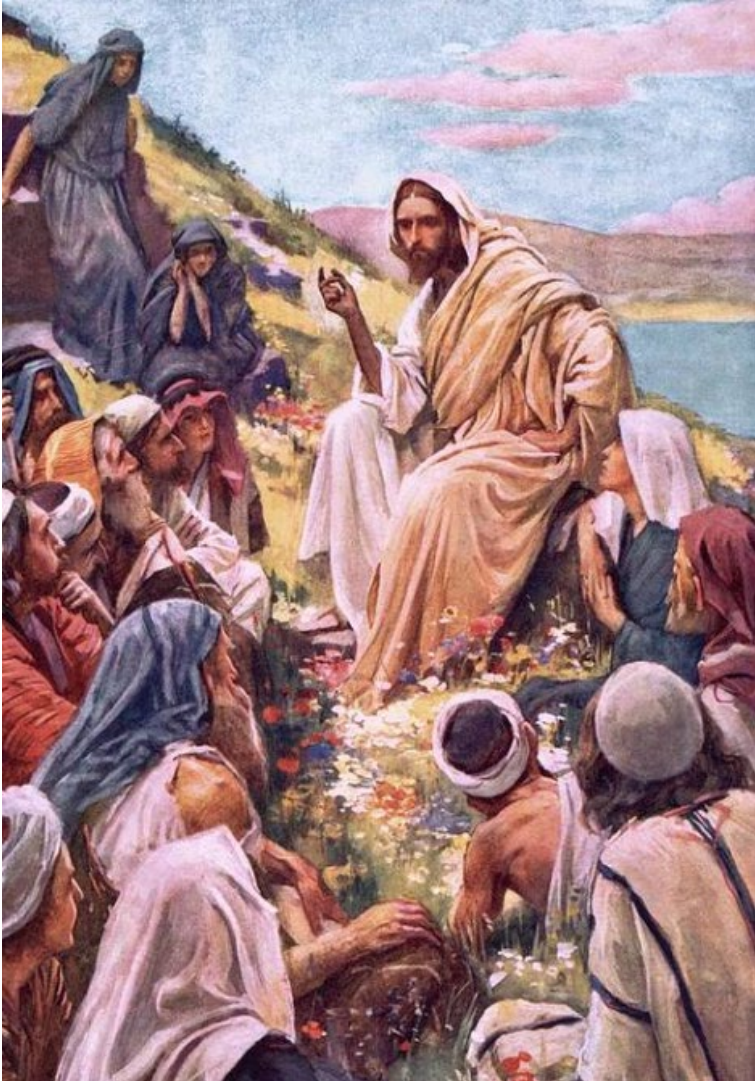


*You have heard that it was declared...
but I say to you...*



Week 6: Loving Enemies

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DAY ONE: THE LAW AND THE GOSPELS

Matthew 5:43-48

You have heard that it has been declared, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and shalt hate thine enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do well to those who hate you, and pray for those who injure you and persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in the heavens; for He makes His sun to rise on the wicked and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the publicans do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do beyond others? Do not even the publicans do so? Be ye therefore perfect, just as your Father who is in the heavens is perfect.

Leviticus 19:13-18

Thou shalt not oppress thy companion, neither rob him; the wages for the work of him who is a hireling shall not pass the night with thee until the morning. Thou shalt not revile one who is deaf, nor put a stumbling block before one who is blind, but shalt fear thy God; I am Jehovah.

You shall not do perversity in judgment; thou shalt not accept the faces of the poor, nor honor the faces of the great; but in justice shalt thou judge thy fellow man. Thou shalt not go slandering among thy people; thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy companion; I am Jehovah.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; reproving thou shalt reprove thy fellow man, and not bear a sin against him. Thou shalt not avenge, and thou shalt not bear a grudge against the sons of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am Jehovah.

Luke 6:31-38

But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do well to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who injure you. And to him who strikes thee on the one cheekbone, offer also the other; and him who takes away thy garment, forbid not to take thy tunic also. And give to everyone who asks thee; and

DAY ONE: THE LAW AND THE GOSPELS

from him who takes away the things that are thine, seek them not again. And as you will that men should do to you, you do also to them likewise.

And if you love those who love you, what grace do you have? For sinners also love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what grace do you have? For sinners also do the same. And if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive back, what grace do you have? For sinners also lend to sinners to receive back the equal amount. Nevertheless, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing back, and your reward shall be much, and you shall be the sons of the Highest; for He is kind to the ungrateful and to the wicked.

