

"From the love of self springs contempt of others, in comparison with self, then the derision and abuse of them, afterwards enmity if they do not favor, and finally the delight of hatred, the delight of revenge, thus the delight of violence, nay of cruelty."
(A.C. 9348)

Every one is born into the love of self; but this love does not, at first, appear to man, and often not to others, in its ugliness. It often hides under the appearance of love towards others and even under the appearance of love into the Lord.

This love can only be discovered in its affects. The first of these effects is the contempt of others in comparison with ourselves, but even this evil, which is the most prevalent, seeks to hide itself; it hides itself behind the love of things which are one's own. Observe how men of all nations despise other nations in comparison with their own; how members of churches despise other churches in comparison with their own; how one despises other families in comparison with one's own family; how one despises other professions in comparison with one's own profession. If one is scientific, accurate or learned how one despises those who are not scientific, accurate or learned. If one is artistic or sensitive how one despises those who are not artistic or sensitive. If one is sociable, and affable, how such a one despises those who are not sociable or affable. If one is generous, and kindly, how such a one despises those who are less generous and kindly. If one is subtle in understanding, influencing or persuading others, how one despises those who have not such talents. If one is quick at grasping the things of the Word and doctrinals thence, one despises those who do this with difficulty. Every one finds things by means of ~~of~~ which he despises others in comparison with himself, and from which he holds others, particularly those who do not agree with himself, in contempt. The evil despise the good, either thinking or calling them hypocrites.

The contempt of others in comparison with self, is more in evidence, and is of a more interior quality, with those who cling ardently to their church than with others.

One who knows many truths of faith can more clearly see the evils and falsities of others, than those who have not such truths, but unless he is in humility he does not see his own evils and falsities. Seeing the evils and falsities of others he is in greater contempt of others in comparison with himself than are those who do not have truths of faith. The more truths of faith one has, if the love of self is not shunned, the more the contempt of others in comparison with self grows, until it despises all in the universe in comparison with oneself.

From the contempt of others there arises derision and abuse of them. Observe how much, so-called humor, has in it contempt of others, - derision, ridicule, and mockery; observe the great

delight felt in such derision and ridicule. Observe also the delight in the abuse of others, in criticising, and in speaking of their faults, especially in regard to those who do not favor ourselves. Finally such an attitude breaks forth in an attitude of enmity towards those who do not favor ourselves, or our own.

Let any one observe his attitude towards those who are critical of him, or are critical of his family, his country, or his church, and do not favor him, and see if a feeling of enmity is not present towards them. How few there are who are not delighted when misfortune overtakes those who have been critical of them, or their own and have manifested disfavor towards them.

Finally this enmity breaks forth as anger against those who criticise and oppose them; or if it does not break forth on account of the fear of gaining a bad reputation or in some way harming oneself, still it burns within, and it is particularly strong against those who one previously loved and who had previously showered them with favors. Such hatred takes the form of revenge, if not open revenge, still a hidden delight of revenge, which is manifest in the delight one has in the misfortunes that befall those who do not favor us, and such delights break forth as violence, fierceness and even cruelty or the desire to hurt and harm, if not in this world, on account of appearances, it breaks out as violence and cruelty in the life after death.

Most people think they love their neighbors, but most people love their neighbors from themselves, and not from the Lord, and to love the neighbor from self is to love oneself more than the neighbor, and such love immediately turns to hatred fierceness and even cruelty when the neighbor does not favor, but opposes us.

We read: "Love consists in this, that ones own should be anothers; to feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving. But to feel one's own joy in another and not the others joy in oneself is not loving; for this is loving self, while the former is loving the neighbor. These two kinds of love are diametrically opposed to each other. Either, it is true, conjoins; and to love one's own, that is, oneself, in another does not seem to divide; but it does so effectually divide that so far as anyone has loved another in this manner so far he afterwards hates him. For such conjunction is by its own action gradually loosened and then, in like measure love is turned into hate." (D.L.W.47)

Everyone desires to be loved, and ardently loves those who love him. But if this is the ruling love it is really the love of self and is turned into hatred, violence and even cruelty when the other does not show the love they long to receive, and particularly when they oppose their loves and thoughts.

