

The Ten Commandments

Week 3

Fourth and Fifth Commandments



Jesus, stretching forth His hand toward the disciples, said,
“My mother and My brothers
are these who hear the Word of God, and do it.”

Matt. 12:48-49; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 8:21; John 19:25-27;
TCR 306e

(with highlights)

Exodus 20:12

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be prolonged upon the ground which Jehovah thy God gives thee.

AC 8897. **Honor thy father and thy mother.** That this means love for good and truth—in the supreme sense [love] for the Lord and for His kingdom—is evident from the meaning of “honoring,” as being to love. For in the spiritual sense “to honor” is to love, for the reason that in heaven one loves another, and when he loves he also honors, for in honor there is love. Honor without love is refused in heaven; in fact, it is rejected, because it is devoid of life from good....

“Father” [means] good... and in the supreme sense [father means] the Lord as to Divine good.... That the Lord in the supreme sense is the “father” is because He gives new life to man, and thereby one becomes a son and heir of His kingdom....

“Mother” [means] truth... and in the supreme sense [mother means] the Lord as to Divine truth, thus His kingdom, because the Divine truth which proceeds from the Lord makes heaven. That the Divine truth of the Lord makes heaven is because in the other life, the Lord as to Divine good is the Sun, and as to the Divine truth He is the light. This Divine light from the Lord as the Sun is what illuminates angelic minds and fills them with intelligence and wisdom, and makes them to be angels of light. Divine good is within Divine truth, as heat from the sun is within the light in the time of spring and summer in the world.

AC 8898. **That thy days may be prolonged upon the land.**

That this signifies the consequent state of life in heaven, is evident from the signification of “to be prolonged,” as being said of good and its increase... from the meaning of “thy days,” as being states of life... and from the signification of “land,” here the land of Canaan... as being the kingdom of the Lord....

AC 8899. **Which Jehovah thy God gives thee.** That this signifies where the Divine is and the consequent influx, is evident from the fact that these words are spoken of heaven, which is here meant by “the land” For heaven in general with all, and in particular with each one, is the reception of influx [or influence] from the Divine....

AC 8899:2. As by “father and mother” are meant the Lord and His kingdom, therefore this commandment is the fourth in order, and surpasses in holiness those which follow. The commandment concerning the worship of Jehovah, that is, the Lord, is first and second, because it is the most holy one. Next comes the commandment concerning the Sabbath, because by this in the supreme sense is signified the union of the Divine Itself and the Divine Human in the Lord. After this follows the commandment concerning honoring parents, because by this is meant love of the Lord and the consequent love of good and truth which are from the Lord....

AE 1026:3. These Ten Commandments contain all things of Divine good and all things of Divine truth, and there is also in them a conjunction of these. But this conjunction is hidden, for it is like the conjunction of love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor. Divine good belongs to love to the Lord and Divine truth belongs to love towards the neighbor. For when a man lives according to Divine truth, that is, loves his neighbor, the Lord flows in with Divine good and conjoins Himself.

For this reason there were two tables on which these Ten Commandments were written, and they were called a covenant, which signifies conjunction. And afterwards they were placed in the ark, not one beside the other, but one on top of the other, for a testimony of the conjunction between the Lord and man. On one table the commandments of love to the Lord were written and on the other table the commandments of love towards the neighbor. The commandments of love to the Lord are the first three, and the commandments of love towards the neighbor are the last six; and the fourth commandment... is the mediating commandment, for in it “father” means the Father in the heavens, and “mother” means the church, which is the neighbor.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Here is an excerpt from a “pleasant discussion” between some husbands and wives in the other world:

“But,” said the men, “from what does a man have honor from his wife if he does not magnify his own intelligence?” And the wives answered, “From love, it being love that honors. Honor cannot be separated from love, but love can be separated from honor.” (CL 331:2)

In other words, if you truly love someone, you cannot help but honor them too; whereas one may pay outward honor and respect to someone without loving him or her. Perhaps there are times when we do not *feel* love for our partner, but we can still be respectful and honor them, while praying for the Lord to restore our love.

