

The Ten Commandments

Week 2

The Second and Third Commandments



Jesus said,
Where two or three are gathered together
✠ in My name, ✠
there I am in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

(with highlights)

Exodus 20:7

Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him innocent who takes His name in vain.

AC 8882. That this signifies profanations and blasphemings of the truth and good of faith, is evident from the meaning of “the name of God,” as being everything taken together by which the Lord is worshiped, thus all the truth and good of faith... and from the meaning of “taking in vain,” as being to profane and blaspheme. By “taking the name of God in vain” is properly meant to turn truth into evil, that is, to believe that it is truth, and nevertheless to live in evil; and it also means to turn good into falsity, that is, to live in a holy way, and yet not believe. Both are profanation....

When a man believes in one way and lives in another, truth and evil, or good and falsity, are conjoined. Thus the things that are of heaven with man are conjoined with those which are of hell. This conjunction cannot be dissolved, and thereby the man be healed, except by a tearing apart that carries away with it everything of spiritual life; and therefore these persons are sent into the most grievous hell of all, where they are direfully tormented.

AC 8882:3. ...That such a state with man cannot be healed, thus cannot be forgiven, is signified also by the words which immediately follow, namely, “Jehovah will not hold him innocent who takes His name in vain,” by which is meant that it cannot be forgiven.

AC 8882:4. By “taking the name of God in vain” is also signified blasphemy, which takes place when those things which are of the Word, or of the doctrine of faith, thus which are holy, are held in derision, and are reduced to unclean earthly things, and thus are defiled....

Apocalypse Explained 960:15. There are two things by which heaven is closed to the people of the church. One is the denial of

the Lord's Divinity, and the other is the denial of the holiness of the Word; and this is for this reason that the Lord's Divine is the all of heaven, and the Divine truth, which is the Word in the spiritual sense, is what makes heaven. This makes clear that he who denies the one or the other denies that which is the all of heaven, and from which heaven is and exists, and thus deprives himself of communication and thence of conjunction with heaven...

AE 963:2. He who abstains from profaning the name of God, that is, the holiness of the Word, by contempt, rejection, or any blasphemy, has religion; and such as his abstinence is, such is his religion. For no one has religion except from revelation, and with us revelation is the Word. Abstinence from profaning the holiness of the Word must be from the heart, and not merely from the mouth. Those who abstain from the heart live from religion...

Spiritual Diary 1304. CONCERNING AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSIONS CONCERNING HOLY SCRIPTURE

Some from custom, others from contempt, have acquired the habit of using things of Holy Scripture in familiar conversation as expressions of derision or as jokes, supposing that by so doing they jest with good taste. But such expressions [from Scripture] are thereby attached to their bodily ideas, and in the other life are very detrimental to them. For such things introduced by habit into their worldly and bodily ideas, however numerous they are, must be separated in the other life, and this is usually brought about by means of various kinds of tearing apart, as I know from experience. Let such persons, therefore, take heed to themselves lest they mingle holy things with profane, and so profane those which are holy. For similar ideas return; that is to say, when the worldly ideas occur, holy things also stick with them, and when holy ideas occur, those that are profane also adhere to them, which is the reason that they must be separated. This may indeed seem remarkable to some, especially to those who do not comprehend how ideas are thus joined together. But let it be sufficient to warn against these things, for they can scarcely be cured without painful methods.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. The second commandment is a warning against “profanation,” which means mixing holy things with unholy things. Can you think of examples of such mixing or profanation?
2. Why can't the Lord God forgive profanation, or in other words, why does profanation close heaven to a person?
3. Sometimes books and magazines use Scriptural references in a frivolous way. The writers probably think of Scripture no differently than Shakespeare or other familiar expressions in our culture. Are they not as guilty, since they don't know or believe better?
4. Can you see why the Lord gave us His Word wrapped and hidden in parables and history, etc.?

Day Two

Matthew 12:31-32

Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven men. And whoever says a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall say *it* against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that to come.

TCR 297. In the natural sense, which is the sense of the letter, to take the name of Jehovah God in vain means the name itself, and its abuse in various kinds of conversation, especially in false speaking or lying, and in useless oaths or oaths to free oneself from blame of evil intentions (which are cursing), also when used in sorceries and incantations.