In all genuine love the ruling fear is always the fear of our losing our love toward the neighbor and never the fear of our neighbor losing his love of us.

Here is the signs as to whether we keep in heart the second of the great Commandments, - is our great fear the fear that we may not be in a genuine love of the neighbor, or is our great fear the fear that our neighbor may not love us sufficiently. If our great fear is that the neighbor should not love us, our center is in ourselves, and we have nothing in us that the neighbor can truly love.

The love of self also consists in this, that we desire the neighbor to love those things that we love and delight in, instead of finding our delight in the delight of the neighbor in the things that he loves.

As we read: "Love consists in this, that its own should be another's; to feel the joy of another as joy in oneself that is loving."

If one gives a gift to another, it may be given in two ways. In the true giving the thought is solely the desire of the happiness of the one who should receive it. As one's own happiness is from the happiness of others there is no feeling of merit. In the false giving, the gift is given with the desire to win the love and favor of the one to whom it is given, for the ruling desire is to be loved and not first to love; wherefore, if the receiver of the gift does not manifest the love and favor sought for, love is gradually lost, and finally turned into hatred. Gifts here refer not only to gifts of material things, but especially gifts of affections and thoughts with their delights. Does one share one's affections, thoughts and delights with others, primarily with the desire of being loved, or from a love of others. Here is the great point, and the sign of the nature of the love is, as to whether we are angered, irritated, or whether our feelings are hurt when we do not receive as much love and affection as we desire in return.

Again we give advice which we believe to be good and are angered because our neighbor does not follow our advice, for we love our own advice more than we love the freedom of our neighbor.

We think we love order, and try to insist that others come into order, while such insistence on coming into the order is often nothing but the love of rule.

The Lord Who is Order Itself never compels order, but only leads to order in freedom. While he permits punishments at times which brings a certain ordering, this permission only goes as far as is necessary to protect the good from evil. It is said the Lord protects the freedom of man as a man protects the apple of his eye, for it is better for a man to be in disorders, rather than to lose his freedom.

Is our primary love the love of the freedom of our neighbor or is it a desire to impose our will upon our neighbor, under the appearance of bringing about order, and of helping them?

We are so anxious to influence others to good, instead of assisting others by giving them the means to good, - means, which we desire that they may use or not use, or use in their own way without any persuasion from ourselves.

There is an orderly insinuation of good from love which is indeed of great importance, but such insinuation does not persuade or compel, but leaves the other free in his free choice and in his own rationality.

Every one should reflect on what delights him most; is it praise for what he has done or said? praise of qualities that one has, or praise of one's family and those who are dear to oneself? or is it to see good and truth prevail, apart from oneself, and one's own? In so far as the former delight is seen to be the greatest, so far one can know one is in the love of self. Again observe what angers and irritates us most, what makes us most indignant? Is it things which hurt our pride, is it a neglect of showing the love and respect that we look for, either to ourselves or to those dear to us? Or is it an indignation that what is unjust, unfair, evil or false prevails apart from its affect upon ourselves and our own. Are we more distressed to see a good and just man, falsely accused, slandered or unjustly treated, than we are to feel ourselves, falsely accused, slandered or unjustly treated. In examining our reactions in these things we can observe how much the love of self rules over the love of the neighbor; and the teaching of the Word can be seen to be true, that every man who has not repented and shunned the love of self as a sin against God, is in the love of self, no matter how kindly generous and charitable he may appear.

No matter how good a man appears to be, if he does not shun the love of self as a sin against the Lord, this love of self breaks forth in the spiritual world as manifest "contempt of others in comparison with himself, then the abuse and derision of them, afterwards enmity if they do not favor, and finally the delight of revenge, thus the delight of violence, nay of cruelty."