2. “Father” means good, or whatever we love. The things we love are the motivation for whatever we do, thus the “father” of all our words and deeds. All the information we learn that show us possibilities, ways and means to achieving what we love are like the “mother” that clothes the love in the womb and cares for the children growing up. Ideally our loves come from the Lord and likewise the truths that show us the way. Honoring our father and mother, spiritually, is partly about making the Lord’s love and truths our priority.
3. How has your honoring of your natural parents helped or hindered your honoring of our heavenly Father and our spiritual mother? What does this imply for being good parents?
4. Can you see how it is true, that we cannot truly love the Lord unless we love our neighbors, and that we cannot truly love the neighbor unless we love the Lord?

Matthew 23:9

Call no man your father on the earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven.

TCR 305. In the natural sense, which is that of the letter, “to honor thy father and thy mother” means to honor parents, to be obedient to them, to be devoted to them, and to return thanks to them for the benefits they confer.... They provide food and clothing for their children, and so introduce them into the world that they may act in it as civil and moral persons; and they introduce them also into heaven by means of the precepts of religion, thus providing both for their temporal prosperity and their eternal happiness. Parents do all this from a love which they have from the Lord, in whose place they act.

In a relative sense it means that if parents are dead, guardians should be honored by their wards. In a broader sense, to honor the king and magistrates is meant by this commandment, since these provide for all in general the necessities which parents provide in particular. In the broadest sense this commandment means that men should love their country, since it supports and protects them. Therefore it is called “the fatherland” from father. But honor to country, king, and magistrates must be rendered by parents, and by them be implanted in their children.

TCR 306. In the spiritual sense, “to honor father and mother” means to reverence and love God and the church. In this sense God, who is the father of all, is meant by “father” and the church by “mother.” In the heavens little children and the angels know no other father and no other mother, since they are there born anew of the Lord through the church. Therefore the Lord says: “Call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father, who is in the heavens” (Matt. 23:9). This was said with reference to children and angels in heaven, and not of children and men on earth. The Lord teaches the same thing in the common prayer of the Christian churches, “Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name.” In the spiritual sense, “mother” means the church, because

as a mother on earth nourishes her children with natural food, so the church nourishes her children with spiritual food....

TCR 307. In the celestial sense, “father” means our Lord Jesus Christ, and “mother” is the communion of saints, which means the Lord’s church spread throughout the whole world....

That “mother” in this sense means the Lord’s church, is evident from the following passages:

I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband (Apoc. 21:2)

That “the New Jerusalem” means the New Church which the Lord is at this day establishing, may be seen in *Apocalypse Revealed*, nos. 880, 881. This church, and not the preceding, is the wife and the mother in this sense....

TCR 308. It must be kept in mind that a Divine-heavenly sphere of love continually goes forth from the Lord toward all who embrace the doctrine of His church, who are obedient to Him, as children are to their father and mother in the world, who devote themselves to Him, and who wish to be fed, that is, instructed by Him. From this heavenly sphere a natural sphere arises, which is one of love towards infants and children. This is a most universal sphere, affecting not only men, but also birds and beasts and even snakes; and not just animate things but also inanimate things. But so that the Lord might do His work on these even as on spiritual things, He created a sun to be in the natural world like a father, the earth being like a mother. For the sun is like a common father and the earth like a common mother, from the marriage of which all the vegetation that adorns the surface of the earth is produced. From the influx of that heavenly sphere into the natural world... it happens that many kinds of plants turn... their faces to the sun during the day, and turn them away when the sun sets. It is from this also that there are flowers that open at the rising of the sun and close at his setting. It is from this also that the songbirds sing sweetly at the early dawn, and likewise after they have been fed by their mother earth. Thus all these things honor their father and mother. They all bear testimony that in the natural world the Lord provides through the sun and the earth all necessities both for animate and inanimate things....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. TCR 305 provides a short checklist for parental responsibilities. How are we doing as a society?
2. Parents act in place of the Lord for their children; a child's first idea of the Lord comes from looking up to his or her parents. What are some implications of this awesome responsibility?
3. How do we implant in our children and set a good example of honor to our country, king (president) and magistrates, at times when we believe our country or leaders are pursuing unwise policies?
4. How does the church nourish her children with spiritual food?
5. What do you suppose is meant by "the communion of saints," the Lord's church spread throughout the world? How do we honor this spiritual mother? (See TCR 416.) Does this mean honoring all who acknowledge the Lord and keep His commandments, living in charity? What if they do not know the Lord but do worship one God?
6. TCR 308 speaks of how the flowers and birds testify that the Lord provides for all necessities in the natural world, through the sun and the earth. It's good to remember, when we see or hear such "testimony," that the Lord is also providing all of our necessities.

