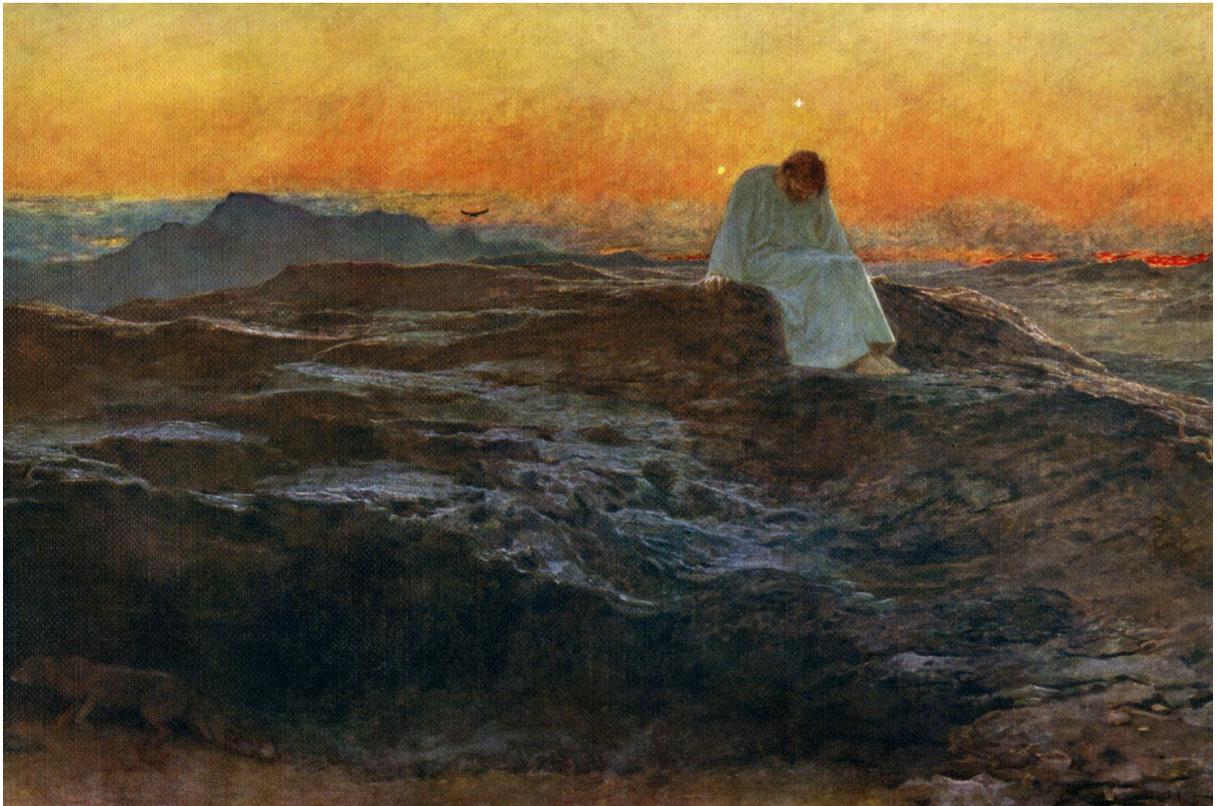


The Lord's Prayer – 5



And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:13, Luke 11:4

1. What is temptation?

Mark 1:13. And [Jesus] was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

NJHD 187. Only those who are being regenerated undergo spiritual temptations, for spiritual temptations are pains of mind induced by evil spirits with those who are in goods and truths. While those spirits are exciting the evils which are with them, there arises the anxiety of temptation. Man does not know where this anxiety comes from because he does not know its origin.

188. For there are both evil and good spirits with every man; the evil spirits are in his evils, and the good spirits in his goods. When the evil spirits approach they draw forth his evils, while the good spirits, on the contrary, draw forth his goods. From this collision and combat arise, from which the man has interior anxiety, which is temptation. Hence it is plain that temptations are not induced by heaven, but by hell; which is also the faith of the church, which teaches that God tempts no one.

189. Interior anxieties are also experienced by those who are not in goods and truths; but they are natural, not spiritual anxieties. The two are distinguished by this, that natural anxieties have worldly things for their objects, but spiritual anxieties, heavenly things.

190. In temptations, the dominion of good over evil, or of evil over good, is what is in contention. Evil, which wills to have dominion, is in the natural or external man, and good is in the spiritual or internal man. If evil conquers, the natural man has dominion; if good conquers, the spiritual has dominion.

