

Parables

Earthly stories with heavenly meanings

Week 4: The Judgment, Part Two



They make excuses not to come to the wedding feast for the king's son
(Matthew 22, Luke 14).

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The last judgment with an individual

AC 2119. That the last state of each person's life when he dies is his last judgment is not hidden from some. But still few believe it; when yet it is a constant truth that every man after death rises again into the other life, and is brought to judgment.

But this judgment takes place as follows. As soon as man's bodily parts grow cold, which takes place after a few days, he is resuscitated by the Lord by means of the celestial angels, who at first are with him. But if the man is such that he cannot remain with those angels, he is received by the spiritual angels, and afterwards in succession by good spirits, for all who come into the other life are without exception welcome and accepted guests.

But as everyone's desires follow with him, he who had led an evil life cannot stay long with angels and good spirits, but separates himself from them in succession, until at last he comes to spirits of a life similar in nature to that which he had had in the world. It then appears to him as if he were in the life of his body, and in fact it is in itself a continuation of that life. With this life his judgment begins. After periods of delay, those who have lived an evil life go down into hell, while those who have lived a good life are by degrees lifted up by the Lord into heaven. Such is the last judgment of each person.

Day One: Bit of straw vs. beam in one's eye

Matthew 7:1-5

Judge not, that you be not judged. For in what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and in what measure you measure, it shall be measured back to you. And why dost thou look at¹ the bit of straw² in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Permit me to cast out the bit of straw from thine eye, and behold, the beam is in thine own eye? Hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt look carefully to cast out the bit of straw out of thy brother's eye.³

“Judge not, that you be not judged.”

CL 523. By [these words] can by no means be meant the judgment of the moral and civil life of anyone in the world, but the judgment as to his spiritual and heavenly life. Who does not see that if one may not judge as to the moral life of those who dwell with him in the world, society would perish? What would society be if there were no public judgments, or if everyone might not form his judgment of another? But to judge what his interior mind or soul is, thus what is his spiritual state and therefore his lot after death, of this one may not judge, for it is known only to the Lord. And the Lord does not reveal it until after death, in order that everyone may do what he does in freedom....

CL 523:2. A general judgment is allowed, such as the following, “If you are in your inward qualities as you appear in your outward ones, you will be saved or condemned.” But a specific judgment such as, “You are of this or that character in your inward qualities and therefore you will be saved or condemned,” is not allowed.

¹ Latin *cerno*, that is, discern (AC 2360, 9051, AE 746:16)

² Latin *festuca*, a small piece of wood or straw (AC 9051:3, AE 746:16)

³ See also Luke 6:37-38, Mark 4:24-25.

CL 453:2. I have met with several who in the world had lived like others in externals, clothing themselves splendidly, faring sumptuously, doing business with advantage as others did, seeing theatrical entertainments, jesting about love affairs as if from lust, and other like things, and yet to some the angels imputed these things as evils of sin and to some not as evils; and the latter they pronounced guiltless, but the others guilty. To the question why they did so, when yet they had done similar things, they answered that they view everyone according to his purpose, intention, or end, and according to this they distinguish them. And therefore those whom the end excuses or condemns they excuse or condemn, for all in heaven have an end of good, and all in hell have an end of evil. And this and nothing else is meant by the Lord's words: Judge not that you be not condemned (Matt. 7:1).

AC 3796:3. It is... the part of a wise man to know the ends [or goals] that are in him. Sometimes it appears as if his ends were for self when yet they are not so; for it is the nature of man to reflect upon himself in everything, and this from custom and habit.

But if anyone desires to know the ends that are within him, let him merely pay attention to the delight he perceives in himself from the praise and glory of self, and to the delight he perceives from use separate from self. If he perceives this latter delight, he is in genuine affection. He must also pay attention to the various states in which he is, for the states themselves very much vary the perception.

A man can explore these things in himself, but not in others; for the ends of each person's affection are known to the Lord alone.... For a thousand persons may appear to be in a like affection in respect to truth and good, and yet every one of them be in an affection that is unlike in respect to origin, that is, in respect to end.

