

FROM THE LORD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT

And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:10-12).

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you...) and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field (Exodus 23:15-16).

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10).

"When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Leviticus 23:9-11).

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
And vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food from the earth,
And wine that makes glad the heart of man,
Oil to make his face shine,
And bread which strengthens man's heart.
(Psalms 104:14-15).

The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
And you give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every living thing.
(Psalm 145:15-16)

NEW TESTAMENT

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:3).

"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself knows not how. For the earth yields crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, and after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:26-29).

“Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you...” (John 6:27).

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has” (Luke 12:42-44).

And they [the disciples] said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.” He said, “Bring them here to Me.” Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children” (Matthew 14:17-21).

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35).

Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands (Luke 6:1).

“I am the living bread...” (John 6:51).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINES

Giving Thanks for the Harvest

All things exist for the sake of the human race, that from it may come the angelic heaven by which creation returns to the Creator, its source (*Conjugal Love* 85).

These gifts have been given to humankind to use and enjoy, and they are free gifts (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 334).

The Lord does, it is true, demand humility, worship, thanksgiving, and much else from a person, which seem like repayment, so that His gifts do not seem to be free. But the Lord does not demand those things for His own sake, for the Divine derives no glory at all from a person’s humility, worship, or thanksgiving. It is utterly inconceivable that any self-love should exist within the Divine, causing Him to require such actions for His own sake. Rather, they are required for a person’s own sake, for if someone possesses humility he is able to accept good from the Lord, since in that case he has been parted from self-love and its evils which stand in the way of his accepting it. Therefore the Lord desires a state of humility in a person for that person’s sake, because the Lord can flow in with heavenly good when that state exists in him. The same applies to worship and thanksgiving (*Arcana Coelestia* 5957).

Farmers love their fields and their vineyards, because of their produce; and love the fruits of them because they are blessings, and render thanks to the Lord, and so look to the Lord continually (*Doctrine of Charity* 169).

Spiritual Nourishment

Everything intended for natural nourishment, such as wheat, barley, oil, wine, and the like, symbolizes those things that are for spiritual nourishment. And the things that are for spiritual nourishment, have reference, in general, to good and truth, and the knowledges thereof, thus to doctrine and to a life according to it (*Apocalypse Explained* 911:14).

Eating and drinking in the Word also mean to eat and drink spiritually, which is to be instructed (*Apocalypse Explained* 617:3).

[The miracle of the Lord feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes] was performed because the Lord had previously been teaching them, and because they received and appropriated to themselves His doctrine. This was what they spiritually ate, from this the natural eating followed, that is, it flowed in with them out of heaven unknown to themselves, as the manna with the children of Israel. For at the will of the Lord, spiritual food, which is also real food (for spirits and angels) is turned into natural food (see *Apocalypse Explained* 617:4).

To be spiritually nourished is to be instructed and imbued, consequently it is to know, to understand, and to be wise. Unless a person enjoys this nourishment together with the nourishment of the body, he is not a human, but a beast (*Apocalypse Explained* 617:2).

The Bread of Life

By harvest and bread are symbolized the truths and goods of the church that are for nourishment (*Apocalypse Explained* 911:14).

[In Isaiah 30:23] the bread of the produce which Jehovah will give, symbolizes the good of love and of charity, which is produced by the truths of the Word, vivified by Divine influx (*Apocalypse Explained* 644:12).

Bread is used to mean everything spiritual and celestial, which is the food of angels, and if they were deprived of it they would cease to live, as a person deprived of bread or food ceases to do. That which is celestial and spiritual in heaven also corresponds to bread on earth, and is also represented by bread, as is clear from many places [in the Word]. That the Lord is Bread, because He is the source of everything celestial and spiritual, He Himself teaches in John [6:58] “This is the Bread which came down from heaven; anyone who eats this Bread will live forever” (*Arcana Coelestia* 276).

Feasts Observed by the Children of Israel

The meaning of “the feast” is worship of the Lord and thanksgiving and the worship of a thankful mind (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9296).

Two feasts were instituted with the children of Israel—one called the feast of seven weeks, which was that of the harvest of first-fruits and the other the feast of tabernacles, which was that of gathering in of the fruits of the earth. The former symbolized the implantation of truth in good, and the latter the production of good, thus regeneration. But by the feast of unleavened bread, or of the Passover, which preceded, was signified liberation from the falsities of evil, which is also the first thing of regeneration (*Arcana Coelestia* 9223:18).