But to swear by God and His holiness, by the Word or the Gospel, at coronations, inaugurations into the priesthood, and inductions into offices of trust, is not taking the name of God in vain, unless he who takes the oath afterwards discards his promises as vain. Moreover, the name of God, because it is holiness itself, must be used continually in the holy things pertaining to the church... This is so because God is in all things of religion, and when He is solemnly invoked [or called upon] He is present through His name and hears. In such ways the name of God is hallowed...

That the name of Jesus is in like manner holy is known from the saying of the Apostle that at this name every knee is bowed or should be bowed in heaven and on earth*; and furthermore from this, that no devil in hell can utter that name... *[Philippians 2:10]

TCR 298. In the spiritual sense, the name of God means everything which the church teaches from the Word, and by which the Lord is called upon and worshiped. All such things in the complex are the name of God. "To take the name of God in vain," means, therefore, to introduce any of these things into frivolous conversation, into false speaking, lying, curses, sorceries or incantations; for this too is reviling and blaspheming God, thus His name. That the Word

and whatever the church has from it, and thus all worship, is the name of God, can be seen from the following passages...

Jesus said, Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

As many as received Him, to them He gave power to become sons of God, even to them that believe in His name (John 1:12)...

Believing, they shall have life in His name (John 20:31)...

TCR 299. In the celestial sense, “to take the name of God in vain” means what the Lord said to the Pharisees [in Matthew 12:31-32, quoted above]... “Blasphemy of the Spirit” means blasphemy against the Divinity of the Lord’s Human and against the holiness of the Word. That the Divine Human of the Lord is meant by the name of Jehovah God in the celestial or highest sense, is evident from the following passages:

Jesus said, Father, glorify Thy name. And there came a voice out of heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again (John 12:28)...

In the Lord’s Prayer, “Hallowed be Thy name” (Matt. 6:9) has the same meaning in the celestial sense.

TCR 300. That the name of anyone means not just his name but his every quality, is evident from the use of names in the spiritual world. No man there retains the name he received in baptism, or that of his father or ancestry in the world; but everyone is there named according to his character, and angels are named according to their moral and spiritual life.... Moreover in the natural world a name does not mean just the person’s name only, but his character also, because this adheres to his name. For in common conversation it is customary to say, “He is doing this for the sake of his name” ...or “This man has a great name,” meaning that he is renowned for such things as are in him, as for talents, learning, merits, and so on. Who does not know that he who reviles and slanders anyone in name also reviles and slanders the actions of his life? ...So again he who mentions the name of another in a tone of contempt, at the same time belittles the acts of his life... According to the laws of all kingdoms it is not lawful to sully and wound with slander anyone’s name, that is, his character and consequent reputation.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. What do you think is meant by “a word against the Son of Man,” which can be forgiven, as compared with “blasphemy of the Spirit,” which cannot?
2. The “name” of God stands for all of His qualities, as revealed to us in His Word. What are some of the Lord’s qualities? How do you think of Him when you pray?
3. When we notice people being unable or unwilling to believe in and commit themselves to a religious life in some respect, we may reflect that if they are not ready yet, it is a very good thing that they are held back from taking steps forward but then turning back and possibly mixing belief with unbelief, etc.

Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

AC 8885. **Remember.** That this signifies what is perpetual in the thought, is evident from the signification of “remembering,” when said of such a thing as must not be forgotten in any way, as being what is perpetual in the thought. ... Whatever universally reigns with man... is perpetually in his thought, even when he is meditating on other things, or is engaged in business affairs. A person’s thought involves many things together, for it is the form of many things which have entered in turn. Those things which come to clear perception are at the time in the center and thus in the light of the internal sight, while all other things are then at the sides all around. Those which are in the surrounding parts are in obscurity... But the things which are still more remote, and are not on the same plane but tend downward, are such as the man has rejected and holds in aversion. Such things are evils and falsities with good people, and goods and truths with evil people.

AC 8885:2. Within a person’s thought itself are those things which are perpetually there, that is, which universally reign there, which are his inmost things. From these man regards those things which are not perpetually there (that is, those things which do not yet universally reign) as being outside of himself and also as beneath himself, and as not yet being related to him. From these he can at that time choose and link to himself ones which agree with the inmost; and when they have been linked to and at length combined with them, the inmost, that is, those reigning universally, are made stronger. This is done by means of new truths in the case of those who are good, and by means of new falsities, or by wrong application of truths, in the case of the evil.