Day Three

Exodus 20:13: **Thou shalt not murder.**

TCR 309. In the natural sense, this commandment... means not to murder a man, and not to inflict on him any wound from which he may die, also not to maim his body. It means also not to inflict any deadly harm upon his name and fame, since with many fame and life go hand in hand. In a broader natural sense, murder means enmity, hatred, and revenge, which breathe slaughter; for in them murder lies concealed as fire in wood under ashes. Hell fire is nothing else; hence the expressions, to be inflamed with hatred, to burn with revenge. These passions are murder in intention, not in act; but if fear of the law or of retaliation and revenge were removed from them, they would break forth into act, especially if there is treachery or ferocity in the intention. That hatred is murder, is evident from these words of the Lord:

You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not murder; and whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother rashly shall be in danger of the judgment. But whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire (Matt. 5:21, 22).

This is because whatever pertains to the intention pertains also to the will, and so essentially to the deed.

TCR 310. In the spiritual sense, murder means all modes of killing and destroying the souls of men. These are many and of various kinds, as for example, turning men away from God, religion, and Divine worship by insinuating scandalous thoughts against them, or by inducing such persuasions as cause aversion and even abhorrence. Such murderers are all the devils and satans in hell. Those in this world who violate and prostitute the holy things of the church are in conjunction with them

TCR 311. In the celestial sense, to kill means to be rashly angry with the Lord, to hate Him, and to wish to blot out His name. It is

said of such that they crucify the Lord, and they would do this as the Jews did, if He were to come again into the world as before....

TCR 312. The nature of man's internal, unless it is reformed by the Lord, has been made evident to me from seeing the devils and satans in hell, for they have it constantly in mind to kill the Lord. And as they cannot do this, they are in the endeavor to kill those who are devoted to the Lord. But not being able to do this as men can in the world, they make every effort to destroy their souls, that is, to destroy faith and charity in them. Hatred itself and revenge with them appear like dusky and white-hot fires—hatred like a dusky fire, and revenge like a white-hot fire—yet these are not fires, but appearances.

The cruelties of their hearts sometimes appear above them in the air like contests with angels and their slaughter and overthrow. Such dreadful mockeries arise from their wrath and hatred against heaven. Moreover, at a distance, these same spirits appear like wild beasts of every kind, such as tigers, leopards, wolves, foxes, [wild] dogs, crocodiles, and all kinds of serpents; and when they see gentle animals in representative forms, they rush upon them in fantasy and strive to tear them in pieces. They came to my sight like dragons standing near women with whom there were little children, whom they were endeavoring, as it were, to devour (according to what is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Revelation); but these were nothing else than representations of hatred against the Lord and His New Church.

That men in the world who wish to destroy the Lord's Church are like these spirits is not evident to their companions. This is for the reason that their bodies, through which they practice moralities, absorb and conceal these things. But to the angels, who behold their spirits and not their bodies, they appear in forms like those of the devils described above. Who could have known such things if the Lord had not opened the sight of someone and given him the ability to look into the spiritual world? Otherwise, would not these, together with other most important matters, have lain concealed from man forever?

