

"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is in the land beneath, or that which is in the waters under the land."

We read: "I am Jehovah thy God, signifies the Lord as to the Divine Human universally reigning in all and single things of the good and the true;..... There shall not be to thee other gods before My faces, - signifies that trues must not be thought of from elsewhere than out of the Lord; Thou shalt not make unto thee a sculptured image, signifies not out of proprial intelligence." (A.C. 8863).

The first of the Commandments and that which must rule through out is the desire that the Divine Human of the Lord should reign in all and in each single thing of the good and true, that is in all and every single thing of the affection and thoughts of man. The first thing therefore to be shunned is, thinking from elsewhere than out of the Lord, and as thinking from elsewhere than out of the Lord is necessarily out of proprial intelligence, the second command is to shun thinking from self intelligence. To think trues from no other source than out of the Lord, means that a man must think what is true from no other source than out of the Word, for the Lord is the Word; and, in the New Church, particularly the thinking of the true must be out of the Third Testament.

And yet a man may read much in the Third Testament and still think from his proprial intelligence and not out of the Lord. It all depends how man reads the Word. If a man believes, as is the case, that his own loves, his affections, his own intelligence and thoughts are false and in disorder; then he looks to the Lord and reads the Word in order that his loves, and thoughts may be changed and brought into the order of heaven. On the other hand, if a man trusts in his own loves and affections, which appear to him to be good, and in his thoughts and intelligence which appears to be true; then when he reads the Word, he only confirms the things of his own intelligence, and he even does this by appearances which he finds in the Word. With such a man or with a man in such a state, the Lord does not reign, but self, for he thinks of trues from elsewhere than from the Lord; and in fact he thinks of them out of his proprial intelligence.

Let us not deceive ourselves, wherever we look we see gods being held before the faces of the Lord, and every where we behold the making of graven images. This is not so serious if it is done in a simple or gentile like state, in which there is something of innocence; but when it is done out of a pride, which is hard, and which stands in the way of instruction and repentance then it becomes serious indeed. How strong is the tendency either from pride or indifference to not permit the Lord to change our form of mind or our thinking, when we read the Word.

We read: "That which is out of the intellectual proprium is signified by a sculpture (or graven image), that which is out of the voluntary proprium by a molten image. To have either the one or the other for a good, or to adore it, is to love above all things, that which proceeds from self." (A.C. 8869).

A molten image refers to the things of the will, because it is made by heat, a sculptured image to the things of the understanding, because made by an iron tool. Because the spiritual Church is being treated of, in the old Testament, only the sculptured image is mentioned, although, we are told in the Arcana Coelestia, that both are included. The reason, however, that the emphasis is placed on the sculptured image is that in the spiritual Church, the primary thing to be shunned is the things which proceed from the pride of ones own intelligence. If a man of the spiritual Church shuns the things of the pride of his own intelligence he can also shun the imagination of his will.

To love above all else ones own ideas, ones own thinking and feeling, is to adore that which proceeds from self. In this case instead of permitting the Divine Human of the Lord to reign in all and in every single thing, self rules in all and every single thing of ones affections and thoughts; and this, no matter how much one may appear to others, and even to oneself, to love the Lord and the neighbor.

We read further that: "They who do this entirely disbelieve that any thing of intelligence and wisdom flows in from the Divine, for they attribute all things to themselves; every thing else that happens to them they ascribe either to fortune or to chance. They totally deny the Divine Providence in such things." (A.C. 8869).

Such a man does not appear to deny the Word, for he interprets the Word in accordance with his own intelligence, thus he makes it favor himself and his own ideas. But he does NOT permit the influx of the Lord into his ideas when reading the Word, but trusts to his own intelligence to give him an understanding of the Word. Such we are told totally deny the Divine Providence; yet they do not seem to deny the Divine Providence, for they often, more than others, say that every thing which happens is in the Divine Providence. What they deny is the essence of the Divine Providence, for the essence of the Divine Providence is the influx of the Divine Love and Wisdom, by which the mind is totally changed, and the former ideas, thoughts and affections are cast out, and a new mind, which can, to eternity, live in heaven, is given. One who loves and trusts in his own ideas, thoughts and affections, opposes the Divine Providence, that is, he opposes those things which come to him from the internal of the Word and from the genuine Doctrine of the Church; he

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opposes all that does not agree with his own ideas; and, as he opposes the means of the Divine Providence for changing him from a form of hell into a form of heaven, in heart he totally denies the Divine Providence.