Questions and Comments

1. What is the Lord communicating about loving other people in Matthew 5:43-48?
2. What do you observe about the context of the Old Testament commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself”? What does it teach us about how to treat each other when we transgress?
3. How do the Luke and Matthew versions differ? What do you observe about these differences?

DAY TWO: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Arcana Coelestia 9256

That benefits ought to be imparted to those who are outside the church, is also meant by the Lord's words in Matthew:

You have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor... but I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and benefit those who hate you. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more? (Matt. 5:43-47)

Here also by "enemies" and by "those who hate" are meant in the spiritual sense those who are at variance in respect to the goods and truths of faith, and in general those who are outside the church, because the Jewish nation regarded these as enemies, whom they were permitted to utterly destroy, and to kill with impunity. That these are meant in the spiritual sense by "enemies" is plain, because it is said, "if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more?" For all were called "brethren" who were born of Jacob, thus who were within the church.

[2] As further regards those who are outside the church, and are called "gentiles," they are indeed in falsities of doctrine, but from ignorance, because they do not have the Word. And yet, when they are instructed, they are in a clearer and consequently more inward perception about the heavenly life with man than are Christians. The reason is that they have not confirmed themselves against the truths of faith, as have very many Christians; and therefore, their internal man is not closed, but, as with little children, is readily opened and receptive of truth. For those who have confirmed themselves against the truths and goods of faith, as do all who live an evil life, close in themselves the internal man above, and open it beneath. The result is that their internal man looks only at those things which are beneath, that is, it looks into the external or natural man, and through this at the things in the world and at things around their body and on the earth; and when this is the case, they look downward, which is to look toward hell.

DAY TWO: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Arcana Coelestia 3605:2, 4

[2] That in the internal sense “to hate” is to be averse to, is because... good does not even know what hatred is, being the direct opposite of it... But instead of hatred... those who are in good feel a kind of aversion.

[4] It is in the same way that “anger,” “wrath,” and “fury” are in the Word predicated of Jehovah or the Lord. Above all other peoples the Jewish and Israelitish people were such that as soon as they observed anything unfriendly, even in their associates, they believed it lawful to treat them cruelly, and not only to kill them, but also to expose them to wild beasts and birds. And therefore, because the inflowing mercy of the Lord was turned with them into such hatred, not only against their enemies, but also against their companions, they could not believe otherwise than that Jehovah also entertained hatred, was angry, wrathful, and furious; and for this reason it is so expressed in the Word according to the appearance; for such as is a man’s quality, such the Lord appears to him....

But what the quality of hatred is with those who are in love and charity, that is, who are in good, is evident from the words of the Lord in Matthew 5:43-45 [quoted on page 1].

Questions and Comments

1. What is the Lord teaching us about our tendency to see those who differ in religion as enemies?
2. What is the danger of confirmation against truth among those who live among the Christian Church?
3. What do we learn here about the angry God of the Old Testament? How does it affect our view of the Lord?

DAY THREE: LOVING THE GOOD, HUMILITY, & PRAYER

Faith 21

It is one thing to love the neighbor on account of the good or use he is to us, and another to love him from the good or use we may be to him. Even an evil man can do the first, but only a good man the second, for a good man loves good from good, that is, he loves use from the affection of use. The difference between the two is described by the Lord in Matthew 5:42-47.

Many say, "I love such a man because he loves me and does me good." But to love anyone for this only is not to love him inwardly, unless he who loves this way is himself in good, and from good loves the good of the other. In this case the man is in charity, but in the other case he is in a friendship which is not charity.

A man who loves the neighbor from charity conjoins himself with his good and not with his person, except so far and for so long as he is in good. Such a man is spiritual, and loves his neighbor spiritually, whereas one who loves another from mere friendship conjoins himself with his person, and at the same time with his evil, and after death he cannot without difficulty be separated from the personality that is in evil, but the former man can. Charity accomplishes this by means of faith, and this faith is the truth. And the man who is in charity by means of the truth examines thoroughly and sees what ought to be loved, and in loving and conferring benefits, he regards the quality of the other's use.

Divine Wisdom 11:2

[I]t is from the Lord that the love of uses or charity is and exists. The neighbor is the one for whom [uses are done], since the neighbor is the object towards whom charity is to be cherished, and to whom charity is to be manifested.