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. What can we do if we observe that we hate someone?
2. How does the commandment against murder relate to gossip?
3. Have you read or seen any examples of attempted spiritual murder, that is, leading others to scorn and detest God, religion and Divine worship? How might we, perhaps inadvertently, be in danger of breaking the spiritual meaning of this commandment?
4. Have you ever been extremely angry with the Lord?
5. Why is it very important to learn what people's spirits are really like after death?

Day Four

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal and to slaughter and to destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly.

AC 8901. **Thou shalt not murder**, signifies not to take away spiritual life from anyone, also not to extinguish faith and charity, as well as not to hold the neighbor in hatred.

AC 8902. [This] is evident from the meaning of “murdering,” as being to deprive of spiritual life. That “murdering” means this in the internal sense, is because in this sense spiritual life, or the life of heaven with man, is treated of; and spiritual life, or the life of heaven with man, is the life of faith and of charity. Therefore by “not to murder” is meant also not to extinguish faith and charity in anyone. The reason why “not to murder” is also in the internal sense not to hold the neighbor in hatred, is that he who holds [someone] in hatred continually wishes to murder, and also would murder in act unless prevented by the fear of the penalty, of the loss of life, of reputation, and the like. For hatred [springs] from evil, is contrary to charity, and breathes nothing but the murder of him whom it hates: in the world, the murder of his body; in the other life, the murder of his soul....

AC 8902:12. “In the consummation of the age they shall deliver you into tribulation, and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all the nations for My name’s sake” (Matt. 24:9).

“Jesus said to His disciples, ‘The hour comes, that whoever kills you shall think that he offers holy worship to God; and they will do these things because they do not know the Father, nor Me’” (John 16:2, 3).

In these passages also by “killing” is signified to deprive of spiritual life, that is, of faith and charity; for by “the disciples” are signified all things of the truth and good of faith and charity....

That the disciples, to whom the Lord spoke, are not meant here, is evident from the fact that the subject dealt with is the consummation of the age, when the Lord is to come in the clouds

of heaven; the disciples had asked about this, and by the consummation of the age is meant the last time of the church, when the disciples would not be alive (see n. 3488).

AC 8902:17. ...Hence it is plain what is involved in the commandment “not to murder,” namely, that not only is man not to be murdered as to the body, but also that he is not to be murdered as to the soul; thus that he is not only not to be deprived of life in the world, but especially that he is not to be deprived of life in heaven. If this commandment had not involved within it at the same time this meaning, it would not have been pronounced by Jehovah Himself, that is, the Lord, in a living voice upon Mount Sinai with so great a miracle. For all peoples and nations know without immediate revelation, and moreover their laws decree, that man is not to be killed, as well as that adultery, theft, and false witness are not to be committed.... But the revealed Word, being from the Divine Itself, over and above this [civil law] stores up in its bosom higher and more universal things, namely, such things as are of heaven, thus which not only concern the life of the body, but which also concern the life of the soul, or eternal life. In this the Word differs from, is separated from, and is preeminent over, all other writing.

AE 1012:3. ...In all the commandments of the Decalogue, as in all things of the Word, two internal senses are involved, besides the highest, which is a third: one that is next to the letter and is called the spiritual moral sense, another that is more remote and is called the spiritual celestial sense...

AE 1012:4e. These three, namely, spiritual murder, which pertains to faith and love, moral murder, which pertains to reputation and honor, and natural murder, which pertains to the body, follow in a series one from the other, like cause and effect.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. To what extent does the Lord permit one person to murder another person spiritually? Can one person cause another to go to hell eternally?
2. Is racism an example of spiritual murder, if it leads people to hold certain others in contempt or hatred?
3. Considering how the Word is pre-eminent above all other writing, how come we spend so little time reading it and instead read other things??

