

## “Actions Speak Louder Than Words”

The Rev. Michael Gladish

*The Lord does...demand humility, worship, thanksgiving, and much else from a person.... But...it is utterly inconceivable that any self-love should exist within the Divine, causing Him to require such actions for His own sake. Rather, they are required for a person's own sake, for if someone possesses humility he is able to accept good from the Lord, since in that case he has been parted from self-love and its evils which stand in the way of his accepting it (Arcana Coelestia 5957).*

*[I]t seems as though [the Lord] desires to display His glory and loves to be adored for His own sake. But the truth of the matter is altogether different. It is not for His own sake but for that of the human race. He is moved not by self-glory but by love. For He wishes to be joined to the human race, and to impart eternal life and happiness to it. But this cannot be accomplished unless a person worships Him in humility... (Arcana Coelestia 7550).*

In these passages from the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church, the Lord shows us that we are not supposed to thank Him or worship Him or do anything else for Him, because *He* needs it or because He wants us to try to make Him feel better. The reason He wants us to thank Him and worship Him is that these actions can improve our own lives and make *us* better people! The Lord doesn't love Himself; He loves us. And He knows that we need to learn and remember to be thankful so that we will keep our minds and hearts open to even more of the goodness and truth He wants to give us.

How can we be truly thankful? Here's a clue: ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS. Your actions, the things you actually *do*, show other people a lot about you. In fact, your actions sometimes *tell* people more than you think—much more than your speech! For example, if you grit your teeth and shake your head and frown and your face gets red and all your muscles become tense while you're telling someone you're not angry, what do you suppose that person will think? Of course, she'll think you *are* angry, because your actions are speaking louder than your words.

The Lord watches us, and He notices all our actions. It is true that He also hears what we say, and He even knows what we are thinking and feeling inside. But He watches our actions because our actions tell Him a lot about us. For example, we may not *feel* very kindly toward our neighbors, and we may not *feel* like going to church to worship. But if we *do* kind things or if we come to church anyway because we know that it is good for us, then the Lord can see that we are *doing* what is good. This shows Him that we care about becoming better people, and He can help us and encourage us, because we are in a state that can receive His good.