AC 2284:4-5. It is very common for those who have taken up an opinion respecting any truth of faith, to judge of others that they cannot be saved unless they believe as they do—a judgment which the Lord has forbidden (Matt. 7:1-2). On the other hand, I have learned from much experience that men of every religion are saved, provided that by a life of charity they have received

remains of good and of apparent truth. The life of charity consists in thinking kindly of another and in wishing him well, and in perceiving joy in oneself from the fact that others also are saved....

How wilt thou say to thy brother....

AC 2360. In the Word “brother” signifies the same as “neighbor,” for the reason that everyone ought to love his neighbor as himself. Thus brothers were so called from love, or what is the same, from good. This manner of naming and addressing the neighbor comes from the fact that in heaven, the Lord is the Father of all and loves all as His children; and thus that love is spiritual conjunction. From this the universal heaven resembles as it were one family derived from love and charity (n. 685, 917).

The bit of straw and the beam

AE 746:16. Because this [teaching] treats of charity, the term “brother” is used, for “to cast out the bit of straw out of a brother’s eye” signifies to instruct respecting falsity and evil, and to reform.... A “bit of straw” signifies a slight falsity of evil, and a “beam” a great falsity of evil, and the “eye” signifies the understanding and also faith. “Bit of straw” and “beam” signify the falsity of evil, because “wood” signifies good; and thus a “beam” signifies the truth of good, and in the contrary sense the falsity of evil....

Questions and Comments

1. Which is the more common problem: people refusing or even being forbidden to make necessary judgments, or people treating others as condemned to hell? Why does the Lord address the one problem and not so much the other in Matthew?
2. Does AC 3796 offer a useful tool for self-examination? How do we repent of too much delight in praise?
3. Why do we have a great beam, while our brother has only a bit of straw, obstructing our sight of truth?

Day Two: The Wicked Vinedressers

Matthew 21:33-46 (also Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19)

Hear another parable: There was a certain man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to farmers, and went abroad. And when the time of the fruits was near, he sent his servants to the farmers to receive the fruits of it. And the farmers, taking his servants, beat one, and killed one, and stoned one. Again, he sent out other servants, more than the first; and they did to them likewise.

And last of all he sent to them his son, saying, "They will have respect for my son." But the farmers, seeing the son, said in themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and have his inheritance." And taking him, they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers? They say to Him, "He will destroy those evil ones with evil, and will let out the vineyard to other farmers, who will render him the fruits in their times."

Jesus says to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,

This has been made into the head of the corner.

This was made by the Lord,

And it is marvelous in our eyes?

Psalm 118:22-23

Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth its fruits. And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew that He spoke of them. And when they sought to take hold of Him, they feared the crowds, since they held Him as a prophet.

Bringing forth the fruits of the vineyard

HH 533. That it is not so difficult to live the life of heaven as some believe can now be seen from this, that when anything presents itself to a man that he knows to be dishonest and unjust, but to which his mind is borne, it is simply necessary for him to think that it ought not to be done because it is opposed to the Divine commandments. If a man gets used to thinking this way, and from so doing establishes a habit of so thinking, he is gradually conjoined to heaven; and so far as he is conjoined to heaven, the higher regions of his mind are opened. And so far as these are opened, he sees whatever is dishonest and unjust, and so far as he sees these evils they can be dispersed, for no evil can be dispersed until it is seen.

A man is able to enter into this state because of his freedom, for is not anyone able, from his freedom, to think this way? And when man has made a beginning, the Lord gives life to all that is good in him, and causes him not only to see evils to be evils, but also to stop willing them, and finally to turn away from them. This is meant by the Lord's words, My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matt. 11:30).

Evil farmers

But it must be understood that the difficulty of so thinking and of resisting evils increases so far as man from his will does evils, for in the same measure he gets used to them until he no longer sees them, and at length loves them and from the delight of his love excuses them, and confirms them by every kind of fallacy, and declares them to be allowable and good. This is the fate of those who in early youth plunge into evils without restraint, and also reject Divine things from the heart.

The Stone which makes the head of the corner

HH 534. The way that leads to heaven, and the way that leads to hell, were once represented to me. There was a broad way tending towards the left or the north, and many spirits were seen going in it; but at a distance a large stone was seen where the

broad way came to an end. From that stone two ways branched off, one to the left and one in the opposite direction to the right. The way that went to the left was narrow or confined, leading through the west to the south, and thus into the light of heaven. The way that went to the right was broad and spacious, leading obliquely downwards towards hell. All at first seemed to be going the same way until they came to the large stone at the head of the two ways. When they reached that point, they divided. The good turned to the left and entered the confined way that led to heaven, while the evil, not seeing the stone at the fork of the ways, fell on it and were hurt; and when they rose up they ran on in the broad way to the right which went towards hell.

