

OLD TESTAMENT

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our God.
(Psalm 95:6)

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
(Psalm 29: 2)

I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech.
(Psalm 17:6)

[M]y prayer is to You, O Lord....
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.....
Hear me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good;
Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.
And do not hide Your face from Your servant,
For I am in trouble; Hear me speedily.
(Psalm 69:13,16,17)

O Lord, God of my salvation
I have cried out day and night before You.
Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry.
(Psalm 88:12)

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And let my cry come unto You.
(Psalm 102:1)

Let my prayer be set before You as incense,
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
(Psalm 141:1-3)

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,
to all who call upon Him in truth.
(Psalm 145:18)

NEW TESTAMENT

[W]hen you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:7-14).

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7,8).

“All things, whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matthew 21:22).

“Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation” (Matthew 26:41).

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:24-25).

“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINES

WORSHIP

A person is worshipping all the time if love and charity abide in him (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618).

While a person is in the world, he ought to participate in external worship. For it is by external worship that internal things are aroused, and by means of external worship external things are kept holy so as to enable internal to flow in (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1618).

The externals of the body which pertain to worship are:

- (1) Frequenting temples.
- (2) Listening to sermons.
- (3) Devoutly singing, and praying on the knees.
- (4) Partaking the Sacrament of the Supper.

And at home:

- (1) Prayer morning and evening, and at dinners and suppers.
- (2) Conversing with others about charity and faith, and about God, heaven, eternal life, and salvation.
- (3) And in the case of priests, preaching, and also private instruction.
- (4) And with everyone, the instruction of children...in such matters.
- (5) Reading the Word, and books of instruction and of piety (*Charity* 174).

[I]n order that worship may exist, adoration must exist, and in order that adoration may exist humility must do so too (*Arcana Coelestia* 2423).

Divine worship consists in exalting the Lord in contrast to self.... When that element is present in a person he is in the right state to receive from the Lord the truth of faith and the good of charity, and is consequently in the right state to offer Him worship. But if a person exalts himself before the Lord, he shuts the interiors of his mind off from receiving goodness and truth from the Lord (*Arcana Coelestia* 8271).

A correspondence exists between the thoughts and affections of the minds and the actions and gestures of the body. Humility of heart, for example, brings a person to his knees, an external gesture of the body. A feeling of gladness and joy of mind leads to singing and jubilation (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4215:2).

[T]rue worship of God is unknown to those who think that all worship consists in acts of adoration and prayer, thus in such things as belong to the mouth and thought, and not in such as belong to deeds flowing from the good of charity and the good of faith. Yet the reality is that in a person offering adoration and prayer the Lord pays attention solely to his heart, that is, to what he is like inwardly so far as love and consequently faith are concerned (*Arcana Coelestia* 10143:4).

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer, regarded in itself, is speech with God, and some internal view at the time of the matters of the prayer, to which there answers something like an influx into the perception or thought of the mind, so that there is a certain opening of the person's interiors toward God. But the experience varies according to the person's state, and according to the essence of the subject of the prayer. If the person prays from love and faith, and for only heavenly and spiritual things, there then comes forth in the prayer something like a revelation (which is manifested in the affection of him that prays) as to hope, consolation, or a certain inward joy (*Arcana Coelestia* 2535).

Worship of the mouth is accepted by the Lord according to the worship of the life (*Brief Exposition* 51).

THE LORD'S PRAYER

When the Lord's prayer is being said, which embraces all heavenly and spiritual things within it, so much can be poured into every least detail that heaven itself is not great enough to contain it all, this of course depending on the capacity and use of each individual. As one penetrates more and more inwardly, the more plentiful and abundant is the content (*Spiritual Experiences* 1790).

Whenever I [Emanuel Swedenborg] have been reading the Lord's prayer, I have plainly perceived an elevation toward the Lord which was like an attraction, and at the same time my ideas were open, and from this there was effected a communication with some societies in heaven. And I noticed that there was an influx from the Lord into every detail of the prayer, thus into every idea of my thought that was from the meaning of the things in the prayer. The influx was effected with inexpressible variety, that is, not the same at one time as another; hence also it was made evident how infinite are the things contained in the prayer, and that the Lord is present in every one of them (*Arcana Coelestia* 6476).

"Thy kingdom come" is a prayer that truth may be received; "Thy will be done," that it may be received by those who do God's will; "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory," means Divine truth from God alone. It is also said "power and glory," because Divine truth has all power and glory (*Apocalypse Explained* 483).

The prayers of little children are much more fully heard in heaven than the prayers of grown-ups, and still more fully than those of people who have closed the way toward deeper things by thoughts of earthly matters and matter of memory (see *Spiritual Experiences* 2435).

FOR WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY?

