

The Ten Commandments

Week 4

The Sixth Commandment



Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man,
but that which comes out of the mouth,
this defiles the man.

Matthew 15:11

Exodus 20:14

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

TCR 313. In the natural sense, this commandment means not only not to commit adultery, but it refers also to not willing and doing obscene things and thinking and speaking about lascivious things. That merely to lust is to commit adultery, is evident from the Lord's words:

You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that everyone who looks on another man's wife to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:27, 28).

The reason for this is that when lust enters the will it becomes, as it were, a deed. For allurements enter only into the understanding, but intention enters into the will, and the intention of a lust is a deed....

TCR 314. In the spiritual sense, "to commit adultery" means to adulterate the goods of the Word and to falsify its truths. That "to commit adultery" means this also has been unknown before, because the spiritual sense of the Word has been concealed until now. That such is the meaning in the Word of "to commit adultery," "to adulterate," and "to commit whoredom" is evident from the following passages:

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek if you can find a man who executes judgment and seeks the truth. When I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery (Jer. 5:1, 7).

In the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible stubbornness in adulterating and walking in a lie (Jer. 23:14).

They have wrought folly in Israel, and have committed whoredom, and have spoken My Word falsely (Jer. 29:23)....

Because the Jewish nation had falsified the Word, it was called by the Lord:

An adulterous generation (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38), and the seed of the adulterer (Isa. 57:3)....

TCR 315. In the celestial sense, “to commit adultery” means to deny the holiness of the Word, and to profane it. This meaning follows from the preceding spiritual meaning, which is to adulterate its goods and to falsify its truths. The holiness of the Word is denied and profaned by those who in heart ridicule all things of the church and of religion, for in the Christian world all things of the church and of religion are from the Word.

TCR 316. There are many causes which make a man to seem chaste, not only to others but also to himself, when in fact he is wholly unchaste, since he does not know that when a lust occupies the will it is a deed and cannot be removed except by the Lord after repentance. A man is not made chaste by abstaining from *doing*, but by abstaining from *willing* because it is a sin, when the doing is possible.

So far as anyone abstains from adulteries and whoredoms solely from fear of the civil law and its penalties; from fear of the loss of reputation and thus of honor; from fear of the diseases arising from them; from fear of the wife’s beratings at home, and the consequent intranquility of life; from fear of the vengeance of the husband and relatives, or of being beaten by their servants; or because of avarice, or any infirmity caused by disease or abuse or age or any other cause of impotence; even if he abstains on account of any natural or moral law, and not at the same time on account of spiritual law, he is nevertheless inwardly an adulterer and a fornicator. For he nonetheless believes that adulteries and whoredoms are not sins, and therefore in his spirit he does not make them unlawful before God. And thus in spirit he commits them, even if he does not commit them in the body before the world. And in consequence, after death when he becomes a spirit, he speaks openly in favor of them.

Furthermore, adulterers... may also be compared to rank he-goats, or to dogs that run about the streets, looking about and smelling for female dogs to satiate their lasciviousness; and so on. When they become husbands, their virility may be likened to the blossoming of tulips in spring, which in a month lose their flowers and wither.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Pornography is a widespread problem. What can one do to avoid addiction to internet or other pornography? How can we protect our children? What can one do to escape from such an addiction? (Have you seen the movie *Fireproof*?)
2. In TCR 313 at the end, note the difference between allurement, which only enters the understanding, vs. intention, which enters the will. Can you picture this distinction? Have you felt it?
3. TCR 314: Adulterating means abusing the Scriptures (or the Doctrine) to make them seem to give you some selfish and worldly benefit, just as in adultery, a man and woman do not truly love each other, but are just using each other selfishly. True love comes only from the Lord. “No others come into this love (conjugal love) and no others can be in it but those who go to the Lord, and love the truths of the church, and do its goods” [that is, the good things the church teaches from the Word] (CL 70).
4. Maybe the clearest example in Scripture of adulterating the goods of the Word is the one the Lord points out in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. The Jewish leaders said that the fourth commandment, to honor your father and mother, means mainly to care for them in their old age. Then they said that you could take the money saved up to care for your aging parents and give it to the church instead as “Corban,” or “a Gift.” And after that, the leaders would not let you do anything more for your parents, thus making the commandment of God have no effect by their tradition. It took the love and honor out of the commandment, made it about money, and directed the money to themselves.

