

FROM THE LORD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT

“[L]ove the Lord your God and...walk always in His ways... (Deuteronomy 19:9).

I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people (Leviticus 26:12).

“[K]eep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him...” (Deuteronomy 11:22).

Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice (Deuteronomy 26:17).

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples” (Isaiah 8:16).

You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not delivered my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?
(Psalm 56:13)

O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,
I will lift up my hands in Your name.
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.
Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.
My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds Me.
(Psalm 63: 1, 3-5, 7-8)

NEW TESTAMENT

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him (Matthew 4: 18-22).

[Andrew, Simon Peter's brother] found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. The following day Jesus...found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” [When Philip brought Nathanael to see the Lord, Nathanael was surprised that Jesus knew him, and Jesus said] “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (John 1:41-43, 48-49).

And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor (Luke 6: 13-16). *[Note: Matthias was chosen as the twelfth disciple after Judas died (see Acts 1:12-26.)]*

And He [Jesus] spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will not they both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher” (Luke 6:39-40).

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2).

Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him (Mark 3:14-19).

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them... “As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:5, 7-8).

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go (Luke 10:1).

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:35-38).

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him (John 1:10-11).

Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8: 31-32).

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age” Amen (Matthew 28:18-20).

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

The Church

There are two things which make the life of heaven with a person, the good of love and the truth of faith. A person has this life from God, and nothing at all of it is from the person. Therefore the primary principle of the church is, to acknowledge God, to believe in God, and to love Him (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 281).

It is the good of love and charity, and the truth of faith, that constitute that which is called the Church. For it is well known that all good comes from the Lord and that all truth comes from the Lord. Good and truth that come from a person are not good and truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 2966:2).

Good and truth of faith themselves are what make a Church, indeed they are the Church, for present within the good and truth of faith there is the Lord, and where the Lord is, there is the Church also (*Arcana Coelestia* 3379).

[N]othing is of greater importance to a person than knowing what the truth is (*Arcana Coelestia* 794:2).

That there may be a church, there must be doctrine from the Word, since without doctrine the Word is not understood. Doctrine alone, however, does not constitute the church with a person, but a life according to it (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 243).

The Disciples

By the twelve disciples are meant all those who belong to the church, and in abstract sense, all things of the church, which are truths from good (*Apocalypse Explained* 851).

The Lord's disciples, who later on were called apostles, were twelve in number, and...like the tribes [of Israel], they symbolize the Lord's Church as regards goods and truths (*Arcana Coelestia* 3858: 16).

[A]ll the Lord's disciples together symbolized the church, and every one of them some aspect of the church: Peter the truth of the church, James its good, and John good in act or works. The rest of the disciples symbolized truths and goods derived from these (see *Apocalypse Explained* 411:12).

By "apostles" are meant those who teach the truths of the church, because the apostles [those sent] were so called from their having been sent to teach and to preach the Gospel concerning the Lord and the drawing near of the kingdom of God through Him; thus to teach the truths of the church, by which the Lord is known and the kingdom of God is brought near. The kingdom of God on the earth is the church. From this it is evident what is meant by "apostles" in the spiritual sense of the Word, namely, not the twelve apostles who were sent by the Lord to teach concerning Him and His kingdom, but all who are in the truths of the church, and in a sense abstracted from persons, the truths themselves (*Apocalypse Explained* 100:2).

Qualities That Represented Spiritual Things

There were twelve [disciples] for this reason, that each one might portray the same quality as a tribe of Israel. Thus Peter portrays belief based on understanding, James charity, and John the fruits of charity. So with the rest. Therefore, such men were chosen as would resemble those whom they portrayed (*Spiritual Experiences* 1217).

