

FROM THE LORD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

(Psalm 29:2)

Then I will go up to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

(Psalm 43:3,4)

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

(Exodus 20:3-5)

You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God.

(Leviticus 26:1)

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? ...If you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

Shadrach Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king...."

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.... And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace....

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God...."

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.... Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who have trusted in Him...that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"

(Daniel 3:14-17, 19-20, 24-26, 28)

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.
(Psalm 145:18)

“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit.”
(Isaiah 57:15)

He does not forget the cry of the humble.
(Psalm 9:12)

The Lord lifts up the humble.
(Psalm 147:6)

O come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
(Psalm 95:6)

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Where two or three are gathered together in My name I am there in the midst of them.”
(Matthew 18:20)

“The hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth....”
(John 4:23)

““And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment.””
(Mark 12:30)

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:16)

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
(Matthew 6:24)

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
(Matthew 6:33)

Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.
(Revelation 14:7)

THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

TRUE WORSHIP

Genuine Divine worship is unknown to those who think that all worship consists in acts of adoration and prayer, thus in such things as belong to the mouth and thought, and not in such as belong to deeds flowing from the good of charity and the good of faith. Yet the reality is that in a person offering adoration and prayer, the Lord pays attention solely to his *heart*—his interiors as they are in respect to love and the consequent faith (*Arcana Coelestia* 10143:4, *emphasis added*).

Worship of God does not consist essentially in worship of the lips, but in a life of performing useful services. This worship is in keeping with the order of heaven. Worship of the lips is also worship, but it achieves nothing whatever without worship in the life one leads, since this is *worship of the heart* (*Arcana Coelestia* 7884, *emphasis added*).

Worship of the Lord does not consist in mere belief nor in mere love. Rather it consists in leading a life in accord with His commandments (*Arcana Coelestia* 10645:2).

Truth becomes a matter of life and worship when the person has an affection for it, wills it, and does it. Worship springing from truth that goes out from the will, and so from affection and love, is worship. In the Word this is called *worship of the heart*, but the other, worship of the lips alone (*Arcana Coelestia* 9393, *emphasis added*).

Worship of the mouth is accepted by the Lord according to the worship of the life (*Brief Exposition* 51).

WORSHIPING WITH A LIFE OF CHARITY

Worship does not consist in prayers and in external devotion, but in a life of charity. The essential of worship is the life of charity (see *Apocalypse Explained* 325:3).

A person is worshipping all the time if love and charity abide in him (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618).

True worship consists in performing uses, thus in the exercise of charity. Anyone who thinks that serving the Lord consists solely in going to church regularly, listening to the preaching there, and saying his prayers is much mistaken. True worship of the Lord consists in performing useful services to his country, its communities, and his neighbor with all his heart. These also include dealing sincerely with others and performing kind offices with full regard for each person's character. These useful deeds are the principal ways of exercising charity and the principal means of worshipping the Lord. Going to church regularly, listening to sermons, and saying prayers are also necessary; but without the useful deeds they have no value at all, for they do not constitute a person's life but teach what that life must be (see *Arcana Coelestia* 7038:1, *emphasis added*).

Worship in the external person proceeding from charity in the internal, appears to the angels as a standard bearer with a banner in his hand. But worship in the external person that does not proceed from charity in the internal, appears to the angels as an actor with a firebrand in his hand (*Charity* 177).

Piety is to think and speak piously; to spend much time in prayer; to bear oneself humbly at such times; to attend churches and listen devoutly to preaching there; to partake of the sacrament of the Holy Supper frequently every year, and likewise the other services of worship. But the life of charity consists in willing and doing good to the neighbor; and in acting from a principle of what is just and fair, and good and true, in every work and every office. In a word, the life of charity consists in performing uses. Divine worship consists primarily in the life of charity, and secondarily in piety. He who leads a life of piety, and not at the same time a life of charity, does not worship God. It is true, he thinks of God, yet he does not think from God, but from himself (see *New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrine* 124 and *Apocalypse Explained* 325:4).

The reason why the worship of the mouth is accepted by the Lord according to the worship of the life, is because the speech of a person before God, and before angels, has its sound from the affection of his love and faith, and these two are in person according to his life. If the love of God and faith in Him are in your life, the sound of your voice will be like that of a dove. But if self-love and self-confidence are in your life, the sound of your voice will be like that of an owl, howsoever you may bend your voice to imitate the voice of a turtle-dove (*Brief Exposition* 52).

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

[W]hen worshipping under compulsion one is not doing so from oneself but from some outside influence or from some other source that forces one to do it. Thus anyone may see that worship offered in freedom is worship itself, but worship offered under compulsion is not worship at all (*Arcana Coelestia* 2880).