191. These combats are carried on by the truths of faith which are from the Word. From these, man must combat against evils and falsities; for if he combats from any other principles, he cannot conquer, because in these alone the Lord is present. Because this combat is carried on by the truths of faith, therefore man is not admitted into it until he is in the knowledges of good and truth, and has thence obtained some spiritual life. Therefore such combats do not take place till man has arrived at years of maturity.

192. If man succumbs in temptation, his state after it becomes worse than before, because evil has acquired power over good, and falsity over truth.

193. Since at this day faith is rare because there is no charity, for the church is at its end, therefore few at this day are admitted into any spiritual temptations; hence it is scarcely known what they are, and to what purpose they serve.

194. Temptations serve to acquire for good dominion over evil, and for truth dominion over falsity; also to confirm truths, and conjoin them to goods, and at the same time to disperse evils and the falsities thence derived. They serve also to open the internal spiritual man, and to subject the natural man to it; as also to break the loves of self and the world, and to subdue the lusts which proceed from them. When these things are effected, man acquires enlightenment and perception as to what truth and good are, and what falsity and evil are. From this, man obtains intelligence and wisdom, which afterwards increase continually.

195. The Lord alone combats for man in temptations. If man does not believe that the Lord alone combats and conquers for him, he undergoes only external temptation, which is not serviceable to him.

Questions and Comments

1. What is the difference between the “natural anxieties” and “spiritual anxieties” identified in NJHD 188?
2. What are examples of “natural anxieties”?
3. What are examples of “spiritual anxieties”?
4. NJHD 191 indicates that spiritual temptations do not occur until the “years of maturity.” What age ranges might this mean? And what factors would make the age at which one experiences spiritual temptations differ from one person to the next?
5. What does it mean for the Lord to combat and conquer for us in temptation?
6. What part do we have in the Lord combatting and conquering for us in temptation?

2. *Does the Lord ever lead us into temptation?*

Psalm 26:2. Test me, O Jehovah, and tempt me;
Examine my kidneys and my heart.

Matt. 26:41. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation; the spirit truly is eager, but the flesh is weak.

AC 1875. It was granted me to have a perception of angelic ideas about these words in the Lord's Prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Temptation and evil were rejected by the nearest good spirits, by a certain idea perceptible within me, and this even until what is purely angelic, namely, good, remained, without any idea of temptation and evil, the literal sense thus perishing altogether. In the first rejection innumerable ideas were being formed respecting this good—how good may come from man's affliction, while the affliction still is from the man and his evil, in which there is punishment; and this with a kind of indignation joined with it that it should be thought that temptation and its evil come from any other source, and that anyone should have any thought of evil in thinking of the Lord. These ideas were purified in the degree of their ascent. The ascents were represented by rejections (spoken of also n. 1393), which were made with a rapidity and in a manner that were inexpressible, until they passed into the shade of my thought. They were then in heaven, where there are only ineffable angelic ideas concerning the Lord's good.

AC 3425.5. The case is the same with the Lord's words in the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation." The sense according to the letter is that He leads into temptation; but the internal sense is that He leads no one into temptation, as is well known (see n. 1875). The same is true of all other things that belong to the literal sense of the Word.

AE 631. The external of the Word and thence of the church and of worship is perverted by evils of life and falsities of doctrine, because the external of the Word, which is called the sense of its letter, is written according to appearances in the world, because it is for children and the simple-minded, who have no perception of anything contrary to appearances. Therefore, as these advance in age, they are introduced by the sense of the letter, in which are appearances of truth, into interior truths, and thus appearances are put off by degrees, and in their place interior truths are implanted.

This may be illustrated by numberless examples, as that we should pray to God not to lead us into temptations. This is said because it appears as if God so leads, and yet God leads no one into temptations. Again, it is said that God is angry, punishes, casts into hell, brings evil upon the wicked, and many other like things; and yet God is never angry, never punishes or casts into hell, nor does He at all do evil to anyone, but the wrongdoer himself does this to himself by his evils, for in evils themselves are the evils of punishment. These things are nevertheless said in many passages in the Word, because it so appears.

SD 2759. WHAT “LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION” [MEANS] [Matt. 6:13, Luke 11:4]: In the inward sense it means, may the Lord not abandon us, or may He not slacken His Divine power, for then they fall into temptations, each into a different one, 1748, 6 Aug. These meanings I learned while praying the Lord’s prayer.