Day Five

Matthew 5:23-24

If therefore thou offer thy gift on the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

AE 1013:2. All who are in hell are in hatred against the Lord, and thus in hatred against heaven, for they are against goods and truths. Thus hell is the essential murderer, or the source of murder itself. It is the source of murder itself because man is human from the Lord through the reception of good and truth. Consequently, to destroy good and truth is to destroy the human itself, thus to kill man.

AE 1013:3. [E]veryone while he lives in the world is in externals, and these externals are taught and trained from infancy to counterfeit such things as are honest and decorous, just and equitable, and good and true. Nevertheless, hatred lies concealed in their spirit, and this in equal degree with the evil of their life. And as hatred is in the spirit, it breaks forth when the externals are laid aside, as is the case after death.

AE 1013:4. This hellish hatred against all who are in good is deadly hatred because it is hatred against the Lord. This can be seen particularly from their delight in doing harm, which is such as to exceed every other delight in degree, for it is a fire that burns with the lust for destroying souls. Moreover, it has been ascertained that this delight is not from hatred against those whom they attempt to destroy, but from hatred against the Lord Himself. Now since man is human from the Lord, and the human that is from the Lord is good and truth, and since those who are in hell are, from a hatred against the Lord, eager to kill what is human, which is good and truth, it follows that hell is the source of murder itself.

AE 1016:2. Since hatred is hellish fire, it is clear that it must be removed before love, which is heavenly fire, can flow in and give life to man by the light from it. And this hellish fire can in no way be removed unless man knows where hatred comes from and what

it is, and afterwards turns away from it and flees from it. In everyone by inheritance there is hatred against the neighbor. For everyone is born into the love of self and of the world, and in consequence conceives hatred, and from it is inflamed against all who do not make one with him and favor his love, especially against those who oppose his lusts. For no one can love himself above all things and love the Lord at the same time. Neither can anyone love the world above all things and love the neighbor at the same time, since no one can serve two masters at the same time without despising and hating the one while he honors and loves the other. Hatred is especially with those who are in the love of ruling over all; with others it is enmity.

AE 1016:3. It shall be told what hatred is. Hatred has in itself a fire which is an endeavor to kill man. That fire is manifested by anger. There is a seeming hatred and consequent anger with the good against evil, but this is not hatred, but an aversion to evil; neither is it anger, but a zeal for good, in which heavenly fire inwardly lies concealed. For the good turn away from evil, and are seemingly angry at the neighbor, in order that they may remove the evil; and thus they have regard to the neighbor's good.

AE 1017. When a man abstains from hatred and turns away from it and shuns it as diabolical, then love, charity, mercy and clemency flow in through heaven from the Lord, and then for the first time the works which he does are works of love and charity. The works he had done before, however good their appearance might have been in the external form, were all works of the love of self and of the world, in which hatred lurked whenever they were not rewarded. So long as hatred is not put away, so long man is merely natural, and the merely natural man remains in all his inherited evil. And he cannot become spiritual before hatred, with its root, which is the love of ruling over all, is removed. For the fire of heaven, which is spiritual love, cannot flow in so long as the fire of hell, which is hatred, stands in the way and shuts it out.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. What are some steps by which we may be reconciled to a brother who has something against us?
2. Does it seem true that in most criminal acts, the action is not really intended to hurt a certain person as much as it is intended to attack what is good and true, and thus the Lord Himself? Is this true of terrorism?
3. Murder is an effort to kill what is human, that is, to destroy what is good and true. Can you see that goods and truths are what make us truly human beings?
4. Does it make sense that we cannot really love any neighbor as long as we are harboring anger and hatred toward someone in our hearts?
5. How can we distinguish good zeal from ugly anger? CL 365 gives three ways. What can you think of or remember?
6. Not everyone has an equally fiery disposition on the outside. What is the root of hatred in all of us, regardless of how anger may or may not manifest itself?