[T]he twelve apostles—like the twelve tribes of Israel—symbolize the church in the whole complex, or all things of truth and good, or all things of faith and charity. Likewise Peter, James, and John symbolize faith, charity, and the works of charity, in their order. When they were together they symbolized these as one, because without charity there is no faith that is faith, and without works there is no charity that is charity. Because these three apostles had this symbolization they followed the Lord more than the others, as can be seen in Mark, where it is said: “Jesus suffered no man to follow Him save Peter, James, and John the brother of James” (5:37). For this reason Peter was the first to be called by the Lord through Andrew, “Andrew” signifying the obedience of faith. And afterwards James and John were called. . . . Likewise He took Peter, James, and John up into the mountain when He was transfigured; He also spoke with these three about the consummation of the age, and about His coming. They were also with the Lord in Gethsemane (*Apocalypse Explained* 821: 2,3).

Calling Fishermen to Become Fishers of Men

[P]eople of lower condition, such as fishermen, were chosen to be disciples rather than more educated people, because at that time, many were brought up learning a lot of nonsense and foolish ideas, to the point where they were unable to grasp matters of belief the way the uneducated do, who understand, and can believe them better (*Spiritual Experiences* 1216).

I was once asked how from a philosopher I became a theologian; and I answered, In the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord; and that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On hearing this the inquirer asked, What is a spiritual fisherman? I replied that a fisherman, in the spiritual sense of the Word, symbolizes a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths rationally. Thence it is evident why the Lord chose fishermen for disciples, and said: “Come ye after Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:18-19; Mark 1:16-17). And to Peter after he had caught a multitude of fishes: “From henceforth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5:9-10). The inquirer said, “Now I can understand why the Lord called and chose fishermen to be His disciples, and therefore I do not wonder that He has also called and chosen you, since, as you have said, you were from early youth a fisherman in a spiritual sense, that is, an investigator of natural truths; that you are now an investigator of spiritual truths, is because these are founded on the former” (*Interaction of the Soul and the Body* 20:1,2).

Helping Establish a New Church

The infancy of the Christian Church was in the lifetime of the apostles, when they preached repentance and faith in the Lord God the Savior throughout the world. [Later] the Lord called together His twelve disciples, now angels, and sent them forth throughout the spiritual world, with the command to preach the gospel there anew (see *True Christian Religion* 4).

The twelve apostles were called together by the Lord, and were sent forth through the whole spiritual world, as they formerly were through the whole natural world, with the command to preach this gospel; and to each apostle was assigned a particular province; and this command they are executing with great zeal and industry (*True Christian Religion* 108).

After this work was finished the Lord called together His twelve disciples who followed Him in the world; and the next day He sent them all forth throughout the whole spiritual world to preach the Gospel that THE LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages (*True Christian Religion* 791).

Becoming a Disciple of the Lord

'Being the Lord's disciple' means being led by Him and not by self, thus by the good and the truths which come from the Lord and not by the evils and falsities which come from the person (*Arcana Coelestia* 10490:6).

"To follow the Lord" has a similar meaning as "to go or to walk after Him," which is to acknowledge, to obey, and to act and live from the Lord and with Him. [N]o one can follow the Lord from self, but only from the Lord Himself. For the Lord draws after Him the person who from freedom wills to follow; but He can draw no one who does not will to follow Him (*Apocalypse Explained* 864).

To acknowledge the Lord's Divine Human and to do His commandments is to follow Him, because only those who do this can be conjoined to the Lord (*Apocalypse Explained* 864: 2).

Everyone is led by self who does not shun evils because they are contrary to the Word and thus contrary to God (*Apocalypse Explained* 864:6).

The Church with People

The Lord's Church is with all in the whole world who live in good according to their religious system. All who live in good—wherever they are—and acknowledge one God, are accepted by the Lord and come into heaven; for all who are in good acknowledge the Lord, because good is from the Lord, and the Lord is in good (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

The communion called the church consists of all people in whom the church is, and the church enters into a person when he is becoming regenerate, and everyone becomes regenerate by abstaining from the evils of sin (*True Christian Religion* 510).