The number continues: "They suppose that if there is anything of the Divine Being present, it is in the order of nature, to which they ascribe all things. They do indeed say with their lips that some Creator God has impressed such things upon nature; but still in their heart they deny any God above nature.....Such are they who from the heart attribute everything to themselves and their own prudence and intelligence, and nothing to the Divine." Such a one, when in such a state, supposes that the Lord has established ones own intelligence according to the order of nature, and he therefore ascribes all things to his own intelligence and trusts in this, as if it had been given to him by the Lord. What they deny is the true of the Lord which is above the apparent order of their natural intelligence, and they disbelieve that the Lord operates according to His Divine Providence to take away the intelligence which is not from proprial intelligence, but is from a new order, - an order which is quite contrary to what appears like order to one who trusts in his own intelligence. Let us eagerly desire that we may come to believe in, and to enter into this stream of Providence, in which we can be carried in the opposite direction from that of our own ideas and desires; when we do this, we for the first time, really believe in the Divine Providence.

"Nor any similitude. That this signifies a similitude of those things which are from the Divine is evident from the signification of likeness as being a similitude." (A.C. 8870)

A similitude or likeness is anything which appears externally as if it were from the Divine, thus as being good and true, but which is internally evil and false because from self and for the sake of self; thus it signifies hypocracies and deceits. It is to be noted that very few are aware of their hypocrisy and deceit; for in deceiving others they at the same time deceive themselves. Thus there are those who work for the Lord and for the establishment of the Church, and are quite unaware that they are doing this from self love and for the sake of themselves, for they make no deep seated examinations into their motives, which therefore lie hidden to themselves as well as to others. Such identify the good of the Church with their own good; and what is good for themselves they think is good for the Church, for they look upon themselves as being good and see no reason for repentance. All such make similitudes or likenesses of that which is from the Divine, and such similitudes are very deceptive. Such similitudes are like carved images having no life, but they often appear to have more life than the genuine things which are from the Lord, for the

love of self gives them an apparent animation and warmth, that appears to excell the genuine warmth and life of good and true things which are from the Lord.

"Of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is in the land beneath. That this signifies those things which are in spiritual light, or of those things which are in natural light." (A.C. 8871).

The things which are in the heavens above are the sun, moon and stars. The sun represents love into the Lord, the moon charity towards the neighbor, and the stars the cognitions of faith or doctrinals.

Particularly the warning is against making doctrine from the Word, which appears to have in it the love into the Lord, love towards the neighbor, and to be full of the cognitions of faith. If man does not come into a holy fear and humiliation before the Lord, all his understanding of the Word, all doctrine that he draws thence has self hidden within. To overcome this love of self is a lifetime struggle, involving the most severe temptations. If a man is being regenerated, he is at times elevated into the light of heaven and is given to see genuine thing but again and again pride enters and draws him down; and the removal of pride is a long process, involving the change of his whole life. The man who is being regenerated is given spiritual gifts little by little, and he is often plunged into darkness and kept there for a long time in the merciful Providence of the Lord, in order that his pride may be broken, and he can be brought to an enduring humility.

It may be noted that the evil as well as the good, when things do not succeed, but are turned into miseries, come into humility. But the humility of the evil disappears as soon as the trials are over, and success comes. While the good are finally brought into a humility which endures. Because the good can be regenerated, but in this day with difficulty, they often are kept in the appearance of having little success throughout life. While the evil often appear to have more success, because the humility which failure would induce on them would have no real value.