As it is said that the neighbor is the one for whom, it shall be told what and who the neighbor is. In a broad sense the neighbor is the common or public good. In a more limited sense it means the church, one's country, or a society, greater or smaller; and in a restricted sense it means a fellow citizen, a companion, and a

DAY THREE: LOVING THE GOOD, HUMILITY, & PRAYER

brother. To perform uses to any of these from love is to exercise charity towards the neighbor, for these are loved when this is done.

These are then loved because love of uses and love of the neighbor cannot be separated. A man may, indeed, from love of uses or from charity do good to an enemy or to an evil man; but to such he performs the uses of repentance or of reconciliation, and these uses are various, and are accomplished by various methods (see Matthew 5:25, 43-44, seq.; Luke 6:27-28, 35).

Luke 10:7-11

And He spoke a parable to those who were invited when He observed how they chose out the first places to recline, saying to them, When thou art invited by anyone to a wedding, do not recline in the first places to recline, lest someone more honorable than thou be invited by him, and he who called thee and him, coming, shall say to thee, Give this man a place; and then thou begin with shame to have the last place. But when thou art invited, go recline in the last place, that when he who invited thee comes, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher. Then thou shalt have glory before those who sit with thee. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

Spiritual Diary 1850

HOW THOSE ARE REPRESENTED WHO THINK HEAVEN IS TO BE MERITED BY HUMILIATIONS AND SUPPLICATIONS. There are those who think that heaven is to be merited by supplications, yet they pray not for others, still less for all, but only for themselves, and thus their prayers are not heard, except, perhaps, in regard to earthly things. One of this character [a female spirit] was represented standing erect above the plane of the right eye, at a moderate distance and a little to the right, covered from the head to the feet with a kind of dirty linen robe, so that the face and head did not appear; from a standing position she threw herself prostrate, and then crept upon the ground. But this was a

DAY THREE: LOVING THE GOOD, HUMILITY, & PRAYER

humiliation prompted by selfhood, and very similar was the humiliation by sackcloth of certain ones in former times.

Questions and Comments

1. How do we love others on account of the use we can be to them? What other examples or applications can you think of regarding the difference between loving use to others and loving others because of the good they can do to us?
2. How do we love the neighbor in various degrees? How do we love the neighbor who is an enemy or evil man?
3. What are some of the intricacies of humility, false humility, and prayer for others, indicated in *Luke 10* and *Spiritual Diary 1850*?

DAY FOUR: LOVE OF THE LORD

True Christian Religion 409

Before the Lord came into the world scarcely anyone knew what the internal man is or what charity is, and this is why in so many places He taught brotherly love, that is, charity; and this constitutes the distinction between the Old Testament or Covenant and the New. That good ought to be done from charity to the adversary and the enemy the Lord taught in Matthew:

You have heard that it has been said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that hurt you and persecute you; that you may be sons of your Father who is in the heavens (Matt. 5:43-45).

And when Peter asked Him how often he should forgive one sinning against him, whether he should do so until seven times, He replied:

I do not say to thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21, 22).

And I have heard from heaven that the Lord forgives to everyone his sins, and never takes vengeance, nor even imputes sin, because He is love itself and good itself. Nevertheless, sins are not thereby washed away, for this can be done only by repentance. For when He told Peter to forgive until seventy times seven, what will not the Lord do?

True Christian Religion 43

IT IS THE ESSENCE OF LOVE TO LOVE OTHERS OUTSIDE OF ONESELF, TO DESIRE TO BE ONE WITH THEM, AND TO RENDER THEM BLESSED FROM ONESELF. The essence of God consists of two things, love and wisdom; while the essence of His love consists of three things, namely, to love others outside of Himself, to desire to be one with them, and from Himself to render them blessed. And because love and wisdom in God make one, as has been shown above, the same three things constitute the essence of His wisdom; and love desires these three things, and wisdom brings them forth.

DAY FOUR: LOVE OF THE LORD

[2] The first essential, which is to love others outside of oneself, is recognized in God's love for the whole human race. And for its sake, God loves all things that He has created, because they are the means; for when the end is loved, the means also are loved. All men and things in the universe are outside of God, because they are finite and God is infinite. The love of God goes forth and extends not only to good men and good things, but also to evil men and evil things; consequently, not only to the men and things in heaven but also in hell, thus not only to Michael and Gabriel but also to the devil and satan; for God is everywhere, and is from eternity to eternity the same. He also says:

That He makes the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

But the reason why evil men continue to be evil, and evil things continue to be evil, lies in the subjects and objects themselves, in that they do not receive the love of God as it is, and as it is inmosty in them, but as they themselves are; in the same way as thorns and thistles receive the heat of the sun and the rain of heaven.

