

Sixth Sermon on the Apocalypse Explained 1148 by the Rev. Theodore Pitcairn, 10/5/47.

"Knowing that while they are not led by the Lord, the devil will lead and breathe in evils of all kinds such as hatreds, revenges, cunning and deceits." (A.E. 1148)

The general teaching of the text is that man is, at all times, led either by the Lord, or by hell. This is a well known teaching of the Word, but one which few believe in the life. Man's nature is to seek for his own life, which appears to be neither of Heaven or of hell, but such a life is not possible. While we are not led by the Lord we are led by the devil. If we seek a life that is not continually from the Lord, the devil leads. The devil specifically signifies the love of self. A man who loves his own life is necessarily led by the love of self which inflows from hell.

When man permits himself to be so led, the devil inspires or breathes in evils of all kinds, such as hatreds and revenges, cunning and deceits. It should be noted that hatreds and revenges are the evils of the will. Hatred is of the internal evil of the will, revenge, the external. Cunning and deceits are the evils of the understanding, cunning, the internal evil, and deceit, the external.

We belong to a nation which is characterized by good-naturedness, tolerance and friendliness, and the whole of education in this land looks to the fostering of these virtues. When we therefore read that anger and revenge are the characteristic evils that the devil inspires, this seems foreign to our very nature. To many it may appear that they have no enemies, and that they have a friendly feeling towards all. If generally recognized evils are condemned, no one is angry, and yet this apparent friendliness and tolerance is deceptive. What church appeared more tolerant and more in the desire to preserve freedom for the individual than the church in which we were brought up, - and yet how angry and intolerant it became at the manifestation of the internal sense of the Word. From this we can learn a lesson that applies to all.

For the most part, anger and revenge are not aroused by condemnation of what is generally recognized as evil, but by a judgment on what is believed to be good. Particularly is anger aroused when an external good or truth which was originally from the Lord, but in which the Lord no longer dwells, is seen in the light of an interior truth; for such a truth touches the apparent goods and truths which are dearest to a man, and cause him to react with what appears to him as righteous indignation, and appropriate punishment. So does the anger and revenge inspired by the devil appear to the man.

All evil and falsity arise from the separation of a good and truth of a lower degree from the good and truth of a higher degree, while regeneration consists in reducing the apparent goods and truths of a lower degree into subservience to the goods and truths of a higher degree, until they become genuine and serve the higher degree. This process continues in its ascent from one degree to another.

Consider the following illustration. If a man, living in a town near a well-loved and awe-inspiring mountain, beyond which lay a great range of mountains, were to rise on wings to a great height, then the near-by mountain would appear to sink until it appeared like an insignificant hill, while the great range of mountains in the distance would look greater, higher, and more magnificent than from below. If, on his return, he told the people of the town how insignificant and small their beloved mountain looked from on high, compared to the great range of mountains beyond, they would become angry. Hills and

mountains represent loves and when from an elevation it is seen that the loves which are near and dear to a man are little and insignificant, compared to the loves that a man has only seen at a distance, his anger is aroused, and this tends to carry over into revenge.

A man has many loves which have not been brought into order and correspondence with more interior loves: for example, in the Church; loves of things in the literal sense of the Word, which in him do not correspond to the living internal sense; loves for the external of the Church which do not as yet correspond with the Kingdom of the Lord; in general a love of the external things of charity which do not correspond with the internal things of charity; the love of the external things of conjugal love which do not correspond with love truly conjugal; the love of children and one's family, unqualified by the Word seen in the light of the Doctrine of the Church; the love of nature, the love of the arts; the love of science, the love of politics and economics. All these loves a man has by nature and from the world, and all must be totally changed, ordered, and properly subordinated. Some must be left, at least for a time, and all, as it were die, before they can be of use as seen in the light of genuine Doctrine.

When stated in this general form, a man does not become angry, but when interior truths begin to touch in particular those loves which are dear to him, he reacts with more or less violence. He ends by either submitting to the truth or by hating the truth. Whether we say hating the truth, or hating the one who is in the truth, it is the same thing, for one who hates the truth, in which there is judgment, also hates the one who is in it. Such hatred of interior truth breaks forth in the other world as hatred against the Lord; and this often is true of those who believed they loved the Lord more than others.