Revelation 17:1-5

And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven vials and spoke with me, saying to me, Come, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot who sits upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed whoredom, and they who dwell [on] the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her whoredom.

And... I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy.... And the woman was arrayed in crimson and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and uncleanness of her whoredom. And on her forehead a name [was] written: Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of whoredoms and abominations of the earth.

AC 8904. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** That this means that those things which are of the doctrine of faith and of charity are not to be perverted, thus that the Word is not to be applied to confirm falsities and evils, also that the laws of order are not to be upset, is evident from the signification of “adulterating,” “committing adultery,” and “committing whoredom,” as being, in the spiritual or internal sense, to pervert the goods and falsify the truths which are of the doctrine of faith and of charity. And as these things are signified by “committing adultery,” it also means to apply the Word to confirm evils and falsities. For the Word is the very doctrine itself of faith and charity, and the perversion of the truth and good of the Word is its application to falsities and evils.

That these things are signified by “adulterating” and “committing adultery” in the spiritual sense, is known to scarcely anyone at this day, for the reason that within the church, few now know what the spiritual is, and in what respect it differs from the natural. And scarcely anyone knows that there is a correspondence between the two, and indeed of such a nature that the image of the one is

presented in the other, that is, the spiritual is represented in the natural, consequently that the spiritual is like a soul and the natural is like its body; and thus that through influx and the consequent conjunction they constitute a one; as in the regenerate man, his internal man, which is also called spiritual, and his external man, which is also called natural, constitute a one.

AC 8904:2. Such things being unknown at this day... the reason may be told why “committing adultery” in the spiritual sense signifies to pervert those things which are of the doctrine of faith and charity, thus to adulterate goods and falsify truths. The reason, which at this day is secret, is that conjugal love descends from the marriage of good and truth, which is called “the heavenly marriage.” The love that flows in from the Lord, and that is between good and truth in heaven, is turned into conjugal love on the earth, and this by correspondence.

Hence it is that the falsification of truth is “whoredom,” and the perversion of good is “adulteration,” in the internal sense. Hence also it is that those who are not in the good and truth of faith cannot be in genuine conjugal love; and also that those who find the delight of life in adulteries can no longer receive anything of faith. I have heard it said by the angels that as soon as anyone commits adultery on the earth and takes delight in it, heaven is closed to him, that is, he refuses any longer to receive from heaven anything of faith and charity.

The reason that at this day in the kingdoms where the church is, adulteries are made light of by very many people is because the church is at its end, and thus there is no longer any faith, because there is no charity; for the one corresponds to the other. Where there is no faith, falsity is in the place of truth, and evil is in the place of good, and from this there flows the result that adulteries are no longer accounted as criminal. For when heaven is closed with a man, such things flow in from hell....

AC 8904:5. “Babylon” means those who pervert the truths and goods of the church for the sake of their own dominion and their own self-gain, perverting them even to the point of profanation....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Notice how true love in marriage originates in the marriage of good and truth. What does that mean to us? How do we marry good and truth in us?
2. Can you picture how a good love strongly desires truths—truths to show how to do what we love, and how to defend the love from people who would make fun of it or even call it bad? Can you picture how, once you have come to believe in and love certain ideas, then you are eager to do them, so that truth may become good in action and effect?
3. True, unselfish love in marriage comes from the marriage of a good heart with true, clear ideas of what is right and wrong, in marriage, in work, and in all areas of life; especially true ideas of the Lord Himself, allowing us to love Him as He really is and serve Him.
4. See AC 8904:2 at the end. Should adulteries be criminal offenses? If society in general were willing, what would be some good laws regarding adultery and divorce? What is possible at this day?