[3] The second essential of the love of God, which is a desire to be one with others, is recognized in His conjunction with the angelic heaven, with the church on earth, with everyone there, and with everything good and true that enters into and constitutes man and the church. Moreover, love viewed in itself is nothing but an endeavor towards conjunction. Therefore, that this aim of the essence of love might be realized, man was created by God into His own image and likeness, with which a conjunction is possible. That the Divine love continually seeks conjunction is evident from the Lord's own words:

That He wishes them to be one, He in them and they in Him, and that the love of God might be in them (John 17:21-23, 26).

[4] The third essential of the love of God, which is to render others blessed from Himself, is recognized in eternal life, which is the endless blessedness, happiness, and felicity that God gives to those

DAY FOUR: LOVE OF THE LORD

who receive into themselves His love. For as God is love itself, so He is blessedness itself; for all love breathes forth delight from itself, and the Divine love breathes forth blessedness itself, happiness, and felicity to eternity. Thus God from Himself renders the angels blessed, and men after death; and this He does by conjunction with them.

Arcana Coelestia 1812

[W]hile He lived in the world, the Lord was in continual combats of temptations, and in continual victories, from a constant inmost confidence and faith that because He was fighting for the salvation of the whole human race from pure love, He could not but conquer. This is what is meant here by “believing in Jehovah.”

From the love from which anyone fights, it is known what his faith is. He who fights from any other love than love toward the neighbor and toward the Lord’s kingdom, does not fight from faith, that is, does not “believe in Jehovah,” but in that which he loves, for the love itself for which he fights is his faith. For example: he who fights from the love of becoming the greatest in heaven does not believe in Jehovah, but rather in himself. For to desire to become the greatest is to desire to command others; thus he fights for command; and so in all other cases. And thus from the love itself from which anyone fights, it may be known what his faith is.

[2] But in all His combats of temptations, the Lord never fought from the love of self, or for Himself, but for all in the universe, consequently, not that He might become the greatest in heaven, for this is contrary to the Divine Love, and scarcely even that He might be the least; but only that all others might become something, and be saved.

DAY FOUR: LOVE OF THE LORD

Questions and Comments

1. How do these descriptions of the Lord's love instruct us in understanding the teachings in Matthew 5 to love our enemy?
2. How does our capacity and ability to love differ from the Lord's? How is it similar? What is our responsibility to love, given the Lord's love?

DAY FIVE: RAIN ON THE JUST AND ON THE UNJUST

Divine Providence 173

[T]he father in the heavens makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matt. 5:45.

By “the sun” here as elsewhere in the Word in its spiritual sense is meant the Divine Good of the Divine Love, and by “rain” the Divine Truth of the Divine Wisdom. These are given to the evil and to the good, “to the just and to the unjust,” for unless they were given, no one would have perception and thought. It has been shown above that there is only one life from which all have life, and perception and thought belong to life. Therefore, perception and thought are from the same fountain from which life springs. That all the light forming the understanding is from the Sun of the spiritual world, which is the Lord, has already been abundantly shown.

Divine Wisdom 12:4

That all things have been created for obedient service to life, which is the Lord, follows in its order from this, that men, and angels who are from men, have been created to receive life from the Lord, and are nothing but receptacles, although in the freedom in which they are kept by the Lord they do not appear to be receptacles.

Nevertheless, they are so, both the good and the evil; for the freedom in which they are kept is likewise from the Lord. The life of men and angels is to understand, and from that to think and speak, and it is to will, and from that to do; and consequently these belong to life from the Lord, since they are the effects of life.

All things that have been created in the world have been created for the use, for the benefit, and for the delight of men, some more nearly, some more remotely. Since, then, these things have been created for man’s sake, it follows that they are for the Lord’s service, who is the life with men. It may seem as if these things were serviceable for the good, because they live from the Lord, and not for the evil. Nevertheless, created things furnish uses,

DAY FIVE: RAIN ON THE JUST AND ON THE UNJUST

benefit, and delight, both to the evil and the good, for the Lord says that:

He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45).

The evil have nothing of life from themselves, and... they are led by the Lord, even though they are ignorant of it and are unwilling to be led....

