gehenna of fire (Matt. 5:29; 18:9).

By “eye” in these places is not meant the eye, but the understanding of truth.

Questions and Comments

1. Why does the Lord use such violent language—plucking out one’s eye and cutting off one’s hand—in relationship to adultery?
2. What does the spiritual meaning of plucking out the right eye and cutting off the right hand teach us about shunning adultery and its lusts?

DAY FIVE: SHUNNING ADULTERY AS TO THE WILL

Conjugal Love 494

THAT ADULTERIES OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH DEGREE, WHETHER COMMITTED IN ACT OR NOT, ARE EVILS OF SIN ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE AND QUALITY OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND WILL WITHIN THEM. That adulteries from reason or understanding, being those of the third degree, and adulteries from the will, being those of the fourth degree, are grievous and therefore are evils of sin according to the quality of the understanding and the will within them, can be seen from the comments on them in nos. 490-493. The reason is because man is man from his will and understanding, for from these two exist not only all that is done in the mind but also all that is done in the body. Who does not know that the body does not act of itself, but the will by the body? and that the mouth does not speak of itself but the thought by the mouth? Wherefore, if will were taken away, action would cease in a moment; and if thought were taken away, the speech of the mouth would cease in a moment. Hence it is fully evident that adulteries committed in act are grievous according to the measure and quality of the understanding and the will within them.

That they are grievous in like manner [even] if not committed in act is plain from these words of the Lord:

It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, That whoever looks on the woman of another to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Matt. 5:27, 28.

To commit adultery in the heart is to commit it in the will.

[2] There are many reasons which cause an adulterer not to be an adulterer in act and yet an adulterer in will and understanding. [The reasons listed here are the same as listed in *True Christian Religion* 316, and are omitted for brevity.]

DAY FIVE: SHUNNING ADULTERY AS TO THE WILL

Conjugal Love 153

THAT CHASTITY CANNOT BE PREDICATED OF THOSE WHO ABSTAIN FROM ADULTERIES SOLELY ON ACCOUNT OF VARIOUS EXTERNAL REASONS. Many believe that mere abstinence from adulteries in bodily act is chastity, when yet this is not chastity unless at the same time the abstinence be in the spirit also. It is man's spirit—by which is here meant his mind as to its affections and thoughts—which makes what is chaste and unchaste; for it is from the spirit that these exist in the body, the body being altogether such as is the mind or spirit. From this it follows that those who abstain from adulteries in bodily act and not from the spirit, are not chaste, as neither are those who abstain from them in spirit by reason of the body.

There are many reasons which cause a man to desist from them in bodily act, and also in the spirit by reason of the body. Yet he who does not desist from them in bodily act from the spirit is unchaste. For the Lord says, if any man has looked on another woman to lust after her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5:28) ...

From this it is clear that even a wicked man can shun adulteries as hurtful, but that none but a Christian can shun them as sins. From the above, the truth of the proposition is now established, that chastity cannot be predicated of those who abstain from adulteries solely on account of various external reasons.

DAY FIVE: SHUNNING ADULTERY AS TO THE WILL

Questions and Comments

1. Confirming adultery in the understanding or will makes us an adulterer. What does it take to make one an adulterer as to understanding or will?
2. Conjugal Love 153 says none but a Christian can shun adultery as a sin. What does that mean? Is there an implied promise for Christians?

DAY SIX: THE NECESSITY OF SHUNNING SINS IN THE EXTERNAL

Divine Providence 111

The internal cannot be cleansed from the lusts of evil so long as the evils in the external man are not put away, since these obstruct.

This follows from the preceding statement, that the external of man's thought is in itself of the same character as its internal; and that the two cohere, like things that are not only one within the other but also one from the other. Consequently, one cannot be set aside unless the other is also. It is so with everything external that is from an internal, and with everything posterior that is from a prior, and with every effect that is from a cause.

[2] Since, then, lusts with their subtleties constitute in the evil the internal of thought, and the enjoyments of lusts together with their machinations constitute their external of thought, and the latter and the former are joined together as one, it follows that the internal cannot be cleansed from lusts so long as the evils in the external man are not put away. It should be understood that man's internal will is that which is in the lusts, and the internal understanding is that which is in the deceitful wiles, and that the external will is that which is in the enjoyments of the lusts, and the external understanding is that which is in the machinations from the wiles.

Anyone can see that lusts and their enjoyments make one, and that deceitful wiles and machinations make one; also that these four are in one series, and together make as it were one bundle. And from this again it is clear that an internal that consists of lusts can be cast out only by putting away the external that consists of evils. Lusts through their enjoyments produce evils. But when evils are believed to be allowable, which comes from the agreement of will and understanding, the enjoyments and the evils then make one.

It is acknowledged that this agreement is equivalent to doing the thing; and this is what the Lord says: "Whoever looks on another's woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). It is the same with other evils.

DAY SIX: THE NECESSITY OF SHUNNING SINS IN THE EXTERNAL

Divine Providence 112

From all this it can now be seen that evils must surely be put away from the external man, in order that man may be cleansed from the lusts of evil. For until this is done there is no possible exit for lusts. And if there is no exit, the lusts remain within and breathe out enjoyments from themselves, and so they urge men on to the consent, thus to the doing. Through the external of thought, lusts enter the body. When therefore there is consent in the external of thought, the lusts are at once present in the body; and the enjoyment that is felt is there.

That as the mind is, such is the body, thus the whole man, may be seen in the work *The Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom*, 362-370. This may be made clear by comparisons and also by examples.

[2] By comparisons: Lusts with their enjoyments may be likened to fire. The more a fire is fed, the more it burns; and the freer the course given it, the further it spreads, until in a city it consumes the houses, and in a forest the trees. In the Word, the lusts of evil are likened to fire, and their evils to its burning. Moreover, in the spiritual world, lusts of evil with their enjoyments appear like fires; hell fire is nothing else. Lusts may also be likened to floods and inundations of water when dikes or dams give way. They may also be likened to gangrenous sores and ulcers, which, if they run their course or are not cured, bring death to the body.

[3] By examples: It is made clear that unless the evils in the external man are put away, the lusts and their enjoyments grow and multiply. The more a thief steals the more he loves to steal, till at last he cannot refrain; so it is with the defrauder, the more he defrauds. The same is true of hatred and revenge, of extravagance and intemperance, of whoredom and blasphemy, and the like. Everyone knows that the love of ruling from the love of self increases as rein is given to it; equally the love of possessing from love of the world; these seem to be without limit or end.

DAY SIX: THE NECESSITY OF SHUNNING SINS IN THE EXTERNAL

All this makes clear that so far as the evils in the external are not put away, their lusts multiply, and that lusts increase to the extent that evils have loose rein.

Questions and Comments

1. What do these teachings from *Divine Providence* tell us about the nature of shunning lusts?
2. How might the teachings about plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand be connected with these teachings from *Divine Providence* about the internal and the external?
3. How do these teachings from *Divine Providence* connect with the teachings about the necessity of shunning evil in the will?