AC 8885:3. Be it known further that that which universally reigns is that which has been insinuated into the will itself, for the will itself is the inmost of man, because it has been formed from his love. For whatever man loves, he wills, and that which he loves

above all things, he inmostlly wills. But the understanding serves to make plain before others the things which the man wills, that is, the things he loves; and it also serves to bend the wills of others by ideas formulated in various ways to make their wills comply with his own. When this is the case, love or affection flows from the will into the intellectual ideas also, and by a certain kind of inspiration gives them life and moves them....

AC 8886. **The Sabbath day.** This signifies:

- ☆ in the supreme sense, the union of the Divine Itself and the Divine Human of the Lord;
- ☆ in the internal sense, the conjunction of the Divine Human with the heavens, thus heaven,
- ☆ and so the marriage of good and truth there...

As such things are signified by “the Sabbath,” therefore in the representative church it was most holy, and was that which was to be perpetually in the thought, that is, which was to reign universally...

AC 8887. **To keep it holy...** By “keeping the Sabbath holy” is signified... in the internal sense that those things which are signified by “the Sabbath” are not to be violated in any manner, namely, the union of the Lord’s Divine essence with His Human essence, also the union of His [Divine Human] with the heavens, and the consequent conjunction in these of good and truth... For if these things are violated, spiritual life perishes with that man, and becomes a life that is merely natural and afterward sensual. And then falsity is readily learned in place of truth, and evil in place of good, for falsity and evil then universally reign with him.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. What kind of things do you always remember, or have in the background of your thought even when you are focused on other things?
2. How important is it to come to church regularly, in order to remember the Lord and eternal life? What are meant to be the uses of coming to church?
3. Do you see why it is so important for us to “remember” the union of the Divine itself with the Divine Human in the Lord? What difference does that make to us?
4. The Sabbath also means “the marriage of good and truth” in the angels of heaven (and the people of the Church on earth). Do you have an idea and a feeling for what this marriage of goodness and truth means, in practical terms?
5. Can you see how, if we abandon looking to the Lord, we end up in a life that is merely natural and sensual?
6. The Jewish Sabbath is on what we call Saturday. Since the Jews profaned the Sabbath so badly by crucifying the Lord on Friday, the eve of the Sabbath, Christians see the day of His resurrection as “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). How important is it to keep the Sabbath on a certain day?

Day Four

Exodus 20:9-10

Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. And the seventh day is the Sabbath to Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not do any work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and thy beast, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates.

AC 8888. **Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work.**

That this signifies the combat which precedes and prepares for this marriage, is evident from the signification of “six days,” as being states of combat... and from the signification of “laboring and doing one’s work,” as being to do those things which are necessary to life, here those which are necessary to spiritual life, that is, to the life in heaven.

AC 8888:2. Moreover by the combat which precedes and prepares for the heavenly marriage is meant spiritual combat or temptation. For before he enters into the heavenly marriage, that is, before he is regenerated, the man is in combat against the evils and falsities in himself, because these must be removed before the truth and good which are from the Lord can be received. These evils and falsities are removed by means of the truths of faith, for by means of these the man not only learns what good is, but is also led to good.

This state is the first state of the man who is being regenerated, and is called the state which precedes and prepares for the heavenly marriage. But when the man is in good and is led by the Lord through good, he is then in the heavenly marriage, thus in heaven, for the heavenly marriage is heaven. The former state is what is signified by “the six days” which precede the seventh, and the latter state by “the seventh day”

AC 8888:3. As by “the Sabbath” is signified the heavenly marriage, that is, heaven, therefore the kingdom of the Lord in the heavens is called a perpetual Sabbath, thus a perpetual rest and peace, and there are no longer six days of labor there.

AC 8889. And the seventh day is the Sabbath to Jehovah thy God... The meaning of “the Sabbath” is the heavenly marriage... Thus [the Sabbath means] good implanted by means of truths, and afterward formed by them. For the good with man is not spiritual good until it has been formed by truths; and when it has been formed by truths, there is then the heavenly marriage. For the heavenly marriage is the conjunction of good and truth, and is heaven itself with man. From this also it is that “the seventh day” signifies a holy state....

