

## SECOND SERMON ON A. E. 1148

by Rev. Theodore Pitcairn  
November 2, 1952

"That the devil may not seduce them and put evils into their hearts; knowing that while they are not led by the Lord, he leads and breathes in evils of every kind, such as hatreds, revenges, cunning, deceits as a serpent breathes in poisons."

As is generally known in the Church the devil in the most general sense stands for hell. In a less general sense as when compared to Satan, the devil stands for the hell opposed to the celestial kingdom, while Satan stands for the hell opposed to the spiritual kingdom. In the abstract sense the devil stands for the love of self; for it is the love of self which forms the hell opposed to the celestial kingdom while it is the love of the world which makes the hell opposed to the spiritual kingdom. To seduce, as to its roots, means to lead aside, or lead astray, that is, to lead off the way. The Lord said: "I am the way." The Lord Himself is the strait and narrow path which leads to heaven. The moment the man does not live in the presence of the Lord, he is off the path of life, he has been seduced, or led astray.

Inmost seen it is nothing but the love of self inflowing from the hells, which seduces man, or leads him astray, takes him away from the way which is the Lord. The Lord with a mighty force works to keep man on this holy way, the hells work with all their power to seduce him or lead him out of the way. It is said that the devil seduces them and puts evils into their heart; or what is the same, it is the love of self that seduces men and puts evils into their hearts. Let us therefore consider the nature of the love of self further in order that we may see why this is so.

In order to consider this matter more deeply we will quote again a number from the Journal of Dreams which was quoted in the sermon last week.

"I perceived that I was unworthy above others and the greatest of sinners for the Lord has granted me to go more deeply with my thoughts in certain matters than many others have done; and I perceived that here lies the very fountain of sin viz. in thoughts which are brought to the work; so that in this manner my sins come from a deeper source than in the case of many other persons. Herein I perceived my unworthiness and my sins to be greater than those of others; for it is not enough to call oneself unworthy, for this may be done while the heart is far away from it, and it may be a pretense, but to perceive that one is such this is the grace of the spirit. I thought and strove by means of my thoughts to gain a knowledge of how to avoid all that is impure, but I noticed nevertheless that on all occasions something from the love of self intruded itself and was turned about in the thought; as for instance, when any one did not show the proper regard for me,

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according to my own imagination, I always thought 'If you only knew what grace I am enjoying you would act otherwise' which at once was something impure having its source in the love of self. After a while I perceived this and prayed God to forgive it..... Thus I observed clearly there was still with me that pernicious apple which has not yet been converted which is the root of Adam and hereditary sin, yea, and an infinite number of other roots of sin are with me." (74, 75)

From the above we can see that the very root of evil called the devil, resides in feeling and thinking oneself superior to others. This is the first state. In the case of Swedenborg, he recognized and from the Lord he combated against this so that it did not proceed further.

If the love of self is not checked it leads to the second state in which one despises others in comparison with oneself. One feels oneself more intelligent or in other ways superior to all, and from such a feeling of superiority despises others, who one regards as less. intelligent, less good, less perceptive, or more lacking in fine feeling.

The third state is, that, from such a feeling of superiority one becomes resentful at others who fail to appreciate ones qualities, or the qualities of ones family, and who do not show the proper respect, for ones position or standing in society, and who do not show honor to oneself, to ones family or to ones most intimate friends.

The fourth state, if this resentment is not checked, is that the resentment turns into hatred and anger, against all that oppose oneself. A man or woman in this state, would deny that it was anger, and would call it just indignation.

If one would know whether he is in hatred from the love of self or whether he is in just indignation, let him observe what makes him most angry, upset or indignant. Is it something which touches him, his family or his most intimate friends personally, or, is it something which does harm to the things of innocence in the Church, to the goods and trues of the Church apart from the things of his person.

If it is things touching his person which makes him most angry or indignant, then he can know that the love of self rules with him.

The fifth state is one of revenge, in which one criticizes another in such a way as to destroy his reputation and usefulness.