Questions and Comments

1. Why does the literal sense seem to suggest that the Lord leads us into temptation?
2. Does it ever feel like the Lord is leading us into temptation?
3. What use is there in the appearance in the literal sense that the Lord leads us into temptation?
4. Where does temptation come from?
5. Why didn’t the Lord just say “may the Lord not abandon us” like it says in SD 2759?
6. When we read Psalm 26:2 and Matthew 26:41, does it help answer any of the questions above?

3. What is evil?

Genesis 8:21. And Jehovah smelled a restful smell; and Jehovah said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more on account of man; for what the heart of man forms is evil from his youth; and I will not again smite any more all that is living, as I have done.

II Kings 17:13. And Jehovah testified in Israel, and in Judah, by the hand of all His prophets, every visionary, saying, Turn back from your evil ways and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent upon you by the hand of my servants the prophets.

CL 444.4. He who looks to God and wills to be led by God is in good; but he who turns away from God and wills to be led by himself is not in good. For the good which he does is done either for the sake of himself or for the sake of the world, and so is meritorious. or simulated, or hypocritical. It is clear, therefore, that man himself is the origin of evil—not that this origin was planted in man from creation but, by turning away from God, he planted it in himself.

DLW 264. The origin of evil is from the abuse of the capacities proper to man, that are called rationality and freedom. By rationality is meant the capacity to understand what is true and thereby what is false, also to understand what is good and thereby what is evil; and by freedom is meant the capacity to think, will and do these things freely.

DLW 265. That the origin of evil is from the abuse of these capacities will be explained in the following order: (1) A bad man equally with a good man enjoys these two capacities. (2) A bad man abuses these capacities to confirm evils and falsities, but a good man uses them to confirm goods and truths. (3) Evils and falsities confirmed in man are permanent, and come to be of his love, consequently of his life. (4) Such things as have come to be of the love and life are engendered in offspring. (5) All evils, both engendered and acquired, have their seat in the natural mind.

AC 6203. In regard to the origin of the influx of evil from hell, the case is this. When a man first from consent, then from purpose, and at last from the delight of affection, casts himself into evil, then a hell is opened which is in such evil (for the hells are distinct from one another according to evils and all their varieties), and there afterward takes place an influx from that hell.

When a man comes into evil in this way, it clings to him, for the hell in the sphere of which he then is, is in its very delight when in its evil. And therefore it does not desist, but obstinately presses in, and causes the man to think about that evil, at first occasionally, and afterward as often as anything presents itself which is related to it, and at last it becomes with him that which reigns universally. And when this takes place, he then seeks for such things as confirm that it is not an evil, and this until he wholly persuades himself; and then, insofar as he can, he

studies to remove external bonds, and makes evils allowable and clever, and at last even becoming and honorable—such as adulteries, thefts effected by art and deceit, various kinds of arrogance and boasting, contempt for others, vituperations, persecutions under an appearance of justice, and the like. The case with these evils is like that with downright thefts, which when committed of set purpose two or three times, cannot be desisted from; for they continually cling to the man's thought.

Questions and Comments

1. How is the heart of man evil from his youth, as it says in Genesis 8:21?
2. According to CL 444.4, what is the origin of evil?
3. How do the passages from *Divine Love and Wisdom* (DLW) explain in more detail the origin of evil in us individually?
4. AC 6203 describes how the influx of evil works to take control in us. When we ask the Lord to deliver us from evil in the Lord's Prayer, is it possible to identify in our minds one particular evil at one of the stages mentioned in the passage? If we can do this, how will it help?

4. How does the Lord deliver us from evil?

John 8:31-32. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, If you remain in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

SD 1878. CONCERNING LIBERATION FROM EVIL. The Lord is never the cause of evil, consequently He never expels evil by evil, but does away with evil by good. This law, which is acknowledged in heaven, is difficult of comprehension to those who are not heavenly. This was given to me while engaged this day in praying the Lord's Prayer. - 1748, April 8.

DP 211. The Lord by His Divine Providence continually leads man in freedom, and the freedom appears to him to be none other than his own; and to lead man in freedom in opposition to himself is like lifting up a heavy and resisting weight from the ground by means of screws, through the power of which the weight and the resistance are not felt; or it is like what happens to a man in the company of an enemy who intends to kill him, an intention he is not aware of; and a friend leads him away by unknown paths and afterwards discloses to him his enemy's intention.

AE 1164. With those about to be reformed, evils are removed by temptations, which are not punishments but combats. Such persons are not compelled to resist evils, but they compel themselves and pray to the Lord, and thus are delivered from the evils which they have resisted. Such afterwards refrain from evils, not from any fear of punishment but from an aversion to evil; and at length this aversion to evil is their resistance.