That the Church of the Lord is spread over all the globe, and is thus universal; and that all those are in it who have lived in the good of charity in accordance with their religious belief; and that the Church, where the Word is and by means of it the Lord is known, is in relation to those who are outside the Church like the heart and lungs in a person (*Heaven and Hell* 328).

The church and religion make one like truth and good.... The church is a church from its doctrine; and religion is religion from life according to doctrine. And the doctrine must be of truths, and the life must be of goods (*The Doctrine of Charity* 212).

All are initiated into the church by knowing evil and not doing it, because it is against God (*The Doctrine of Charity* 27).

People outside the Church who are true to their religion and have led lives in which some kind of charity towards their neighbor has figured, as well as some kind of love to God the Creator of the universe in a human form, are accepted in the next life by the Lord and saved. For after receiving instruction from angels they acknowledge the Lord, believe in Him, and love Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 10112).

Three groups of people constitute the Church. Those governed by the good of charity constitute the internal part of the Church, and those who possess few truths and still wish to receive instruction...constitute the external part of the Church. But those immersed in the delights that go with external truth are the most external, forming the perimeter and enclosing the Church (*Arcana Coelestia* 9276:2).

The Church within a Person

The Church, like heaven, is in a person (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 246).

The Church is the Lord's heaven on earth, and therefore also the Lord is the All in all within the Church, just as He is in heaven, and dwells with people there in what is His own, just as He does with angels in heaven (*Arcana Coelestia* 10151:3).

If the Church is to exist at all the individual must be the Church (*Arcana Coelestia* 1068).

[T]he church is with those only who are in spiritual good and at the same time in natural good; in such the church is formed by the Lord. For the church is in a person and not outside of him, consequently is not with those with whom these goods are not (*Apocalypse Explained* 619:7).

The word Church is used here to mean that which constitutes the Church in a person, for a person is a Church when goodness and truth are present in him; and groups of such people make up the Church in general (*Arcana Coelestia* 6113).

When a person is being regenerated or becoming the Church, that is, when from being a dead person he is becoming a living one, or from being a bodily-minded person is becoming a heavenly-minded one, he is led by the Lord through many states (*Arcana Coelestia* 3913:2).

For when a person is being regenerated, that is, becoming the Church, the first thing is his need to know and understand what the truth of faith is. The second is his determination to will and do it. And the third comes when he has an affection for it. When a person has an affection for truth, that is, when he experiences delight and blessing in acting in accordance with truth, charity or mutual love has arrived in him (*Arcana Coelestia* 3876).

Whatever the quality of a person's understanding of the Word is, so is the quality of the Church in him and the quality of his worship (*Arcana Coelestia* 10707).

Those who belong to the Church, that is, who have the Church within them, must acknowledge the Lord and the Divinity within Him. They must acknowledge the joining together of the Lord with heaven, also that of heaven with a person of the Church, and in general the joining together of goodness and truth in that person since this joining together constitutes the Church present in him. Whether you say the Church present in a person, or heaven present in him, or the kingdom of God present in him, or the Lord present in him, it all amounts to the same thing. For the Church is the Lord's heaven on earth, the kingdom of God is heaven and at the same time the Church, and the Lord is the Source, indeed the Sum and Substance of their existence (*Arcana Coelestia* 10357).

The Importance of Believing in the Lord God Jesus Christ

The primary principle of the church is, to acknowledge God, to believe in God, and to love Him (*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 281).

People ought to believe, that is, have faith, in God the Savior Jesus Christ, because that is a faith in a visible God within whom is the invisible; and faith in a visible God, who is at once Man and God, enters into a person (*True Christian Religion* 339).

A right idea of God in the church is like the sanctuary and altar in a temple, or like the crown upon the head and the scepter in the hand of a king on his throne. For on a right idea of God the whole body of theology hangs, like a chain on its first link (*True Christian Religion* 163).