What is sown in freedom remains, because it is implanted deeply in the person's actual will, which is the indispensable element of his life. But what is sown under compulsion does not remain, because the compulsion is not an impulse originating in the person's own will but belongs to the one who compels him. So it is that worship offered in freedom is pleasing to the Lord, but not worship offered under compulsion. Worship offered in freedom is worship coming from the heart; for all freedom goes together with love (*Arcana Coelestia* 9588, *emphasis added*).

While a person is being regenerated, he exercises self-compulsion, from the freedom with which he is gifted by the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1947:1, 2).

HUMILITY AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF WORSHIP

Divine worship consists in exalting the Lord in contrast to self, which one does according to one's degree of self-abasement before the Lord which is the essential element in Divine worship. When that element is present in a person he is in the right state to receive from the Lord the truth of faith and the good of charity, and is consequently in the right state to offer Him worship. But if a person exalts himself before the Lord he shuts the interiors of his mind off from receiving goodness and truth from the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8271).

In order to make a person blessed and happy, the Lord wills [desires] total submission.... That submission must be total is very evident from the first commandment of the church: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30). Thus since love to the Lord does not come from a person but from the Lord Himself, all his heart, all his soul, all his mind, and all his strength, which are recipients, must be the Lord's (see *Apocalypse Explained* 6138:2,3).

[A]ll true worship consists in adoration of the Lord. Adoration of the Lord consists in being humble; and being humble consists in the self-acknowledgement that with oneself there is nothing living and nothing good.... Being humble also consists in the acknowledgement that everything living and everything good come from the Lord. The more a person acknowledges these things not just with the lips but *in his heart*, the more humility he has; and consequently the more adoration—which is true worship—and the more love and charity, and the more happiness (*Arcana Coelestia* 1153:2, *emphasis added*)

WORSHIPING ONE GOD

The idea of God is the primary of all ideas. For such as this idea is such is person's communication with heaven and his conjunction with the Lord, and such is his enlightenment, his affection of truth and good, his perception, intelligence, and wisdom. These are not from a person but from the Lord according to conjunction with Him. The idea of God is the idea of the Lord and His Divine, for no other is the God of heaven and the God of earth, as He Himself teaches in Matthew: "All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth" (28:18) (*Apocalypse Explained* 957:3).

As a consequence of the Divine influx into the souls of people, there is in every one an internal dictate that there is a God and that He is one. And yet there are some who deny God, and some who acknowledge nature as god, and some who acknowledge more gods than one, and some who worship images as gods. This is possible because such have blocked up the interiors of their reason or understanding with worldly and corporeal things, thereby obliterating their first or childhood idea respecting God and...rejecting religion (*True Christian Religion* 9).

When a person shuns and turns away from evils because they are sins, he not only sees from the light of heaven that God is and that God is one, but also that God is Man. The reason is that the person who turns away from evils as sins thinks from heaven; and the whole heaven, and everyone there, has no other idea of God than as that of Man (see *Apocalypse Explained* 955:4).

YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

"Thou shalt not make to thee other gods" includes not loving self and the world above all things. For that which one loves above all things is his god (*Apocalypse Explained* 950:3).

All who acknowledge and worship any other God than the Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah God Himself in human form, sin against the first commandment. Those also sin against it who persuade themselves of the actual existence of three Divine persons from eternity.... Who would not see the monstrosity of that faith if it were presented as it is in itself in a picture before his eyes? For example, if the three were to stand in order beside each other, the first distinguished by a scepter and crown; the second holding a book, which is the Word, in his right hand, and in his left a golden cross spattered with blood; the third, encircled with wings, standing upon one foot, ready to fly forth and do his work, and above the three the inscription—these three persons, being so many Gods, are one God. What wise man seeing the picture would not say to himself, "Alas, what hallucination!" But he would say otherwise if he were to see a picture of one Divine Person with rays of heavenly light about His Head and with the inscription over it, "This is our God, at once Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator, and therefore the Savior." Would not that wise man kiss this picture, carry it home in his bosom, and by the sight of it gladden his own mind, and the minds of his wife and his children and servants? (*True Christian Religion* 296).

“You shall not have other gods before My face” means that there must be no thought about truths from any source other than the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 8867).

The first commandment of the Decalogue, “You shall not worship other gods besides Me,” means that nothing else nor anyone else is to be worshipped as Divine. In the Divine celestial sense, it means that the Lord alone is to be acknowledged and worshiped, and a trinity in Him, namely, the Divine Itself from eternity, which is meant by the Father, the Divine Human born in time, which is meant by the Son of God, and the Divine that proceeds from both, which is meant by the Holy Spirit (see *Apocalypse Explained* 1025:2,3).