Day Three

Revelation 19:1-2

After these things I heard a great voice of a crowd of many in heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and just *are* His judgments; for He has judged the great harlot, who corrupted the earth with her whoredom, and He has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

AC 8904:9. ...They have wrought folly in Israel, and have committed adultery with the wives of their companions, and have spoken a word in My name falsely, which I did not command them (Jer. 29:23)

AC 8904:10. From these passages it is very manifest that “to adulterate” and “to commit adultery” mean to explain and pervert the truths of the Word from one’s own heart, that is, from one’s proprium*, in such a manner as the loves of self and of the world persuade one to do; consequently it is to speak lies, that is, falsities, as is openly said. *i.e., self-intelligence, self-interest

AC 8904:12. From [various] passages [in the Scriptures] it can be fully seen what is meant by “committing adultery,” namely, that in the external sense it is to commit adulteries. In the internal representative sense, it is to worship idols and other gods by means of such things as are of the church, consequently it means external and internal idolatry. But in the internal spiritual sense, adulterations of good and perversions of truth are meant. From all this it is plainly evident why it is that adulteries are in themselves so wicked and are called “abominations,” namely, from the fact that they correspond to the marriage of falsity and evil, which is the infernal marriage. On the other hand, [it can be seen] why genuine marriages are holy, namely, from the fact that they correspond to the marriage of good and truth, which is the heavenly marriage. In fact, genuine conjugal love descends from the marriage of good and truth, thus out of heaven, that is, through heaven from the Lord; whereas the love of adultery is from the marriage of falsity and evil, thus from hell, that is, from the devil.

Life 74. IN PROPORTION AS ANYONE SHUNS ADULTERIES OF EVERY KIND AS SINS, IN THE SAME PROPORTION HE LOVES CHASTITY. To “commit adultery” ...means, in the natural sense, not only to commit whoredom, but also to do obscene things, to speak lascivious things, and to think about filthy things. But in the spiritual sense to “commit adultery” means to adulterate the goods of the Word and to falsify its truths. In the highest sense to “commit adultery” means to deny the Divine of the Lord and to profane the Word. These are “adulteries of every kind.”

The natural man can know from rational light that to “commit adultery” includes in its meaning doing obscene things, speaking lascivious things, and thinking things that are filthy. But he does not know that to commit adultery also means to adulterate the goods of the Word and to falsify its truths, and still less that it means to deny the Divine of the Lord and to profane the Word. Consequently, neither does he know that adultery is so great an evil that it may be called devilishness itself, for he who is in natural adultery is also in spiritual adultery, and the converse.... But those who from their faith and their life do not regard adulteries as sins, are in adulteries of every kind at the same time.

Life 76. No one can know what the chastity of marriage is like unless he shuns the lasciviousness of adultery as sin.... The truth is that the lasciviousness of adultery and the chastity of marriage stand toward each other exactly as do hell and heaven, and that the lasciviousness of adultery makes hell in a man, and the chastity of marriage makes heaven. But the chastity of marriage exists solely with the man who shuns the lasciviousness of adultery as sin....

Life 77. From these considerations it may be concluded and seen without doubt whether a man is a Christian or not: indeed, whether a man has any religion or not. He who does not regard adulteries as sins, both in faith and in life, is not a Christian, neither does he have any religion. But on the other hand, he who shuns adulteries as sins, and especially he who on that account holds them in aversion, and still more he who on that account abominates them, has religion, and if he is in the Christian Church, he is a Christian....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Sometimes “chastity” in common speech means abstinence from all sexual relations, but in the Doctrine, it means purity in thought and conduct; decency, modesty, cleanness. True conjugal love is chastity itself. Synonyms for “lascivious” are lustful, lewd, wanton, lecherous, and licentious, or in other words, inciting or coming from immoral lust. We can see that chastity and lasciviousness are opposites, and that we have a real choice between them. Do some people have less of a choice because of how they were raised, or abused while growing up?
2. We can explore our own minds to see whether we believe adultery, pornography and other obscene things are sins or not, by imagining what we would do if no one would ever be able to pin it on us. We have a free choice, whether to turn our minds away from adulterous things because the Lord says to, or not. If we see that adultery is a sin against the Lord and destructive of everything good and human, then we can pray to the Lord for help against it, and hold our noses against dirty things wherever they come up (CL 49e).
3. It’s not our fault that dirty thoughts occur to us, over and over again. What matters is what we do when we realize that dirty thoughts have come into our mind. Do we turn away, or do we indulge such thoughts? The Lord said, “Not what goes into the mouth [or the mind] defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” (Matt. 15:10-20)

Day Four

Ezekiel 23:2-17

Two women, the daughters of one mother, committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth.... One played the harlot when she was Mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors.... She bestowed her whoredoms on them.... Neither did she leave her whoredoms brought from Egypt. The other corrupted her love more than the former, and her whoredoms more than the whoredoms of her sister.... She increased her whoredoms.... She loved the Chaldeans.... The Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom.

Life 79:2. These words relate to the Israelitish and Jewish Church, which are here called the daughters of one mother. By their whoredoms are meant adulterations and falsifications of the Word. And as in the Word, by Egypt is meant knowledge, by Assyria reasoning, by Chaldea the profanation of truth, and by Babylon the profanation of good, therefore it is said that they committed whoredom with those nations.

AE 983:2. That marriage is heaven and that adultery is hell is best seen from their origin. The origin of love truly conjugal is the Lord's love for the church, and this is why the Lord is called in the Word the "Bridegroom" and "Husband," and the church the "bride" and "wife." It is from this marriage that the church is the church in general and in particular. The church in particular is a man* in whom the church is. From this it is clear that the Lord's conjunction with a man of the church is the very origin of love truly conjugal; and how that conjunction can be the origin shall be told.

*Here "man" is a translation of the Latin *homo*. It means a human being, male or female, and especially a husband and wife together.

The Lord's conjunction with a man of the church is a conjunction of good and truth. Good is from the Lord, and truth is with man, and from this is the conjunction that is called the heavenly marriage. From that marriage, love truly conjugal exists between

two partners who are in such conjunction with the Lord. From this it is now evident that love truly conjugal is from the Lord alone, and exists with those who are in the conjunction of good and truth from the Lord. As this conjunction is reciprocal, it is said by the Lord that:

They are in Him, and He in them (John 14:20).

AE 983:3. This conjunction or this marriage was thus established from creation. The man* was created to be the understanding of truth, and the woman to be the affection of good, and thus the man to be truth and the woman good. When the understanding of truth that is with the man makes one with the affection of good that is with the woman, there is a conjunction of the two minds into one. This conjunction is the spiritual marriage from which conjugal love descends. For when two minds are so conjoined as to be one mind there is love between them; and when this love, which is the love of spiritual marriage, descends into the body it becomes the love of natural marriage. That this is so anyone can clearly perceive if he wants to. A married pair who interiorly or as to their minds love each other mutually and reciprocally also love each other mutually and reciprocally as to their bodies. It is known that all love descends into the body from an affection of the mind, and that apart from such an origin no love exists.

*In this passage, "man" translates the Latin *vir*, which refers to a male.

AE 983:4. Since then the origin of conjugal love is the marriage of good and truth, and this marriage in its essence is heaven, it is clear that the origin of the love of adultery is the marriage of evil and falsity, which in its essence is hell. Heaven is a marriage because all who are in the heavens are in the marriage of good and truth; and hell is adultery because all who are in the hells are in the marriage of evil and falsity. From this it follows that marriage and adultery are as opposite as heaven and hell are.

AE 995:2. True conjugal love is from the Lord alone. It is from the Lord alone because it descends from the Lord's love for heaven and the church, and thus from the love of good and truth.... And from this it follows that true conjugal love in its first essence is love to the Lord....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. An example of falsifying and adulterating the Word, represented by the two women in the prophecy of Ezekiel, is the interpretation of the Lord's saying to Peter that He would give him the keys of heaven, to bind or loose on earth and in heaven (Matt. 16:13-23). Some people took this as giving the pope, as the successor to Peter, Divine authority to sentence people to hell or raise them to heaven. (They ignore v. 23, just 4 verses later, where Jesus calls Peter "Satan," and many other teachings.) The power of opening and closing heaven actually belongs to the Divine Truth that Peter had just stated, namely, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
2. Does it fit with your experience that "man is created to be the understanding of truth, and woman the affection of good" (AE 983:3)? Are there other ways in which you see that men (from Mars) and women (from Venus) complete each other?

Revelation 19:7-9

Let us rejoice and be glad, and let us give the glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has prepared herself. And it was given to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright; for the fine linen is the just deeds of the holy *ones*. And he said to me, Write: Happy *are* they who have been called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said, These are the true words of God.

AE 996:2. As true conjugal love in its first essence is love to the Lord from the Lord, it is also innocence. Innocence is loving the Lord as one's Father by doing His command-ments and wishing to be led by Him and not by oneself, thus like an infant. As that love is innocence, it is the very being of all good. And therefore man has so much of heaven in himself, or he is so much in heaven, as he is in conjugal love, because he is so far in innocence.

It is because true conjugal love is innocence that the playfulness between a married pair is like the play of infants together. And this is so in the measure in which they love each other, as is evident in the case of all in the first days after the nuptials, when their love emulates true conjugal love. The innocence of conjugal love is meant in the Word by the "nakedness" at which Adam and his wife did not blush, and this is for the reason that there is nothing of lasciviousness, and thus nothing of shame, between a married pair, any more than between little children when they are naked together.

AE 1000:4. Those who are in true conjugal love, after death, when they become angels, return to their early manhood and to youth, the males, however spent with age, becoming young men, and the wives, however spent with age, becoming young women. Each partner returns to the flower and joys of the age when conjugal love begins to exalt the life with new delights, and to inspire playfulness for the sake of bearing offspring. The man who while he lived in the world had shunned adulteries as sins, and who has been inaugurated by the Lord into conjugal love, comes into this

state first exteriorly and afterwards more and more interiorly to eternity.

As such [people] continue to grow young more interiorly, it follows that true conjugal love continually increases and enters into its charms and satisfactions, which have been provided for it from the creation of the world... arising from the love of the Lord for heaven and the church, and thus from the love of good for truth and truth for good. These loves are the source of every joy in the heavens.

A person thus grows young in heaven because he then enters into the marriage of good and truth; and in good there is the effort to love truth continually, and in truth there is the effort to love good continually. Then the wife is good in form and the husband is truth in form. From that effort a person puts off all the austerity, sadness, and dryness of old age, and puts on the liveliness, gladness, and freshness of youth, from which the effort lives and becomes joy. [5] I have been told from heaven that such then have the life of love, which cannot otherwise be described than as the life of joy itself.

AE 1000:5. ...From the marriages in the heavens, although the married pair have consociations there like those on the earth, children are not born, but instead of children goods and truths, and thus wisdom.... And this is why births, nativities, and generations in the Word, in its spiritual sense, mean spiritual births, nativities, and generations, and sons and daughters mean the truths and goods of the church, and other like things are meant by daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law, and fathers-in-law. This also makes clear that marriages on the earth correspond to marriages in the heavens; and that after death, man comes into the correspondence, that is, comes from natural bodily marriage into spiritual heavenly marriage, which is heaven itself and the joy of heaven.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. "Innocence" in the Heavenly Doctrine does not mean naiveté or ignorance. It means the willingness to be led by the Lord. Can you see how love for a married partner and for marriage depends on willingness to be led by the Lord?
2. Why aren't children born in heaven? What would children born there be lacking?
3. What do married partners have in place of bearing children? Can you picture what spiritual offspring are like?

Day Six

Revelation 21:2-3

And I, John, saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will *dwell in* a tabernacle with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God.

AE 1002:2. From what has been thus far presented we can infer what good results from chastity in marriage, consequently what the good works of chastity are that a man does who shuns adulteries as sins against God. The good works of chastity concern the married pair themselves, or their offspring and posterity, or the heavenly societies.

The good works of chastity that concern the married pair themselves are spiritual and heavenly loves, intelligence and wisdom, innocence and peace, power and protection against the hells and against the evils and the falsities from them, and manifold joys and felicities to eternity. Those who live in chaste marriages as described before have all of these.

The good works of chastity that concern the offspring and posterity are that so many and so great evils do not become innate in families. For the ruling love of parents is transmitted into the offspring and sometimes to remote posterity and becomes their hereditary nature. This is broken and softened with parents who shun adulteries as infernal and love marriages as heavenly.

AE 1002:3. The good works of chastity that concern the heavenly societies are that chaste marriages are the delights of heaven, that they are its seminaries, and that they are its supports. They supply delights to heaven by commun-ication [or sharing]; they are seminaries to heaven by producing offspring; and they are supports to heaven by their power against the hells. For at the presence of conjugal love diabolical spirits become furious, insane, and mentally impotent, and cast themselves into the deep.

AE 982:5. Since adultery is hell with man and marriage is heaven with him, it follows that so far as a man loves adultery he removes himself from heaven; consequently adulteries close heaven and open hell, and this they do so far as they are believed to be allowable and are perceived to be more delightful than marriages. The man, therefore, who confirms himself in adulteries and commits them from the favor and consent of his will, and turns away from marriage, closes heaven to himself, until finally he ceases to believe anything of the church or of the Word, and becomes a wholly sensual man.

AE 989. All this makes clear that it is from adulteries that man has hell, unless he is reformed by the Lord by means of truths and a life according to them. And no one can be reformed unless he shuns adulteries as infernal and loves marriages as heavenly.

AE 1006:3. But it is to be known that adulteries are more and less infernal and abominable. The adulteries that spring from more grievous evils and their falsities are more grievous, and those from the milder evils and their falsities are milder.... There are sodomitic hells for those who were in evils from a love of ruling over others from mere delight in ruling, and who were in no delight of use.

AE 1008:2. The reason Christians abhor adulteries less than the Gentiles, and even than some barbarous nations, is because at present in the Christian world there is no marriage of good and truth, but a marriage of evil and falsity. For the religion and doctrine of faith separated from good works is a religion and doctrine of truth separated from good. And truth separated from good is not truth, but interiorly regarded is falsity; and good separated from truth is not good, but interiorly regarded is evil. Consequently, in the Christian religion there is the doctrine of falsity and evil. From this origin a desire and favor for adultery from hell flow in, and this is why adulteries are believed in the Christian world to be allowable and are practiced without shame. For, as has been said above, the conjunction of evil and falsity is spiritual adultery, from which, according to correspondence, natural adultery exists....

AE 1010:4. Adulteries are all the acts of promiscuity that destroy conjugal love.... But that which does not destroy the conjugal and does not extinguish its love is fornication, springing from a certain instinct of nature towards marriage, which for various reasons cannot yet be entered into.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Can you envision some of the benefits described here coming out of working on (your) marriage—or working to prepare for marriage by repentance?
2. Notice how the benefits are not just for the married partner, but for their descendants and for the heavens. Clearly, “this is from the LORD; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:23). It is marvelous how the Lord has set up creation that good things are shared universally, and we all depend on each other (really on the Lord, but by means of each other).
3. Do you see evidence that the ex-Christian world regards adulteries as allowable, more than other parts of the world?
4. Why is fornication (or pre-marital sex) distinguished from adultery? What conditions make fornication more or less harmful?