Matthew 5:25-26

Enter into goodwill to thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest *at any time* the adversary deliver thee up to the judge, and the judge deliver thee up to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, Thou shalt not come out from there, until thou hast paid the last farthing.

AE 1015:3. ...To be delivered to the judge, and by the judge to the officer, and by him to be cast into prison, describes the state of the man who is in hatred after death from his having been in hatred against his brother in the world, "prison" meaning hell, and "to pay the last farthing" signifies the punishment that is called everlasting fire.

The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture, n. 67. It may now be illustrated by an example how spiritual and celestial angels draw their own sense from the natural sense, in which the Word is with men. Take as an example... the commandments of the Decalogue:

Honor thy father and thy mother. By "father and mother" a man understands his father and mother on earth, and all who stand in their place, and by to "honor" he understands to hold in honor and obey them. But a spiritual angel understands the Lord by "father," and the church by "mother," and by to "honor" he understands to love. And a celestial angel understands the Lord's Divine love by "father," and His Divine wisdom by "mother," and by to "honor" to do what is good from Him...

SS 67:4. Thou shalt not murder. By "murdering," a man understands also bearing hatred, and desiring revenge even to the death. A spiritual angel understands to act as a devil and destroy men's souls. And a celestial angel understands to bear hatred against the Lord, and against what is His.

SS 67:6. ...Wonderful to say, the angels draw out their senses without knowing what the man is thinking about, and yet the

thoughts of the angels and of the men make a one by means of correspondences, like end, cause, and effect....

The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem from the Precepts of the Decalogue, n. 70. Now as evil and good are two opposite things, precisely as are hell and heaven, or as are the devil and the Lord, it follows that if a man shuns evil as sin, he comes into the good that is opposite to the evil. The good opposite to the evil that is meant by “murder” is the good of love toward the neighbor.

Life 72. When a man is no longer in the evil of murder, but in the good of love toward the neighbor, whatever he does is a good of this love, and therefore it is a good work. A priest who is in this good does a good work whenever he teaches and leads, because he acts from the love of saving souls. A magistrate who is in this good does a good work whenever he delivers a decision or a judgment, because he acts from the love of taking care of his country, of the community, and of his fellow-citizen. The same with a businessman: if he is in this good, everything of his business is a good work. There is in him the love of the neighbor; and his country, the community, his fellow-citizen, and also the members of his household, are the neighbor whose welfare he has care for in providing for his own. A workman also who is in this good, works faithfully from it, for others as for himself, fearing his neighbor’s loss as he would his own.

The reason why the doings of these men are good works, is that in proportion as anyone shuns evil, in the same proportion he does good, according to the general law stated above (n. 21), and he who shuns evil as sin, does good not from himself but from the Lord (n. 18-31).

The contrary is the case with him who does not regard as sins the various kinds of murder, which are enmities, hatred, revenge, and many more. Whether he is a priest, magistrate, businessman, or workman, whatever he does is not a good work, because every work of his partakes of the evil that is within him; for his internal is what gives it birth. The external may be good, but only as regards others, not as regards himself.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. The Writings reveal that if a person dies still holding hatred for someone else, those two people will certainly meet after death; and his own hatred will cause the hater a lot of grief (AC 823, 2481-2, 5061, etc.). So it's much better to be reconciled with those we hate, or if the other is unwilling or unable to be reconciled, at least not to hate him in our hearts, and enter into goodwill while on earth, rather than have to "pay the last farthing."
2. The doctrine of salvation by faith alone says that no one can do anything that is truly good, because every single one of our works is tainted with selfishness—seeking merit and reward, or hypocritical. But the Heavenly Doctrine teaches that so far as we shun evil as a sin against God, the opposite good love flows in from the Lord. Then our works are really good, not from our own goodness, but from the Lord's love flowing into us and through us. It still feels like our own good, but we can know better and give all the credit to the Lord.