AC 8890. Thou shalt not do any work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and thy beast, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates. This means that in this case heaven and blessedness are in each and all things in the internal and in the external of man. This is evident from the meaning of “not doing any work,” as being rest and peace, thus heaven. For when man is in heaven, he is free from all worry, unrest, and anxiety, and when he is free from these he has blessedness. And it is evident from the meaning of “thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy manservant, thy maidservant, thy beast, the sojourner within thy gates,” as being each and all things in the internal and in the external of man. For by “thou” is meant the man himself; by “son” is meant his understanding, by “daughter” his will, both in the internal man. By “manservant” is signified the natural as to truth, and by “maidservant” the natural as to good, thus both that are in the external man. But by “beast” is signified affection in general, and by “the sojourner within the gates,” memory-knowledge in general. Thus there are signified each and all things....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Arcana Coelestia 9349:4 says that the words “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” are a commandment that must be altogether observed and done; but that the rest of the third commandment (verses 9-11) “may serve a use if one so pleases,” that is, if we wish to. (There is also a third category in the laws given through Moses, laws which the Lord has completely done away with.) So the Lord does not literally require that we do our work in six days and rest on the Sabbath. Looking at the spiritual meaning, what aspects of the spiritual sense of verses 9-11 are required of us?
2. Do you think that even if your work prevents you from coming to church very often, it is important to keep a Sabbath, a day of rest and remembering the Lord, once every seven days?
3. AC 8888:3 says that in heaven there is perpetual rest, and no longer the six days of labor. How does that fit with the teachings that heaven is a kingdom of uses, where everyone loves the work they do?
4. Why is the good we do not spiritual good until it is formed by truths? (AC 8889)

Exodus 20:11

For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

AC 8891. For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth and the sea. That this signifies the regeneration and making alive of those things which are in the internal and in the external man, is evident from the signification of “six days,” as being states of combat... And when “six days” are said of Jehovah, that is, the Lord, they signify His labor with man before he is regenerated... And... “heaven and earth” [mean] the church or kingdom of the Lord in man, “heaven” in the internal man and “earth” in the external man... thus the regenerate man, that is, one who has found new life and has thus been made alive. And... “the sea” [means] the sensuous [mind] of man sticking to his bodily aspect....

They who do not think beyond the sense of the letter cannot believe otherwise than that the creation which is described in the first and second chapters of Genesis is the creation of the universe, and that there were six days within which the heaven, the earth, the sea and all things which are in them were created, and finally man in the likeness of God. But who that takes into consideration the particulars of the description cannot see that the creation of the universe is not meant there? For such things are there described as may be known from common sense not to have been so, as that there were days before the sun and the moon, as well as light and darkness, and that herbage and trees sprang up...

AC 8891:3. ...Nevertheless be it known that each and all things in that history, down to the smallest iota, are Divine, and contain within them arcana which before the angels in the heavens are plain as in clear day. The reason of this is that the angels do not see the sense of the Word according to the letter, but according to what is within, namely, what is spiritual and celestial, and within these, things Divine...

AC 8892. **And all that is in them.** That this signifies the vivification [or making alive] of all things in them, is evident without explanation.

AC 8893. **And rested on the seventh day...** That by “rest on the seventh day” is signified peace and the good of love, is because before a man is regenerated, or created anew, he is in an untranquil and restless state, for his natural life then fights with his spiritual life and wishes to rule over it. Consequently at this time the Lord has labor, for He fights for man against the hells which assault. But as soon as the good of love has been implanted, the combat ceases, and rest follows, for the man is then introduced into heaven, and is led by the Lord according to the laws of order there, thus in peace. These things are signified by “the rest of Jehovah in the seventh day.”

AC 8894. **Wherefore Jehovah blessed the seventh* day.** That this signifies that then is the heavenly marriage from the Lord, is evident from the signification of being “blessed,” as being to be disposed into heavenly order, and to be gifted with the good of love... and from the signification of “the seventh* day,” as being a state of heavenly love... thus the heavenly marriage. For the heavenly marriage is the conjunction of good and truth, and this is heaven in man...

* The Hebrew has “Sabbath here.”

AC 8895. **And hallowed it.** That this signifies that it cannot in any way be violated, is evident from the signification of “to be hallowed,” when the heavenly marriage in the regenerate man is treated of, as being to be inviolable... For the holiness of the Lord with man is inviolable. Thus neither can the person who receives what holy from the Lord be violated, that is, one who is in the good of love, consequently who is in heaven.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Do you have an idea of what AC 8893 is talking about, in relation to the restless state when our natural life is trying to overpower our spiritual life, versus the state of peace when the Lord is leading us to act from good loves?
2. AC 1798:2-3 says, "If you are willing, just examine all doctrinal things, and see what they are and what they are like. Don't they all pertain to charity, and consequently to the faith that is from charity? [3] Take only the Precepts of the Decalogue. The first of these is to worship the Lord God. He who has the life of love or of charity worships the Lord God, because this is his life. Another precept is to keep the Sabbath. He who is in the life of love, or in charity, keeps the Sabbath holy, for nothing is sweeter to him than to worship the Lord, and to glorify Him every day."
3. In what ways might we find it sweet to glorify the Lord every day, not in a super-pious way but in ways that are useful and true?