True Christian Religion 364:2

But how God inflows with the whole of His Divine life may in some measure be perceived in somewhat the same manner as seeing that the sun of the world with its whole essence, which is heat and light, flows into every tree, every shrub and flower, every stone both common and precious; and that the sun does not distribute its heat and light, dispensing a part to this object and a part to that, but each object draws its own portion from the common influx. The same is true of the sun of heaven, from which Divine love goes forth as heat and Divine wisdom as light. As the heat and light of the sun flow into human bodies, so do these flow into human minds and make them live according to the nature of their forms, each form taking what is necessary for itself from the common influx. To this the following words of the Lord are applicable:

Your Father makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

Romans 12:14-21 (NKJV)*

Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind one toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Provide honest things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine,

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I will repay," says the Lord.¹ Therefore, if thine enemy hungers, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Apocalypse Explained 815:2*

[T]he Gospels contain the words of the Lord Himself, all of which have concealed in them a spiritual sense, through which immediate communication with heaven is granted, while the writings of the Apostles contain no such sense, although they are nevertheless useful books for the church.

Questions and Comments

1. If the Lord is love and truth flowing in, how does the reception alter what flows in?
2. How do we benefit from the Lord's universal flowing in with truth and good?
3. How do we respond to those who do not receive His influx of good and truth?
4. How does Romans 12 accord or not accord with New Church doctrine? How can we benefit from reflecting on this teaching?

¹ Leviticus 19:18

DAY SIX: SHUNNING THEFT AND BEING PERFECT

Life 80

IN PROPORTION AS ANYONE SHUNS THEFTS OF EVERY KIND AS SINS, IN THE SAME PROPORTION HE LOVES SINCERITY.

To “steal,” in the natural sense, means not only to commit theft and robbery, but also to defraud, and under some pretext to take from another his goods. But in the spiritual sense to “steal” means to deprive another of his truths of faith and his goods of charity. And in the highest sense to “steal” means to take away from the Lord that which is His and attribute it to oneself, and thus to claim righteousness and merit for oneself. These are “thefts of every kind.” And they also make one, as do adulteries of every kind, and murders of every kind, of which we have already treated. The reason why they make one is that they are one within another.

Life 81

The evil of theft enters more deeply into a man than any other evil because it is conjoined with cunning and deceit; and cunning and deceit insinuate themselves even into the spiritual mind of man, in which is his thought with understanding. That man possesses a spiritual mind and a natural mind will be seen below.

Life 82

That in proportion as anyone shuns theft as a sin, in the same proportion he loves sincerity, is because theft is also fraud, and fraud and sincerity are two opposite things, so that in proportion as anyone is not in theft in the same proportion he is in sincerity.

Life 83

Sincerity is to be understood as including integrity, justice, fidelity, and rectitude. In these no man can be from himself so as to love them from and for themselves. But he is in them who shuns as sins, fraud, cunning, and deceit, and is therefore in them not from himself but from the Lord.... Such is the case with a priest, a magistrate, a judge, a merchant, and with everyone in his own office and his own work.

DAY SIX: SHUNNING THEFT AND BEING PERFECT

Life 84

This is taught by the Word in many passages, among which are the following:

He that walks in justice, and speaks uprightnesses; who despises oppressions for gain, who shakes off his hands lest they hold a bribe; who stops his ears lest he hear of bloods, and shuts his eyes lest he see evil; he shall dwell on high (Isa. 33:15-16).

Jehovah, who shall abide in Thy tent? who shall dwell in the mountain of Thy holiness? He that walketh uprightly, and doeth justice; he that slanders not with his tongue, nor does evil to his companion (Ps. 15:1-3, etc.).

My eyes are towards the faithful of the land, that they may sit with Me; he that walks in the way of the upright, he shall minister to Me. He that makes deceit shall not sit in the midst of My house; the one speaking lies shall not stand before My eyes. In the dawning will I cut off all the wicked of the land, to cut off from the city all the workers of iniquity (Ps. 101:6-8).

That unless a man is interiorly sincere, just, faithful, and upright, he is insincere, unjust, unfaithful, and base, is taught by the Lord in these words:

Unless your justice shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5:10).

The “justice that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees” means the interior justice in which is the man who is in the Lord. That he is in the Lord is taught by the Lord Himself in John:

The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:22-23, 26).

DAY SIX: SHUNNING THEFT AND BEING PERFECT

From this it is evident that they are “perfect” when the Lord is in them. These are they who are called:

The pure in heart, who shall see God, and,

Those who are perfect as is their Father in the heavens (Matt. 5:8, 48).

Questions and Comments

1. The Lord teaches us that the perfection the Lord calls us to acquire (“Be ye perfect,”) is according to the internal state of sincerity with us. Why is perfection of state associated with sincerity?
2. Why is the commandment not to steal associated with loving our enemies and being perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect?