

You Shall Have No Other Gods Before My Faces.

(Worship the True God.¹)

The First Commandment

- from -

Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

SH 8863. Exodus 20:2-7. *I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants. You shall have no other gods before My faces. You shall not make to you a graven image, nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is in the earth beneath, or that which is in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah your God am a zealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the thirds and upon the fourths of them that hate Me; and doing mercy to thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.* "I am Jehovah your God," signifies the Lord as to the Divine Human universally reigning in each and all things of good and truth; "who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants," signifies liberation by Him from hell; "You shall have no other gods before My faces," signifies that truths must not be thought of from any other source than the Lord; "You shall not make to you a graven image," signifies not from self-intelligence; "nor any likeness," signifies a semblance of those things which are from the Divine; "of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is in the earth beneath," signifies of those things which are in spiritual light, or of those which are in natural light; "or that which is in the waters under the earth," signifies of those which are in the sensuous corporeal; "you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them," signifies no Divine worship is to be paid them; "for I Jehovah your God," signifies the Divine from the Lord in each and all things; "am a zealous God," signifies that falsity and evil are therefrom; "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons," signifies the consequent proliferation of falsity derived from evil; "upon the thirds and upon the fourths," signifies in a long series, and the conjunction of them; "of them that hate Me," signifies who absolutely reject the Divine of the Lord; "and doing mercy to thousands," signifies good and truth to them forever; "of them that love Me," signifies who receive the good of love; "and keep My commandments," signifies who receive the truths of faith; "You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain," signifies profanings and blasphemings of the truth and good of faith; "for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain," signifies that these things cannot be forgiven.

¹ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

SH 8864. *I am Jehovah your God.* That this signifies the Lord as to the Divine Human universally reigning in each and all things of good and truth, is evident from the fact that in the Word no other than the Lord is meant by "Jehovah" (see n. 1343, 1736, 2921, 3023, 3035, 3445, 5663, 6250, 6251, 6303, 8274), in like manner by "Jehovah Zebaoth," by "the Lord Jehovih," by "Jehovah God" (n. 2921, 3023, 3445, 6303); and that the Lord is called "Jehovah" from the Divine good, which is the Divine *Being*, but "God" from the Divine truth, which is the Divine *Coming-forth* (n. 6905, also n. 709, 732, 1096, 2586, 2769, 2507, 2822, 3921, 4402). That it is the Divine Human of the Lord which is here meant by "Jehovah God," is because the Lord as to this is meant in the Word both by "Jehovah" and by "God"--the Divine good, which He is even as to the Human, by "Jehovah;" and the Divine truth, which He is because it proceeds from Him, by "God." [2] That the Divine Human of the Lord is meant by "Jehovah God," is because the Divine Itself which is in the Lord cannot be seen in heaven, and not even perceived, thus cannot be received in faith and love, but the Divine Human only. That the Divine Itself cannot be communicated to the angels in heaven, and still less to people on earth, except through the Divine Human, is known in the churches from the words of the Lord in the Evangelists, where He says that He is the "door," that He is the "mediator," that "no one can come to the Father but through Him," that "no one knows the Father but He," and that "no one has seen the Father," not even any "shape" of Him. From this it is plain that it is the Lord who is here meant by "Jehovah God." That it is He also who redeemed the human race and liberated it from hell is likewise known. This is signified by the words which follow: "who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants." From all this it is now plain that Jehovah God who spoke from Mount Sinai denotes the Lord as to the Divine Human. [3] That this is the first thing which is said by the Lord from Mount Sinai, is because this ought to reign universally in each and all things that follow; for what is said first must be kept in the memory in the things that follow, and must be regarded as the universal thing that is in them. What is meant by "universally reigning" shall be seen in what follows. The things said by the Lord are all of this nature, namely, that the things said first are to reign in the things which follow, and are to involve them, and so successively the things that follow in the series. The things which follow [next] in this chapter are the commandments of the Decalogue, which are internal truths, and then the statutes, which are external truths. In both of these the Lord must reign as to the Divine Human, for they are from Him, and are Himself, because all truths that are truths proceed from Him, and the things which proceed from Him are Himself. That the Lord as to the Divine Human must reign in each and all things of faith, is also known in the churches, for it is there taught that without the Lord there is no salvation, and that all the truth and good of faith are from Him. Thus as He is the source of faith, He is the faith with a person, and if the faith, He is also every truth that is contained in the doctrine of faith, which is from the Word. From this also it is that the Lord is called "the Word." [4] That the things which precede must reign in the things which follow, and thus in the series, as said above, is evident from everything which the Lord spoke, especially from His prayer, which is called "the Lord's Prayer." In this prayer all things follow on in such a series that they constitute as it were a column that grows larger from top to bottom, in the interiors of which are the things which precede in the series. What is first therein is inmost, and what succeeds in order adds itself to the inmost successively and thus grows. That which is inmost reigns universally in those things which are round about; that is, in each and all things for from this is that which is essential to the existence of all things.

