

the earth in a chariot of fire. The fire is God's love made real in practice, and the chariot are the ideas derived from that love and practice which sustain us and allow us to feel God with us. We just keep being lifted up on the simple, singular, same and soft task of loving others to the best of our ability in each moment, as it is, in the name of our true and visible God, Jesus Christ. We are not good. We are not chaste. We are not friend of the Father. We are just lucky to be given the chance to try to love. And that is the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. It is His chariot.

Editorial

LAYING DOWN YOUR LIFE.

Memorial Days abound round the world. Monuments and memorial observances move us to tears as we recall the sacrifices of those in uniform who risk death and injury for the sake of their country. Many recall their own experiences, and how close they came to paying the ultimate price, making the ultimate sacrifice. The reason we are moved, is that it is the greatest love: "Jesus said, Greater love hath no one than this that one lay down his soul for his friends" (John 15:13). "Who does not remember and love the man who, from the zeal of love for his country, fights with her enemies even unto death that he may thereby deliver her from the yoke of servitude?" (*True Christian Religion* 710).

This means that the love of serving in the military has nobility, because it is a likeness of the Lord's love, when He said, "I lay down My life for My sheep...I lay down My life that I may take it again" (John 10:15, 17). Not only do these words recall the Lord's Passion of the Cross (*True Christian Religion* 709:3) but also remind us of the doctrine involved in the Passion: namely that the Lord "by His own power united His Divine Essence to His Human Essence through temptations" (*Arcana Coelestia* 3381, cf 1663, 1668, 1690 *passim*). "led the Human

into the most grievous temptations, even to the utmost of power.” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2816) It sounds strange that the Divine actually let the Human into temptations. However, just before the temptations began, the Lord came into another consciousness, namely of the Human that was being led; and then the awareness of the Lord changed: “The truth is that the Lord admitted temptations into Himself in order that He might expel thence all that was merely human, and this until nothing but the Divine remained” (ibid.)

The Lord’s admission of temptations into Himself was from His own free choice. For “He fought from His own freedom and finally laid down His soul that He might do all things from His own power, and thus might become righteousness from Himself, which He could not have become except from His freedom.” That is why He said, “I lay down My soul of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” The Divine guiding the Human in this process, yet the Human admitting temptations in “freedom” are meant by the end of the quote: “This commandment I have received from My Father.” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3)

Imagine that: the Lord prepared His own human for the battles, and this all through His life, in “His own freedom”! All the while, He prepared the battles to reach the “utmost of power” on each occasion, and this until “nothing but the Divine remained.” He could do this preparation for battle because He “from His own power governed [ex propria potentia gubernaverit] in the state of temptations, that is, overcame the hells which...were continually...pouring [falsities and evils] into mankind” (*Arcana Coelestia* 5045).

That is why the Lord suffered such pain. It was because of our sins, accumulated through the ages and passed on from generation to generation, that the hells could pour such a stream of falsities and evils into the human race, and thus into the

heredity of the Lord. These the Lord took on by Himself. Yet it was “not His Divine that suffered, but ... His Human.” After the suffering, “a most inward and complete union took place” (*True Christian Religion* 126:2)..All of this is involved in “laying down My life.”

So also, we fight in our temptations from “freedom” without which “we could not become spiritual.” The main-spring from which we fight, is “the love of truth, and ... the love of eternal life.” There is no other way for our internal to be “opened and regenerated” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3). The equivalent victory and union for us humans in our regeneration comes when we remember the temptation as just a vague distress, when in fact it was most painful. This is meant by the Lord “wiping away our tears” (*ibid.*).

There is no other reason for wars, than our hereditary evils accumulating from generation to generation. The only hope to end all war lies in a plurality of human beings entering into spiritual temptations, and overcoming them in the Lord’s name. The individual conquest over evil would in that case remove the cause for war so that it would never arise!

However, we know this is not yet the case. Instead, “men’s life’s love has become such that it wills to rule over others, and finally over all; and also to possess the wealth of the world, and finally all wealth” (*Divine Providence* 251). Such evils accumulate unseen, but by their very nature cannot remain hidden forever. Such a love to rule over all, or to possess all wealth, lies completely concealed in every person’s heart in this world, but springs up whenever opportunity to expand one’s ego is given (*Heavenly Doctrine* 71, 77, 152). We may growl in anger at this message, and say, No way! I don’t have that desire lurking in me! However, if we react with that much anger, it only proves the point! Our anger is riled at being discovered, and is to blame. Therefore, we are asked to look deeply inside

ourselves: “These two loves” which can never be quelled by any external control, are like violent prisoners finding every possible rout to escape. They inevitably boasts of their presence. Thus, when evils have risen to the point of threatening destruction on everything, then they are uncovered so that people can see them and freely resist them. They are in Providence allowed to “break out” so that we can “see and acknowledge them” (*Divine Providence* 251). Enough people have searched out these hidden desires in themselves, and so they have known them when they come out into the open. Something has to be done.