HH 534:2. What all this meant was afterwards explained to me. The first way that was broad, in which many, both good and evil, went together and talked with each other as friends, because there was no visible difference between them, represented those who externally live alike, honorably and justly, and between whom seemingly there is no difference. The stone at the head of the two ways or at the corner, on which the evil fell and from which they ran into the way leading to hell, represented the Divine truth, which is rejected by those who look towards hell; and in the highest sense this stone signified the Lord's Divine Human. But those who acknowledged the Divine truth and also the Divine of the Lord went by the way that led to heaven.

By this again it was shown that in externals, the evil lead the same kind of life as the good, or go the same way, that is, one as readily as the other. And yet those who from the heart acknowledge the Divine, especially those within the church who acknowledge the Divine of the Lord, are led to heaven; while those who do not are led to hell.

Questions and Comments

1. In this parable, what is meant by the vineyard? The evil farmers? The servants sent to them? The son? The fruits? The cornerstone? A fruitful nation?
2. Does it feel difficult to live the life of heaven? Is there any evil of which we cannot repent? Has the common idea of an honorable life broken down?

Day Three: The Two Sons, and the Barren Fig Tree

Matthew 21:28-32

But what do you think? A man had two children, and coming to the first he said, "Child, go, work today in my vineyard." And he answering, said, "I am not willing." But afterwards, being remorseful, he went. And coming to the second, he said likewise; and he answering said, "I go, lord," and did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?

They say to Him, "The first." Jesus says to them, Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go before you into the kingdom of God. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and seeing it you were not remorseful afterwards, that you might believe him.

Vineyard

AC 9139e. "A vineyard" is the church as to truth. This is because "wine," which belongs to a vineyard, signifies the truth of good....

AC 9139:2. That "field" and "vineyard" have this signification has its origin from the representatives in the spiritual world. For fields full of wheat and barley appear before spirits when the angels in a heaven above them are talking about a gathering of those who are in good; and there appear vineyards full of grapes with winepresses, when the angels are talking about a gathering of those who are in the truth of good. These representatives are not from the fact that there are such things on earth, but from the correspondences, in that wheat and barley, or the bread made from them, nourish the body, as the good of love and of charity nourishes the soul; and in that wine, as a drink, also nourishes the body....

AC 9139:5. From all this it can be seen why the Lord so often likened the kingdom of the heavens to a "vineyard" ...and why the Lord called Himself "the vine"

Unbelief

AE 815:15. The cause of the unbelief of the Jews was their wish for a Messiah who would exalt them to glory above all the nations in the world; also that they were wholly natural and not spiritual; also that they had falsified the Word, especially where it treats of the Lord and also of themselves...

That neither would those in the Christian world at the present day believe that the Lord is one with the Father, and is therefore the God of heaven and earth, is meant by the Lord's words in Luke:

When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? (18:8).

Luke 13:6-9 (compare Mat. 21:18-22, Mark 11:12-14, 20-26)

And He told this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the vine-worker, "Behold, three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and do not find any. Cut it down. Why should it also make the land useless?" But he answering said to him, "Lord, leave it also this year, until I dig around it and cast dung around it, and if it indeed makes fruit—and if not, in the future cut it down."

AE 403:20. "The vineyard in which was the fig tree" signifies the church, which contains also such people as are in externals, for in the Lord's church there is both an internal and an external. The internal of the church is charity and faith from charity, while the external of the church is the good of life. The works of charity and faith, which are the good of life, belong to the natural man, while charity itself and faith from it belong to the spiritual man. Therefore "a vineyard" signifies the internal of the church, and "a fig tree" its external.

With the Jewish nation there was only the external of the church... Therefore "a fig tree" means the church with that nation. But because they were in external worship and in no internal, being inwardly evil, and external worship without internal is no worship,

and with the evil there is evil worship, therefore with them there was nothing of natural good.