AE 803.2. When man begins to think for himself, which is the case after he has grown up, it must be to him the first and chief thing to refrain from doing evils for the reason that they are sins against the Word, thus against God, and for the reason that if he does them he will gain, not life eternal, but hell. And afterwards as he grows up and becomes old he must shun them as damned, and must turn away from them in thought and intention. But in order to so refrain from them and shun and turn away from them, he must pray to the Lord for help. The sins he must refrain from and must shun and turn away from are chiefly adulteries, frauds, illicit gains, hatreds, revenges, lies, blasphemies, and elation of mind.

So far as man detests these evils because they are opposed to the Word, and thence opposed to God, so far there is granted him communication with the Lord, and conjunction is effected with heaven. For the Lord enters, and with the Lord heaven enters, as sins are removed, since these and their falsities are the sole hindrances.... So far, then, as man detests these sins, so far good affections enter. Then so far as he detests adulteries, so far chastity enters. So far as he detests frauds and unlawful gains, so far sincerity and justice enter. So far as he detests hatred and revenge, so far charity enters. So far as he detests lies and blasphemies, so far truth enters.

And so far as he detests elation of mind, so far humility before God and love of the neighbor as oneself enter; and so on. From this it follows that to shun evils is to do goods.

AC 1740. As evils and falsities are dissipated, goods and truths take their place; and the greater the horror that is conceived for evils and falsities, the more of love for goods and truths is insinuated by the Lord. And further, the greater the horror for evils and falsities, the less do evil spirits dare to approach, for they cannot endure aversion and horror for the evils and falsities in which their life consists, and are sometimes seized with terror on their first approach. And the more of love there is for goods and truths, the more do the angels love to be with the man, and together with the angels, heaven; for they are in their own life when in the goods of love and truths of faith.

Questions and Comments

1. What do you think of the Lord's description of leading a man in freedom against himself in DP 211?
2. What does it mean to resist evil from aversion to evil as stated in AE 1164?
3. How does shunning evils result in doing good?
4. AC 1740 describes horror for evils and falsities. What evils and falsities horrify us? What evils and falsities do not horrify us? How does horror at evil and falsity help deliver us from evil?

5. Why should we ask the Lord to deliver us from evil?

Psalm 140:2. Set me free, O Jehovah, from the evil man;
From the man of violence preserve me.

DP 297. The evil cannot be wholly led by the Lord away from evil and into good so long as they believe their own intelligence to be everything, and the Divine providence nothing. The appearance is that man has the ability to withdraw himself from evil, provided he thinks this or that to be contrary to the common good, contrary to what is useful, and contrary to the law of the nation and of nations. This an evil man can do as well as a good man, provided he is such by birth or by practice as to be able inwardly in himself to think clearly, analytically and rationally.

Nevertheless he is not able to withdraw himself from evil. And the reason for this is that while the Lord gives to every man, the good and the evil alike, the capacity to understand and perceive things, even abstractly, as has been shown above throughout. Yet man from that capacity is not able to deliver himself from evil, because evil belongs to the will, and the understanding flows into the will only as with light, enlightening and teaching. And if the heat of the will, that is, man's life's love, is glowing with a lust of evil, it is frigid in affection for good. And in consequence, he does not receive [that light], but either rejects or extinguishes it, or by some contrived falsity turns it into evil....

But this can be seen more fully in the following order: (1) One's own intelligence, when the will is in evil, sees nothing but falsity, and has no desire or ability to see anything else. (2) If one's own intelligence then sees truth it either turns itself away or it falsifies the truth. (3) The Divine providence continually causes man to see truth, and also gives an affection for perceiving it and for receiving it. (4) By this means man is withdrawn from evil, not by himself, but by the Lord.

AC 8179.2. As to there being no need of intercession, the case is this. They who are in temptations are wont to slack their hands and betake themselves solely to prayers, which they then ardently pour forth, not knowing that prayers will not avail, but that they must fight against the falsities and evils which are being injected by the hells. This fight is performed by means of the truths of faith, which help because they confirm goods and truths against falsities and evils. Moreover in the combats of temptations, the man ought to fight as of himself, but yet acknowledge and believe that it is of the Lord (see above n. 8176). If man does not fight as of himself, the good and truth which flow in through heaven from the Lord are not appropriated to him; but when he fights as of himself, and still believes that it is of the Lord, then they are appropriated to him. From this he has an own [proprium] that is new, which is called the heavenly own, and which is a new will.