[I]t is common in all Divine worship, that a person should first will, desire, and pray, and the Lord then answer, inform, and do; otherwise a person does not receive anything Divine.... The Lord gives them to ask, and what to ask; therefore the Lord knows it beforehand. But still the Lord wills that a person should ask first, to the end that he may do it as from himself (*Apocalypse Revealed* 376).

[W]hatever a person thinks, the mouth and tongue speak, and whatever he wills the body does.... A person's will and understanding are ruled by the Lord through angels and spirits. So also are all things of his body, because these are from the will and understanding; and if you will believe it, without influx from heaven a person cannot even move a step.... He prays that God may send His angels to lead him, direct his steps, teach him, and inspire in him what to think and what to say, and other like things (*Heaven and Hell* 228).

Since prudence is from God and not from people, when the Christian person is engaged in prayer, he prays that God may guide his thoughts, intentions and deeds, and also adds the reason that he cannot do so of himself (*Divine Providence* 191:2).

A person is from creation in a state to know that evil is from hell, and that good is from the Lord, and to perceive these in himself as if they were from himself, and when he so perceives them to cast the evil down to hell and to receive the good, with the acknowledgment that it is from the Lord. When he does these two things he does not appropriate evil to himself, and does not claim merit for the good. There are many who do not comprehend this, and who have no desire to comprehend it, but let them pray,

That the Lord may be with them continually, that He may lift up and turn His face to them, that He may teach, enlighten, and lead them, since of themselves they can do nothing that is good, that He may grant to them to live; that the devil may not lead them astray and instill evils into their hearts, knowing that if they are not led by the Lord the devil will lead them and breathe into them evils of every kind, as hatred, revenge, cunning, and deceit, as a serpent instills poison; for the devil is present stirring up and continually accusing, and wheresoever he meets with a heart turned away from God, he enters in, dwells there, and draws the soul down to hell. O Lord, deliver us.

These words coincide with what has been said above, for hell is the devil. Moreover, this is an acknowledgment that a person is led either by the Lord or by hell, thus that he is between the two (see *Apocalypse Explained* 1148:4).

PRAYERS FROM THE HEART

When a person is in a life of charity, he is constantly praying, if not with the mouth yet with the heart. For that which is of the love is constantly in the thought even when a person is unconscious of it. It is clear that "praying" in the spiritual sense is worship from love (see *Apocalypse Explained* 325:12).

[P]rayers proceed from the heart, and a person's heart is such as is his life of love and charity. So "prayers" in the spiritual sense mean that life and worship from it (*Apocalypse Explained* 325:7).

[W]hen a person shuns evils as sins, he fights against them because they are contrary to the Lord, and against His Divine laws. Then he prays to the Lord for help and for power to resist them, which power besought is never denied. By these two means a person is purified from the evils that are in him from birth. If therefore he does not embrace these two means he can but remain as he was born (*Doctrine of Charity* 204).

Worship does not consist in prayers and in external devotion, but in a life of charity. Prayers are only its externals, for they proceed from the person through his mouth. Consequently people's prayers are such as they themselves are in respect to life. It matters not that a person bears himself humbly, that he kneels and sighs when he prays. For these are externals, and unless externals proceed from internals they are only gestures and sounds without life. In each thing that a person utters there is affection, and every person, spirit, and angel is his own affection, for their affection is their life. It is the affection itself that speaks, and not the person without it. Therefore such as the affection is such is the praying. Spiritual affection is what is called charity towards the neighbor. To be in that affection is true worship; praying is what proceeds. From this it can be seen that the essential of worship is the life of charity, and that its instrumental is gesture and praying. The primary of worship is a life of charity, and its secondary is praying (*see Apocalypse Explained 325:3*).

They also err who believe that they can make themselves receptive of influx by prayers, adorations, and the externals of worship. These things are of no effect unless a person abstains from thinking and doing evils, and by truths from the Word leads himself, as of himself, to things good in respect to life. When a person does this he makes himself receptive, and then his prayers, adorations, and externals of worship avail before the Lord (*Apocalypse Explained 248:4*).

PRAYING TO THE LORD FOR HELP

There are two obligations incumbent on a person after self-examination: prayer and confession. Prayer should be that the Lord may have pity, grant the power to resist the evils of which one has repented, and supply the inclination and affection for doing good, since a person without Him cannot do anything (John 15:5). Confession should be that one sees, recognizes and acknowledges one's evils, and reveals oneself as a wretched sinner. There is no need to list one's sins before the Lord, nor to pray that they may be forgiven. There is no need to list one's sins, because one has examined them and seen them in oneself; consequently they are present to the Lord, because they are to oneself. The Lord has also guided the person in self-examination, disclosed the sins, and inspired sadness and together with this an effort to desist from them and begin a new life (*True Christian Religion 539*).

The Lord does not do what prayers ask for if that is contrary to the end, which is salvation (*see Arcana Coelestia 8179:3*).