Isaiah 58:14-15

If thou turn thy foot back from the Sabbath, *from doing* thine own delight on the day of My holiness, and shalt call the Sabbath a delight to the Holy One of Jehovah, honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words; then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah, and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.

TCR 301. ... In the natural sense, which is the sense of the letter, [the third commandment] means that six days are for man and his labors, and the seventh for the Lord, and rest for man from the Lord. In the original tongue 'Sabbath' means 'rest.' With the children of Israel the Sabbath, because it represented the Lord, was the holy of holies. The six days represented His labors and conflicts with the hells, and the seventh His victory over them and consequent rest. And as that day was a representative of the close of the whole of the Lord's work of redemption, it was holiness itself. But when the Lord came into the world, and in consequence representations of Him ceased, that day became:

- ☆ a day of instruction in Divine things,
- ☆ and thus also a day of rest from labors
- ☆ and of meditation on such things as relate to salvation and eternal life,
- ☆ as well as a day of love towards the neighbor.

That it became a day of instruction in Divine things is evident from this, that on that day the Lord taught in the temple and in synagogues... That that day was made also a day of love towards the neighbor is evident from what the Lord did and taught on that day... [healing and helping people].

From all this it is evident why the Lord said,

That He is Lord also of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5);
and because He said this, it follows that that day was a representative of Him.

TCR 302. In the spiritual sense, this commandment signifies man's reformation and regeneration by the Lord, "the six days of labor" signifying his warfare against the flesh and its lusts, and at the same time against the evils and falsities that are in him from hell, and "the seventh day" signifying his conjunction with the Lord, and regeneration thereby... For the Lord reforms and regenerates man and renders him spiritual in the same manner in which He glorified His Human and made it Divine; and this is the meaning of the command to "follow Him"

TCR 303. In the celestial sense, this commandment means conjunction with the Lord, followed by peace, because of protection from hell. For the Sabbath signifies rest, and in this highest sense, peace. Therefore the Lord is called the Prince of Peace, and He also calls Himself "Peace," as is evident from the following passages...

Moreover, the state of peace into which men are to come from the Lord is treated of in Isa. 65, 66 and elsewhere; and those will come into that state, who are received into the New Church which the Lord is establishing at this day... From all this it is also evident why the Lord called Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," that is, of rest and peace.

TCR 304. Heavenly peace, in respect to the hells, is that evils and falsities shall not rise up from them and break forth. This peace may be compared in many respects with natural peace; as with peace after war, when everyone is secure from enemies and is safe in his own city and home and living in his own fields and garden. This is as the prophet said when he spoke naturally of heavenly peace: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid (Micah 4:4; Isa. 65:21-23). It may also be compared to recreations of mind and to rest after severe labor, and to the consolation felt by mothers after childbirth, when their parental love... manifests its delights. It may also be compared with serenity after tempests, black clouds, and thunders; also with spring, after a terrible winter has passed, and with the gladdening influences from the new growths in the fields and the blossoming in the gardens, meadows, and woods....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. What do you suppose the Lord means in Isaiah 58 about not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, but instead honoring the Sabbath?
2. TCR 301 lists four purposes of the Sabbath day since the Lord's coming in Person. What applications do you see of making the Sabbath a day of love toward the neighbor?
3. The Lord leads us into warfare against the flesh and its lusts and at the same time against the evils and falsities in us from hell. He asks us to take up the cross and follow Him. Then His kingdom comes and His will is done. Why is there a struggle involved? What's good about that?
4. The Lord's goal for each of us is the peace of heaven. The Sabbath is partly designed to keep reminding us of this goal, and of the Lord, who actually does the work for us if we let Him. How can our habits on the Sabbath day do a better job of these purposes?
5. The Lord is the Lord of the Sabbath, and heaven is a perpetual Sabbath. The Lord never actually rests, and His kingdom is a kingdom of uses. So although the literal sense, the abrogated part, emphasizes doing no work, the spiritual sense emphasizes taking the "work" out of the uses we do, making them a joy instead. We can act according to the instruction we receive—especially that the Lord is the One who does all good things—and out of love for the Lord and the neighbor, as opposed to the "fire" of loves of self and the world that we might kindle.