It is therefore said that “for three years he found no fruit on the fig tree, and that he told the vine dresser to cut it down.” This means that from beginning to end there was no natural good with that nation, “three years” signifying a whole period, or the time from beginning to end, and “the fruit of the fig tree” signifying natural good. By natural good is meant spiritual-natural good, or good in the natural from the spiritual. And because a church composed of such people as are not in natural good, as was the Jewish nation, is not a church, it is also said, “why also does it make the land unfruitful?” “land” meaning the church.

The vine worker saying that it should still be left, and he would dig around it signifies that they would remain, and that they would afterwards be instructed by the Christians, in the midst of whom they would be. But no answer being made to this means that the fig tree would still produce no fruit, that is, that no good proceeding from anything spiritual would be done by the Jewish nation.

Questions and Comments

1. When we have acted as publicans and harlots, saying “I am not willing” to our Father, can we be remorseful afterwards and go do as our Father asks?
2. What are some ways our Father calls us to work in His vineyard and bring forth its fruits? In what ways can a New Church be an especially fruitful vineyard?
3. Do we hope the New Church will make us stand out in our community and in the world? In what ways might that be appropriate, and in what ways is that sick?
4. To what extent do you think the parable of the barren fig tree might apply to the fallen Christian world, including to us and our children as part of that world? See AE 815:15 quoted above.

Day Four: The Wedding Banquet

Matthew 22:1-14 (compare Luke 14:15-24)

And Jesus answering, again said to them in parables, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is likened to a man, a king, who made a wedding for his son, and sent forth his servants to call those who were called to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Say to those who were called, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fatlings⁴ are slaughtered, and all things are prepared; come to the wedding.'" But they, neglecting it, went away, indeed, one to his own field, and the other to his merchandise; and the rest, taking hold of his servants, insulted them, and killed them. And when the king heard, he was angry; and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Then he says to his servants, "The wedding is indeed prepared, but they who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the exits of the ways, and whomever, as many as you find, call to the wedding." And those servants, going out into the roads, gathered together all, as many as they found, both wicked and good; and the wedding was filled with guests. And the king, coming in to observe the guests, saw there a man who had not put on a wedding garment. And he says to him, "Fellow, how didst thou come in here not having a wedding garment?" And he was silenced. Then the king said to the ministers, "Having bound him feet and hands, take him up, and cast him out into the outer

⁴ Literally, "wheat-fed"

darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.”

A wedding for the Son

AR 812:2. When [the people of the Church] acknowledge the Lord's Human to be Divine, a full marriage of the Lord and the church takes place. For ...the church is a church from the marriage of the Lord with her, for the Lord is called ...the Bridegroom and Husband, and the church is called the Bride and Wife....

That there is then a full marriage of the Lord and the church, when His Human is acknowledged to be Divine, is clear; for then God the Father and He are acknowledged to be one, as the soul and the body. When this is acknowledged... the Lord Himself is approached... because the Father is in Him, as the soul is in the body... Moreover, three husbands cannot be given to one wife, nor three souls to one body; and therefore, unless one God is acknowledged, in whom is the Trinity, and that that God is the Lord, there is no marriage.

A man who had not put on a wedding garment

TCR 380:4. Of all who honor the Lord as the Redeemer and Savior only with the mouth and lips, while in heart and spirit they regard Him as a mere man, it may be said, when they are speaking of these things and teaching them, that their cheeks are like a bag of honey, and their heart like a bag of gall. Their words are like cakes of sugar, while their thoughts are like emulsions of aconite [or poison]. They are also like rolls of pastry containing snakes. If such persons are priests, they are like pirates on the sea who hoist the flag of a peaceful nation, but when a ship sailing near hails them as friends, they raise a piratical flag in place of the other, seize the ship, and carry away those on board into captivity.

They are also like serpents of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that approach like angels of light, carrying in their hands apples from that tree painted with golden colors, as if plucked from the tree of life; and they offer them, saying:

God knows that in the day you eat of them, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5).

And when these have eaten, they follow the serpent into the lower world, and there they dwell together....

Such as these are meant also by the man who came to the marriage without a wedding garment and was cast into outer darkness (Matt. 22:11-13), "the wedding garment" meaning faith in the Lord as the Son of God, the God of heaven and earth, and one with the Father.