AC 8179:3. Moreover they who are in temptations, and not in some other active life than that of prayers, do not know that if the temptations were interrupted before they had been fully carried through, they would not be prepared for heaven, and thus could not be saved. For this reason, moreover, the prayers of those who are in temptations are but little heard; for the Lord wills the end, which is the salvation of the man, which end He knows, but not the man; and the Lord does not heed prayers that are contrary to the end, which is salvation. He who conquers in

temptations is also confirmed in the truth stated above; whereas he who does not conquer entertains a doubt with respect to the Divine aid and power, because he is not heard; and then sometimes, because he slacks his hand, he partly yields. From all this it can be seen what is meant by there being no need of intercession, namely, that prayer is not to be relied upon. For in prayer from the Divine it is always thought and believed that the Lord alone knows whether it is profitable or not; and therefore the suppliant submits the hearing to the Lord, and immediately afterward prays that the Lord's will, and not his own, may be done, according to the Lord's words in His own most grievous temptation at Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44).

Questions and Comments

1. How does the Lord withdraw man from evil according to DP 297?
2. What is the role of prayer in being delivered from evil?
3. How do we fight against evils as if from ourselves while still knowing the Lord is actually doing the fighting for us?
4. What does it mean when it says in AC 8179.3 that "the prayers of those who are in temptations are but little heard"?
5. What kind of prayer is particularly important in the midst of temptations as indicated in the end of AC 8179.3?

6. What happens after we are delivered from evil?

Isaiah 1:16-19. Bathe, purify yourselves; put aside the evil of your actions from in front of My eyes; forbear to do evil; learn to do good; inquire after judgment; make the oppressed happy; judge for the orphan; plead for the widow. Go now, and let us dispute, says Jehovah. Though your sins be as scarlet twice-dyed, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and hearken, you shall eat the goodness of the land.

AC 5036. As regards temptations, they take place when the man is in the act of regeneration; for no one can be regenerated unless he undergoes temptations, and they then arise from evil spirits who are around him. For the man is then let into the state of evil in which he is, that is, in which is that very [life] which is his own. And when he comes into this state, evil or infernal spirits surround him, and when they perceive that he is inwardly protected by angels, the evil spirits excite the falsities which he has thought, and the evils which he has done, but the angels defend him from within. It is this combat which is perceived in the man as temptation, but so obscurely that he scarcely knows otherwise than that it is merely an anxiety. For man—especially if he believes nothing about influx—is in a state that is wholly obscure, and he perceives scarcely a thousandth part of the things about which the evil spirits and angels are contending. And yet the battle is then being fought for the man and his eternal salvation, and it is fought from the man himself, for they fight from those things which are in man, and concerning them. That this is the case has been given me to know with the utmost certainty. I have heard the combat, I have perceived the influx, I have seen the spirits and angels, and at the time and afterward have conversed with them on the subject.

AC 5036:3. As before said, temptations take place chiefly at the time when the man is becoming spiritual; for he then apprehends spiritually the truths of doctrine. The man is often unaware of this, but still the angels with him see in his natural things the spiritual; for his interiors are then open toward heaven. For this reason also the man who has been regenerated is among angels after his life in the world, and there both sees and perceives the spiritual things which before appeared to him as natural. When therefore a man has come into such a state, then in temptation, when assaulted by evil spirits, he can be defended by angels, who then have a plane into which they can operate; for they flow into what is spiritual with him, and through this into what is natural.

AC 9334. When a man is being regenerated, which is effected by the implanting of spiritual truth and good, and by the removal at the same time of falsity and evil, he is not regenerated hastily, but slowly. The reason is that all things the man, from his infancy, has thought, intended, and done, have added themselves to his life, and have made it, and likewise have formed such a connection among themselves that no one thing can be taken away unless all are taken away at the same time. For an evil man is an image of hell, and a good man is an image of heaven. And the evils and falsities with an evil man have such a connection among themselves

as there is among the infernal societies, of which he is a part; and the goods and truths with a good man have such a connection among themselves as there is among the heavenly societies, of which he is a part. From this it is evident that the evils and falsities with an evil man cannot be removed from their place suddenly, but only in proportion as goods and truths are implanted in their order, and interiorly, for heaven in a man removes hell from him. If this were done suddenly, the man would fail, for each and all things that are in connection and form would be disturbed, and would take away his life.

Questions and Comments

1. What are some examples of the spiritual being in what is natural as described in AC 5036?
2. Why can't the Lord deliver us from evil all at once?
3. Can you think of an example of how being delivered from one particular evil opens the way for related evils to be removed?
4. How difficult is it to believe that the Lord can really make our sins white as snow as it says in *Isaiah* 1:16-19?