Now, if the Lord just cast out such evil loves apart from each person voluntarily shunning it as a sin against Him, “there would be no life left to man” (*Divine Providence* 177). And if instead they were to be repressed by the Lord’s hand of Providence, that is to say, prevented by the Lord’s own hand from expression, then those evil loves would turn on the person and “like cancer or gangrene, they would spread and consume everything vital in man” (*Divine Providence* 251). The human soul would be consumed. It is similar to profanation, when evil and good being joined together, are then ripped apart. There would hardly be anything left. Wars by comparison are lesser evils. The Lord’s mercy therefore does not remove evils in a moment, nor does it in Providence “repress the evils” since in either case this would destroy the human being. Instead the “means” of His mercy is human cooperation in spiritual things. We have to volunteer for that fight against the evils which the Lord allows to emerge into the open, visible especially in war.

Granted then that war prevents worse fates, and granted that evil cannot for long conceal itself, it is inevitable that evils emerge into view. It is almost the “daily news.” When aggressors invade—a subtle issue in our modern international day and age—the Lord moves defenders’ goods to marshal their forces to restore the balance within the borders of each nation involved.

Repentance is then also possible. The aggressors are free to change their minds. The lost sheep is returned. “He rejoices more over that lost sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray” (Matthew 18:13).

It must always be kept in mind that there is a love of “dominion” which is actually motivated by care for others. It is called “the love of dominion from love to the neighbor.” Such a person wishes good to all, and likes nothing better “than performing uses, or being of service to the public and to individuals” (*True Christian Religion* 400, 405). His desire for more power is only to perform greater services than otherwise possible. Clearly, someone like this would never invade another nation! They would instead send their army to “counter-attack” the aggressor, to restore the balance of human freedom. Perhaps there are few such examples from history, although the elves led by Haldir coming to the aid of Helm’s Deep in

Since human beings are the ultimate cause for war, since everyone who is not regenerated passes on more hereditary tendencies to domineer over others and steal their riches, they also have to breach the gap of their making, and join together to put an end to any war as well. That is why, once “war has begun,” if the best defense proves to be “aggression,” then the victim of war “becomes the aggressor”! (*Charity* 164) The invaded or wronged nations counter-attack. Examples such as D-Day come to mind, where the hand of Providence seemed to be at play even with the weather. What appeared as a “narrow window to launch” north of the Channel, appeared as a “impassable stormy wall” to its south.

The soldier in self-defense turned counter-attack, then becomes like a lion in battle, but as a “lamb” afterwards when he rejoices in the “deliverance of his country and his people from the invasion of any enemy” (*Charity* 164). He then treats prisoners-of-war as neighbors to be corrected (*Charity* 166).

Those in uniform then have “the glory of the use” of being in the military, with commanders having also the “glory of the honor” of being in command. (*Charity* 165)

We approach Memorial Day here in the USA. ANZAC Day is celebrated on April 25 in Australia and New Zealand. There is a national observance held on November 11 in Great Britain, Canada and many English-speaking nations; and so also elsewhere. Everyone from love of country knows it is noble to serve one’s country, to defend it. The love of country, like a rung in the ladder of loves moving up from self- and family-preservation to the Lord at the top (*Heavenly Doctrine* 91), is instilled by remains from the Lord and bred into everyone. The Church, the Lord’s Kingdom and the Lord Himself are indeed to be loved more than one’s country, placing “eternal life” and “truth” above all things. For each person’s freedom is involved in “becoming spiritual” since all “freedom is of love,” namely the “love of truth and the love of eternal life” (*Apocalypse Explained* 900:3). These loves stem from the Lord’s own love to “lay down His life for His sheep.” They are the “greater” loves that fight in temptations, and that are willing to don a uniform. It is such loves that we salute. “If the country is threatened with ruin from an enemy or any other source, it is noble to die for it, and glorious for a soldier to shed his blood for it. This is said because so great should be one’s love for it” (*True Christian Religion* 414).