The likeness of that which is in the land beneath, refers to likeness of animals, birds, and creeping things. Birds and animals refer to the natural affections, birds to the affections of the intellectual, animals to the affections of the natural voluntary; such things are in natural light, and bear relation to civil and moral goods. Natural life depends on civil and moral good; that is the goods which are provided for by civil law and by custom. Genuine civil law and genuine custom, like those things which are in spiritual light, also have their origin from the Divine Human of the Lord. Such things however only

remain good if they serve the spiritual. - How easy it is to set up ideals of the civil state, of the moral life, customs - of the family and society, as if they were from the Divine of the Lord and to love them above all else, which is to worship them. Such things often appear good and beautiful when yet self is in them and not the Divine Human of the Lord. Nothing of law or custom, of family or social tradition, is living unless it has descended from the interiors of the Word and continuously looks to the Word. Often there are civil things, political principles, family and social customs and traditions which are greatly loved and which originally had their origin in the Word or in remains from the Primitive or from the Ancient Church but which have lost their spiritual life and have become idols that are worshipped, and which are made to glorify ones own country, ones own family, and thus ones self. Look at any country, any society, or any family, and do we not see such idolatries; that is ideals which glorify ones own. In fact we may say that it is such idolatries in the world, and often in the Church, which alone hold together nations, societies and families. Indeed making a likeness of things which are in the land beneath and worshipping them is a universal custom that we have the greatest need to repent of, if we are not to have other gods before the faces of Jehovah, that is if we are not to think of trues from elsewhere than from the Lord. As long as we hold such ideals, such laws and customs, as the most essential thing, we think truths from our proprium and not from the Lord.

"Or of that which is in the waters under the land. That this signifies such things are in the sensual corporeal.....To the sensual corporeal bear relation those scientifics which arise most immediately from the experience of the external senses and also their delights. With the good these scientifics and their delights are good because they are applied to goods; but with the evil they are evil because they are applied to evils." (A.C. 8872).

The things of the sensual corporeal are on the one hand all knowledges that come by way of the senses, thus all scientifics, and on the other hand they are all things of the pleasures which come to man by the external senses, thus they include all things of the arts and of the enjoyment of nature. If one adores such things as being the primary things of life, which he loves; he makes carved images which he worships. Scientifics, in the more internal sense of the word, refers to all things of the Word and the Doctrine of the Church which have come immediately from the senses, that is, by direct cognizance, and in which the Lord as to His Divine Human does not universally reign. All such scientifics and doctrinals are viewed from self intelligence and are nothing but idols.

It can be seen that the first commandment which is in the internal sense, that the Lord as to His Divine Human is to universally reign in all and every single thing of the good and the true, and that He liverates from hell or from the proprium, that trues are not to be thought of from elsewhere than out of His Divine Human, thus not from self intelligence, and that man is not to make an appearance or semblance of that which is from the Divine: is the same as the first Commandment which the Lord gave, namely: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind."

The first commandment of the Decalogue has in it a great call to repentence, a call to leave everything to come into obedience to this command. As we are told, this commandment must universally reign in all the commandments that follow, thus in all things of life. If this commandment is not the first thing in all Man's life then the keeping of all the other commandments, thus all things of life, have self as their center and not the Lord.

This requires a great change of life. It must be seen that all things of a natural and personal love of the Lord, all things of the doctrinals of the Church, all things of moral and civil life, all things of science, and the arts, all things of the country, of the family, of married life, are false and of no value and importance unless one learns to think of the trues from no where else than out of the Divine Human of the Lord, and that a man only does this when he shuns his self intelligence. Every one would improve this and change that, in his own life, and the lives of others; but it only leads from bad to worse if a man does not shun thinking from his own intelligence and out of his own affections, and does not come to think the true out of no where else than from the Divine Human of the Lord.

To think the true out of no where else than out of the Divine Human of the Lord, is to think of the true out of no where else than out of the Word of the Lord seen in the light of heaven, for the Lord is the light of heaven.

Where ever we look do we not see; both outside of the Church and inside of the Church, men thinking the true out of their own intelligence and women thinking the true out of their own loves? Until these things are repented of, the Church cannot commence, for the Lord cannot be present where there are other gods before His faces.

AMEN

Lessons: Deut.4:14-40; John 7:1-24; A.C. 8875⁸