Criticism may come from a genuine love of amendment of life, or it may come from the self love; externally these two may not appear so very different; while internally seen they are opposites. The man who is acting out of self love or revenge, convinces himself that he is acting for the real welfare of his neighbor, or of society. It is only by a genuine humiliation and prayer to the Lord, that one can

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be freed by the Lord from evil, in what appears like our effort to give helpful criticism to others. There is no harder struggle than to act towards the neighbor from love, justice, and genuine judgment, when there is a disturbed or disordered state that needs correction; for in such states the hells are near to all, and it is only by being in the presence and mercy of the Lord, that one can be protected from them.

The prayer reads: "That the devil may not seduce us and put evils into our hearts, knowing that while we are not led by Thee O Lord, he leads and breathes in evils of every kind, such as hatreds, revenges, cunning and deceits." Hatreds are of the internal will, revenges of the external, cunning are of the internal understanding, deceits, of the external.

The inmost cunning and deceits are those by which we deceive ourselves. The love of self causes us to take apparent goods and truths in which lie the worst of interior evils as genuine goods and truths. While it violently condemns external evils, done out of ignorance, weakness or insufficient strength of control, while yet there may be in them something of a genuine good intention. If a man is therefore not continually present with the Lord, and if the Lord is not continually present with him, he falls into unjust judgments, and the cunning of the love of self cause him to be deceitful both in regard to himself and to others.

We are told that deceit is the opposite of innocence, whenever a man is not in the innocence of the Lord, who alone is innocent, he immediately falls into cunning and deceits, no matter how sincere, honest, and straightforward he may appear to be to both himself and to others.

Many have an outward honesty, sincerity and straightforwardness which they have acquired, and which is very impressive both to the one who has it, and is proud of it, and to others; while yet the internal cunning and deceit of the serpent rules secretly within and seldom manifests itself either to the man himself or to others.

This internal deceit and cunning only shows itself when man's ruling love is touched and threatened, and even then, it may so quickly clothe itself with apparent things of love, wisdom and innocence, that it is not recognized by the man himself or by others.

Many persons think they are not cunning, deceitful or dishonest, because they are not often such in externals, and that therefore they are innocent. Yet no one can come into a state of genuine innocence unless he has shunned cunning and deceits, and no one can shun these unless he has seen them in himself, combatted against them as of himself and turned himself away from them, at the same time acknowledging such a turning away is solely from the presence of the Lord and not from himself.

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It is the inmost cunning of the love of self, that it hides man's internal evils from the conscious mind and thus deceives him. A man must therefore constantly look to the Lord for help, in order that the cunning of the love of self, by hiding man's internal evils, from the conscious mind protects them and thus leads the unrepentant man to hell.

There are two loves which we are frequently told make hell, the love of self, and the love of the world. While there is both a love of self and a love of the world, in regard to both the Church and the things of the Church and to those things outside the Church, in general the love of self is most manifest in relation to the Church and those in the Church, while the love of the world manifests itself in relation to these without the Church.

The love of the world in its external form has to do with the possessions of the world, to the work in the world by which most gain their livelihood, ones standing in the world, ones reputation, the way one clothes oneself, ones house, ones manners, and in general ones reputation, in a word in all ones relations to the world. The love of the world, when in its proper subordination and order is a good love. When it rules it is an evil love; if one would know whether this love rules or not let him ask himself what importance he attaches to his reputation in the world, to the way he appears to those in the world. If this is a minor love with him it may be good, if it is the ruling love it is one of the two great loves which makes hell with man.

The love of self manifests itself most vigorously in relation to the church, and towards those in the church. This love at times appears as a great love for the church and the things of the Church. But hidden within is the love of ruling in the things of the Church and by means of them.