Such a spirit hides under the pretence of righteous indignation, of protecting the order of society, even of protecting the Church. The evils of others are violently condemned by those who have not removed the root of all evils in themselves.

Because we can see the evils of others, particularly if we know certain truths, we think ourselves better than others. To be able to see the nature of evils in others does not mean that we are not in evil. The Protestants see the evils of the Catholic Church, and the Catholics see the evils of Protestantism. What they cannot see is their own evils. From the truths of the Word we can see the evils of the Protestant and Catholic Church, and from the Doctrine of the Church we can see evils in other bodies of the New Church, but the great question is do we see our own evils and are we willing to perform grievous repentance on account of them? Are we willing to become truly humble, a humility due to self examination followed by a shunning of evil, which has in it the acknowledgment that of our own power, we could not shun a single evil, but that all shunning evils, as of ourselves, is from the Lord's Power and mercy, and is solely from His Presence, and that from ourselves we would rush into the worst of hells.

While the love of self, we are in from heredity, is the inmost origin of all evils, and as diametrically opposed to love into the Lord; still as to its origin the love of self is a celestial love.

One who had no desire to be loved, humored, and respected, would be inhuman, yea, scarcely animal, such a one would be a useless person. A man must also have self respect, a person without any self respect, loses the respect of others, and becomes a worthless member of society.

The love of self is properly the feet of man, without which he cannot walk. Thus we can see that there is a love of self for the sake of the Lord and the neighbor, and a love of self for the sake of self only. A man in the first of these loves is a man standing on his feet a man in the second of these loves is a man standing upside down. When a man is upside down he sees everything upside down.

The man who is upside down sees the infernal love of self in which he is as necessary self respect, the mockery of the neighbor as innocent humor, the enmity towards others who do not favor him, as an aversion towards the evils and falsities of others, the delight of revenge he sees as just retribution and punishment, the delight of violence and cruelty as necessary self defense. While on the other hand if he looks to his neighbor who is standing on his feet, he sees his neighbors self respect as a contempt of others, his self defense he sees as an abuse of others, his aversion towards the evil and false as enmity, and his self defense as violence and cruelty.

Now every man who has not shunned evils both internal and external as sins against God, is upside down, and therefore regards himself and his neighbor as described above. If however a man will meditate and reflect on the Word and the truths thence, he can have his eyes opened so that he can see what is upside down and what is right side up. At first this is only seen occasionally, and, for a considerable time, is as it were a reversible optical illusion; - in one state what appears right side up in the next state appears upside down, and in the one state he sees all things inversely to what he sees them in an opposite state. When passing through such trying alterations of state he must cling to the belief in the truths of the Word, and from his memory of his seeing things right side up must believe in the truth even when to the appearances of the external mind the matter looks entirely the reverse. If he will so cling to the truth of the Word he will in time come to constantly see things as they really are.

Every one who has not seen himself as upside down, seen and perceived that he has viewed all things upside down, but has regarded himself as always standing on his feet, is continually with his feet in the air and his head towards the ground.

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A man may be in true doctrinals from an evil love, in such case his doctrinals are true in the external, but false in the internal. Also a man may be in false doctrinals from a good love, in this case the doctrinals are false in the external, but are still acceptable, and such a one can be readily instructed in the other life.

Those in true doctrinals from an evil love, more than others hold others in contempt in comparison with themselves, deride and abuse them, as the Jews of old held the gentiles in contempt.

The more truths a man knows the more interior is the evil in which he is, if he does not shun the love of self and the love of the world.

May the Church by shunning evils as sins against the Lord, come into a genuine charity towards the neighbor. May it be willing to give up its own life, in order that the Lord may dwell in us and we in the Lord, that our own human having died we may be in a new human from the Lord.

AMEN

Closing Prayer:

O Lord, we pray that the old life may die in us, Give us the power to take up the cross and follow Thee, that having lost our life we may receive Thy Life. O Lord, be with us continually.

AMEN