Those who honor the Lord with the mouth and lips only, but in heart and spirit regard Him as a mere man, if they declare their thoughts and persuade others, are spiritual murderers, and the worst of them are spiritual cannibals. For a man's life is from love to the Lord and faith in Him, and if this essential element of faith and love, that the Lord is God-Man and Man-God, is taken away, man's life becomes death. Thus in this way man is killed and devoured as a kid by a wolf.

Questions and Comments

1. Have you ever had a sense of being called to be New Church by virtue of having grown up with it and being surrounded by New Church people, but feeling a resistance to coming to "the wedding feast"?
2. Why is there no marriage between us and God unless we acknowledge the Lord as God? What about good Christians who are confused, or good people of other faiths?
3. Where might we encounter spiritual murderers and cannibals, or guests without a wedding garment? How can we be sure to put on a wedding garment ourselves?

Day Five: The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

Luke 12:41-48, also Matthew 24:45-51

And Peter said to Him, Lord, sayest Thou this parable to us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and prudent steward, whom the lord shall appoint over his household, to apportion *to them their* measure of wheat in due time? Happy is that servant whom his lord at his coming shall find so doing. Truly I say to you that he will appoint him over all his belongings.

But if that servant⁵ shall say in his heart, “My lord delays to come,” and shall begin to strike the boy-servants and maids, and to eat and to drink and be drunken, the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he does not expect him, and in an hour which he does not know, and will divide him in two, and will put his part with the unbelieving⁶.

And that servant who knew his lord’s will, and did not prepare, nor do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, but did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. And everyone to whom much has been given, from him much will be sought; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will ask all the more.

In this parable, the Lord is urging us to live a good life.

AC 4422:2e. These are words of exhortation to those in the church, that they should be in the *good* of faith, and that if not they must perish.

⁵ Matthew 24:48 has “that evil servant...”

⁶ Matthew 24:51 has “with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Servant

AR 3:3. By servant is meant he who teaches Divine truth... [especially] those who are in truths from good, or in faith from charity, because these can teach from the Lord, that is, the Lord can teach and minister through them.... In the opposite sense, by servants are meant those who serve the devil; these are in a state of servitude itself. But those who serve the Lord are in a state of liberty, as the Lord also teaches (John 8:32-36).

Eat and drink and be drunken

AE 617:2. "To eat" and "to drink" signify to nourish oneself spiritually, consequently to appropriate to oneself good and truth, "to eat" signifying to appropriate to oneself good, and "to drink" to appropriate to oneself truth.... To be nourished spiritually is to be instructed and imbued, consequently to know, to understand, and to be wise. Unless a man enjoys this nourishment together with the nourishment of the body, he is not a man but a beast. And this is why those who place all delight in feastings and banquetings and daily indulge their palates are dull in spiritual things, however they may be able to reason respecting the things of the world and of the body. Therefore, after death they live a life that is beastly rather than human, for instead of intelligence and wisdom they have insanity and folly.

The lord shall come in an hour he does not know.

AE 194:3-4. [This] means not only that one is ignorant of the time of death, but also of the state of life at that time which will continue to eternity; for such as the state of man's past life is, even to the end, such he remains to eternity.... It should be known that man remains to eternity such as his whole life is, even to the end, and by no means such as he is at the hour of death. Repentance at that time with the evil is of no avail, but with the good it strengthens.

That servant who knew his lord's will and did not prepare

AC 7790. When those who have infested the upright are damned, all truth Divine departs from them, for they are then in the state of their evil, and evil rejects and extinguishes all truth Divine. Until then, previous to their damnation, they were indeed acquainted

with the truths of faith, but nevertheless they had no truths in them, for truths were then in their mouth, but not in the heart. And therefore, when they have been vastated as to these truths, evil remains, and then also the falsity of evil comes forth to view which had lain hidden within them. For although they had professed truths, they were nevertheless not in truths, but in falsities. Moreover, the very profession of truth did not descend from its own beginning, namely, from good, but from evil. For they had made their profession for the sake of gain, honors, and reputation, thus for the sake of themselves and the world. The truths which descend from such a beginning adhere on the surface, and therefore when they are being vastated, the truths fall off like scales, and when they fall off, they leave places that are foul-smelling and putrid from the falsities which exhale from the evils there. Such is the lot of those who have known the truths of faith, and yet have lived contrary to them....