We read: "The devil by whom he is led, is nothing else than the love of dominion from the love of self." (D. P. 215 8)

Again: "I saw a devil rising up with a bright circle around his head..... He said I am licifer the son of the morning..... There I am a devil, but here I am an angel of light..... I am able to preach, and I have preached..... against adulterors, defrauders, and all infernal loves; nay I have called lucifer a devil..... and when in the pulpit I have thought no otherwise..... but the reason is, that I was then in externals, and these were then separated from my internals..... but still I could not change myself, because I have not looked to God above my conceit..... In the body I am an angel, but in the spirit a devil; for in the body I am in the understanding, but in the spirit I am in the will..... He afterwards spoke about his two fold state more rationally than any one; but suddenly when he saw the angel with me he became black and sank down into hell." (C. L. 269)

While this number treats of an infernal clergyman, it applies to all in the Church who enter the interior things of the Word and Doctrine, who do not humble themselves and in humility look to the Lord above their conceit.

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The love of self like the love of the world is a good love when it humbles itself. The humbled love of self, is the love of having a place in the Lord's kingdom where in accordance to the Lord's Divine Providence one can perform the use for which the Lord created us, and thus serve the neighbor. A man cannot come to this celestial love of self until his former love of self has been brought to a total submission to the Lord, by means of many severe temptations.

We are told that the devil, that is the love of self, breathes in or inspires evils, as a serpent breathes in or inspires poisons. It is said that he breathes in or inspires and not that he injects. The reason is that the love of self flows into the understanding represented by the lungs. As long as man's spiritual lungs, that is, the understanding is healthy man can be inspired, he can receive and be purified by the air, breath or spirit of God. But when the love of self so flows into the understanding as to poison it, it is no longer capable of opening itself to the breath of God, and be inspired by the Lord. Then the understanding follows the will or the love, which in this case is the love of self, and will not admit truths, by which the love of self can be combatted and over-come. Such a man may indeed enter into the interior truths of the Church, but he always turns them in such a way to favor himself. Like the devil we read about above, he can in appearance condemn himself out of the truths which he may know better than others. But still he does not let these truths touch or change his will. He indeed uses the truths to make his external man an angel, but his internal man from the love of self remains in the form of a devil.

It is said as a serpent breathes in or inspires poison. A serpent represents the sensual, and corporeal.

When we read of a sensual and corporeal man we are apt to think of one who is gross, and is in gross evils.

But one who is sensual and corporeal may not be of this nature at all. He may be a man of apparently high morals, and of the most refined taste. We read the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made, (Gen 3:1) The subtle serpent has one of two natures to which hereditarily we all belong. We either have a Catholic or Protestant nature by heredity, and in fact some thing of both.

The characteristic Catholic evil, is to seek for love, harmony, beauty, clarity, in the external by which the external is made into an image of heaven. While in the internal the love of self and the world rules, thus hell rules. We then wish to merit heaven by our works.

The characteristic Protestant evil is to seek salvation in the external faith, in external law, principles and truths, while internally the love of self and the world rules. Such a one orders his natural, for the sake of life in the world, but does not see or believe that it is possible to struggle with the love of self and the world that rules in the internal man, or if believes it possible, he still does not make

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this the most important thing of life. He thinks that if he has faith in God and in the Word and orders his natural life this is sufficient, or that in any case this is the most important thing of life. An ordered sensual and corporeal life, with its beauty and harmony is of importance provided it is regarded as the ultimate, the basis of a spiritual life, and is for the sake of spiritual life. If it is regarded as a thing of importance in itself, then it is the subtle serpent that deceives man; for then it is only a hiding place for the devil, who by his cunning appears in the external as an angel of light, and subtly breathes into man a fragrant poison which deprives man of spiritual life.

If we can only realize these things we will at the same time realize that we of ourselves can never win in the combats of regeneration, that we of ourselves can never disentangle ourselves from the snares of the devil, by things of our own intelligence, nor overcome the evils of our will by our own power. We must realize that the Devil is too cunning, subtle, too powerful, too ever present, for us to win by means of our intelligence and will. Then we can truly pray:

"O Lord be with us continually lift up and turn Thy faces towards us teach enlighten and lead us, since we of ourselves can do nothing of good and give us that we may live."

We then indeed will cooperate with the Lord as if of ourselves, but will acknowledge from our heart that this cooperation is solely of the Lord, and only apparently from ourselves, and that of ourselves we have no power or wisdom of life. And at the same time we will believe in the wisdom of the Lord and His Power to save us, and will cooperate with Him to this end.

AMEN