The first feast, which was called “the feast of unleavened things,” symbolizes purification from falsities. This second feast symbolizes the implantation of truth in good. And the third feast, the implantation of good (*Arcana Coelestia* 9294:2).

The First Fruits

That the firstfruits were to be given to Jehovah, symbolized that it is the first of the church to ascribe all the goods and truths of faith to the Lord, and not to self. To ascribe to the Lord is to know, to acknowledge, and to believe that these things are from the Lord, and nothing of them from self; for as above shown, everything of faith is from the Lord. The “firstfruits” have this meaning because they were offerings and gifts, which were thanksgivings for the produce of the earth, and an acknowledgment of blessings from Jehovah, that is, from the Lord; and consequently were an acknowledgment that all things are from Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 9223:3).

That the feast of the harvest of the firstfruits symbolizes the worship of the Lord and thanksgiving on account of the implantation of truth in good. This is evident from the meaning of a “feast” as the worship of the Lord and thanksgiving, “first fruits” as those things which are the first of life, “sowing” as instructing, and the “field” as being the good of the church (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9294).

As this feast was called “the feast of the firstfruits of the harvest” it should be known what is meant in the Word by “the harvest. . .” In the broadest sense the harvest symbolizes the state of the whole human race in respect to the reception of good by means of truth. In a less broad sense, it means the state of the church in respect to the reception of the truths of faith in good. In a more restricted sense, [it means] the state of the person of the church in respect to this reception. And in a still more restricted sense, [it refers to] the state of good in respect to the reception of truth, thus the implantation of truth in good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9295:3).

The Harvest

“Seedtime and harvest” means the person who is to be regenerated, and consequently the Church. A person is compared to a field and to “seedtime” and of the Lord’s Word to “seed”. What it accomplishes is likened to ‘produce’ or ‘harvest’. No one ever fails to have seed from the Lord sown within him, no matter whether he is inside the Church or outside of it, that is, whether he knows the Lord’s Word or whether he does not. Without this implanting of seed from the Lord nobody can do the least good thing. Every good that stems from charity is seed obtained from the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 932:1-2).

In the Word frequent mention is made of “earth,” “ground,” “field,” “seed time,” “harvest,” “standing crop,” “threshing-floor,” “grain,” “wheat,” “barley,” and these symbolize such things as belong to the setting up of the church and to the regeneration of the person who is in the church (*Arcana Coelestia* 10669:3).

Since by the harvest are symbolized all those things that spiritually nourish a person, which have reference to truths of doctrine and goods of life, therefore the harvest symbolizes the church in general and in particular (*Apocalypse Explained* 911:15).

Feast of Ingathering

And “the feast of ingathering at the end of the year” means [the worship of a thankful mind on account of the implanting of good after that, and so on account of] regeneration and complete deliverance from damnation (*Arcana Coelestia* 10654).

The truths which are sown must be implanted in good, because they have no soil anywhere else, nor can they strike root anywhere else. They are implanted in good when the person wills the truth, loves it, and does it. This state of regeneration, or of liberation from damnation, is symbolized by this feast, which is called “the feast of the harvest of the first fruits of thy works;” for “harvest” symbolizes truths producing good (*Arcana Coelestia* 9294:2).

When truths have been implanted in good, the person is no longer led of the Lord by means of truths, but by means of good, which is effected when he wills good and does good from the affection of love, that is, from charity. This state of regeneration, or of liberation from damnation, is symbolized by the third feast, which is called “the feast of ingathering” (*Arcana Coelestia* 9294:3).

Being Fruitful

Becoming fruitful” means the increase of good and the most important feature of a person is good, just as the most important feature of a tree is the fruit. The leaves, it is true, grow first, but they do so for the sake of the fruit as the end in view (*Arcana Coelestia* 9337).

All good which is going to bear any fruit begins in the Lord, and unless it comes from Him it is not good (*Arcana Coelestia* 9258).

Good Growing Secretly in Our Lives

[In explanation of the parable of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4:26-29)] The reason why a person does not perceive the operation of the Divine Providence in himself is, that such perception would take away his freedom, and consequently the power of thinking as if from himself, and with it also all the enjoyment of life, so that a person would be like an automaton, in which there is no power of reciprocation as means by which conjunction is effected.... This, therefore, is what is meant by the words: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth” (John 3), also, by the seed springing up and growing, a man knowing not how (Mark 4:27). Of what importance is it for a person to know how the seed grows, provided he knows how to plough the earth, to harrow it, to sow the seed, and when he reaps the harvest, to bless God? (*Apocalypse Explained* 1153:8-9).