Let us pray that we may acknowledge and believe "that in so far as we are not led by the Lord, the devil will inspire these evils into the hearts of us all". This hatred breaks forth into revenge; namely, an attempt to harm and destroy the truth with ourselves and with others by every possible means. The means used are cunning and deceits. Not only cunning and deceits by which we deceive others but particularly cunning and deceits by which we deceive ourselves. The will, with the greatest cunning, brings forth reasons of all kinds to turn away the power of the truth; it confuses man by bringing other truths from the Word or the Doctrine which apparently weaken the force of the truth and its judgment. It charges the truth with being extreme, exaggerated, or impractical at this time. The short comings and faults of the man who is in the truth are pointed to, in order to weaken the truth which he is in. At other times, when one can not escape the logic of the truth, one appears to accept the truth, and in fact to be more in it than others, in order unconsciously to turn it to one's own ends. Thus the cunning and deceits, that is the internal and external wiles, which the devil breathes into a man, particularly a man of the Church, are legion, and he can only be protected from them by being continually led by the Lord.

The subtlety of these cunning and deceits lies in the fact that the man who is in them is usually quite unaware of them. The man is persuaded that he is more honest and straightforward than others.

In the early Christian Church, to leave the obvious loves of the world was easier, for they were persecuted by the world. Their country was an enemy to them, threatening to deprive them of their wealth and life. All the arts about them were dedicated to heathen gods which were being worshipped. The moral code was non-christian, the attitude towards wife and children was different. Under such circumstances, a breaking away from the mode of life of those around was obviously necessary, and in one sense, easy. A mixture of the life of the church with the life in society about them was scarcely possible, and when this

barrier broke down and the Emperor of Rome became Christian, the beginning of the end was at hand. Constantine became Christian in the year three hundred nine. Sixteen years later, in the year three hundred twenty-five the Council of Nicaea took place.

We live in a world which does not appear inimical; our country protects religious freedom. At least the external of Christian morality is maintained by many. The deadly hatred which would break forth if the truth were to touch the world in such a way as to appear to threaten its mode of life, is lacking, for the world has no fear of us.

This is all in Providence, for the New Church is to be established by overcoming internal enemies, for it is an internal Church. The enemies which threaten to destroy our life are not of the world outside of us, but are the things of the world which have entered into us, and which often appear to be good and true things. The moment we are not led by the Lord it is those things which cause us to break forth in hatreds and revenges, cunning and deceits against the genuine goods and truths of the Church.

We have treated concerning the love of the world as opposed to the living things of the Church; we will now consider the love of self and the nature of its opposition to the living things of the Church.

The essence of the love of self is the desire or longing to be loved by others. Every man has something of this love, - if he had not, he would not be human. Even animals have this love. With infants and little children this love is strong; in fact it is the first love that they have. From this it can be seen that in its essence it is a celestial love. When this love, however, becomes the head, and is not disciplined, it rushes on into all insanity. One wishes to be admired and loved more than anything else. One wishes to be adored, and finally worshipped. The kings of old at times had themselves deified. If this love is again ordered, - if from the head, it is placed in the feet, - it again becomes a celestial love, for the love of being loved by the Lord is the reciprocal of Love into the Lord; and the love of being loved by the neighbor is the reciprocal of loving the neighbor. This may throw further light on the reason why Abram, who represented the idolatry of the love of self in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, in the twelfth chapter represented the celestial.

It is particularly those truths which would convert the love of self, - that is, the love of being loved, - from the head to the feet, when they intimately touch the life of man, that cause man to break forth in hatreds, revenges, cunning and deceits, and in this, no man can conquer from himself: "Knowing that if they are not led by the Lord the devil will lead and breathe in evils of all kinds, such as hatreds, revenges, cunning, and deceits".

If we see that the essence of the love of self is the desire to be loved, it is evident that the love of self usually does not manifest itself as what is called egotism. What is called egotism is more apt to be a manifestation of the love of the world, or still more likely, of the love of pleasure. One who is in the love of self, in the perverted sense, often appears good natured, generous, and sympathetic, for such a one cultivates all the so called virtues which cause others to love him, for this is his ruling love. It is the manifestation of the evil love of self which lies behind these apparent virtues and which causes the breaking forth of hatreds, revenges, cunning and deceits. The love of self is converted when it is in the last place and the love of use is in the first place. The love of use in its essence, is the love that the Lord's Kingdom should come, and the love to co-operate with the Lord, as if from self, to this end. Amen,