Questions and Comments

1. How can we be faithful and prudent stewards? (See DP 210, quoted on pages 16-17 of Week 3.)
2. AR 3: "Servants" are those through whom the Lord can teach and minister to others. Can parents and friends be "servants" in this sense, nourishing their children and friends spiritually?
3. AE 194: Deathbed repentance with the evil is of no avail, but with the good it strengthens, if we have practiced repentance regularly in life. Why is it essential that we do not know when we are going to die?
4. AC 7790: How can we beware of having truths only in our mouths but not in our hearts?

Day Six: The parables of Noah and of Lot, and others

Luke 17:25-37, also Matthew 24:37-42, 17-18, 28; Mark 13:34-37, 15-16

But first [the Son of Man] must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation. And even as it came to pass in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they wed, they were given to be wed, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the day Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. According to these things shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

In that day whoever shall be on the housetop, and his vessels in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, let him likewise not turn around to what *is* behind. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever shall seek to save his soul, shall lose it; and whoever shall lose it, shall preserve it alive.

I say to you, In that night two *men* shall be in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two *women* shall be grinding grain together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And they answering said to Him, Where, Lord? And He said to them, Where the body *is*, there the eagles will be gathered.

Eat, drink, buy and sell, plant and build

AE 840:5. “To eat and drink” signifies here to live for self and the world, and to appropriate to oneself evils and falsities; “to buy and sell” signifies to acquire these [evils and falsities] and to communicate them to others; “to plant and build” signifies to confirm oneself in them and to live in them.

Sodom; fire and brimstone

AR 502. *Which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt* [Rev. 11:2] signifies the two infernal loves, which are the love of dominating from self-love, and the love of ruling from the pride of one’s own intelligence, which are in the church where one God is not acknowledged, and the Lord is not worshiped, and where they do not live according to the precepts of the Decalogue.... The reason why these loves prevail in [such a] church ...is because man is born into those two loves, and comes into them as he grows up. And those loves cannot be removed except by God the Savior, and by a life according to His precepts; and they cannot be removed by God the Savior unless He is approached. Nor can a life according to His precepts be given unless man is led by Him.

AR 502:2. By “fire and brimstone,” that love with its lusts is signified.

He who is on the rooftop should not come down.

AC 2454:2. According to the internal sense, to be “upon the house” is to be in good (a “house” denotes good...). The “vessels” in a house are the truths which are of good (truths are the vessels of good...). To “go down to take them away” is to turn oneself away from good to truth... for as good is prior it is also higher, and as truth is posterior it is lower. A “field” is the church, being so called from the seed which it receives into it; consequently those [people] are “fields” who are in the good of doctrine.... This shows what is signified by “turning back behind him,” namely, to turn oneself away from good, and to look to doctrinal things. Therefore, because these things are signified by Lot’s wife, it is added, “Remember Lot’s wife.”

AC 2454:5. Truth is said to turn itself away from good and to look to doctrinal things when the man of the church no longer has at

heart what kind of a life he lives, but what kind of a doctrine he possesses; when yet it is a life according to doctrine that makes a man of the church, but not doctrine separate from life. For when doctrine is separated from life, then because good, which is of the life, is laid waste, truth, which is of doctrine, is also laid waste, that is, becomes a pillar of salt. Everyone who looks only to doctrine and not to life may know this, when he considers whether, although doctrine teaches them, he believes in the resurrection, in heaven, in hell, even in the Lord, and in the rest of the things that are of doctrine.

Two in one bed; two women grinding; two in the field

AR 137. “Two in one bed” means two in one doctrine but not in similar life.

AE 163:6. “Two [women] grinding” are those who collect and learn such things as are serviceable to faith. “Two [men] in the field” are those in the church who apply goods and truths to themselves.

Questions and Comments

1. The parables of Noah and Lot show that those stories in Genesis are also parables, having a deeper meaning.
2. Why will there be judgments like the flood and the fire in the day when the Son of Man is revealed?
3. AR 502: Humanists believe men can be good and moral without God. The Heavenly Doctrine says this attitude leads to “Sodom and Egypt,” the love of dominating from self-love, and the love of ruling from the pride of one’s own intelligence. Why is this so? Do you see examples of this appearing to happen? How does it explain the push for acceptance of certain kinds of adultery at the end of a church?
4. AC 2425: Where do we see a tendency to focus on doctrine instead of on life?