SH 8865. What is meant by “universally reigning” can be seen from what has been said and shown above (see n. 8853-8858), namely, that that is universally regnant with a person which is in each and all things of his thought, and in each and all things of his will, consequently which constitutes his very mind, or life. Such a regnant must the Lord be with a person, for such a regnant is the Lord with the angels in heaven, of whom therefore it is said that they are “in the Lord.” The Lord becomes regnant when it is not only believed that all good and all truth are from Him, but also when it is loved to be so. The angels are not only in the faith, but also in the perception, that it is so. Hence it is that their life is the Lord’s life in them; the life of their will is the life of love from the Lord, and the life of their understanding is the life of faith from the Lord. From all this it is evident how it is that the Lord is the all in all of heaven, and that He Himself is heaven. When the Lord universally reigns with a person of the church, as with the angels of heaven, then the Lord is in all the truths and goods of faith with him, as the heart is in all the blood-vessels, because these derive from it their origin, and the blood which is their life. [2] Be it further known that such spirits and such angels are with a person as is his universal regnant. The reason is that that which reigns universally is the being of the life of every one (n. 8853-8858). All the cheerfulness and all the content a person has, even when he is thinking about other things, are therefrom; for therein the angels and spirits who are with him dwell and as it were have their abode, and their gladness flows into the person, and causes his cheerfulness and content. That such is its source does not come to the perception of the person, because he does not know that his life flows in, nor that the universal regnant makes his life, nor that when this regnant of his life is touched, it is as if the pupil of the eye is touched; with delight when by beautiful objects; and with pain when by ugly ones. It is called universal from the fact that it is the whole singular in the complex, and thus the universal regnant is that which is in each and all things (see n. 1919e, 5949, 6159, 6335, 6452, 6483, 6571, 7645, 8067).

SH 8866. *Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants.* That this signifies liberation by Him from hell, is evident from the signification of “bringing forth,” as being liberation; from the signification of “the land of Egypt,” as being infestations by the infernals (see n. 7240, 7278); and from the signification of “the house of servants,” as being spiritual captivity (n. 5049). That “the house of servants” denotes spiritual captivity and also hell, is because it is servitude to be held captive and to be led by those who are in hell, and it is freedom to be led by the Lord (n. 892, 905, 2870-2875, 2582, 2884, 2892, 2893, 6205, 5209). (That they who are of the spiritual church and are represented by the sons of Israel were liberated from hell by the Lord, by His coming into the world and making the Human in Himself Divine, see n. 6854, 6914, 7035, 7828, 7932, 8018, 8321.)

SH 8867. *You shall have no other gods before My faces.* That this signifies that truths must not be thought of from any other source than the Lord, is evident from the signification of “gods,” as being truths, and in the opposite sense as being falsities (see n. 4402, 4544, 7268, 7873, 8301); and from the signification of “faces,” when predicated of God, as being love, mercy, peace, good (n. 222, 223, 2434, 5585), thus the Lord Himself, for it is the Lord from whom these are. That “no other gods before My faces” signifies that truths must not be thought of from any other source than the Lord, is also because the Divine Human of the Lord, which is signified by “I am Jehovah your God,” is first spoken of, and consequently holds the first place in order, and must universally reign in each of the truths that follow (n. 8864, 8865); and therefore there are now perceived such

things as must be avoided, because they would destroy and prevent the universal reign of the Lord in all and each of the truths contained in the commandments and statutes that were dictated and commanded from Mount Sinai. The first thing which would destroy is the thinking of truths from some other source than the Lord, which is signified by the command to have no other gods before the Lord's faces. The rest of the things that would destroy this universal reign are contained in the things which follow in order, namely, that they should not make to themselves a graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heavens, in the earth, or in the waters, and that they should not bow down themselves to them nor serve them. After this therefore it again follows "for I am Jehovah your God," by which is signified that the Lord must be in each and all things.

SH 8868. It must also be briefly told what is meant by truths which are from some other source than the Lord. They are in general those truths in which the Lord is not. The Lord is not in the truths with a person when the person denies Him and His Divine, and also when he acknowledges Him and still believes that good and truth are not from Him, but from himself, and who consequently claims righteousness for himself. Truths also in which the Lord is not are those which are taken from the Word, especially from the sense of its letter, and are explained in favor of self-rule and self-gain. In themselves these are truths, because they are from the Word; but in this case they are not truths, because they are wrongly explained and thus perverted. They are such as are meant by the Lord by these words in Matthew:

If any one shall say, "Lo, here is the Christ, or there;" believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders; so as to lead into error, if possible, even the elect (xxiv. 23-26; see n. 3900).

And in Luke:

See that you be not led astray; for many shall come in My name, saying, "I am;" and, "The time is at hand;" go you not therefore after them (xxi. 8).

[2] The truths which are from the Lord are always truths from the Lord in the internal form; and the truths which are not from the Lord appear as truths in the external form only, but not in the internal form; for within they are either empty, or false, or evil. In order for truth to be truth there must be life in it; for truth without life is not the truth of faith with a person; and life is from no other source than good, that is, through good from the Lord. If therefore the Lord is not in truth, it is truth without life, thus is not truth; but if falsity is in it, or evil, the truth itself in a person is falsity or evil; for that which is within makes the essence, and also in the other life shines through the outside. From all this it can now be seen how it is to be understood that truths must not be thought of from any other source than the Lord. [3] As few know how the case is with truths which in the internal form are truths, thus which live from the Lord, something shall be said about these from experience. In the other life it is openly perceived from every one who speaks there what lies hidden within the words of his speech, as whether it is closed within, or whether it is open, also what kind of affection there is therein. If the affection of good is within, it is inwardly soft; if the affection of evil, it is inwardly hard; and so on. With the angels of heaven all things of their speech are open

even to the Lord, and this is both clearly perceived and also heard from the softness and the quality of this. From this also it is known what lies hidden within truths, whether the Lord or not. Truths in which the Lord is are truths which are alive, but truths in which the Lord is not are truths which are not alive. Those which are alive are truths of faith from love to the Lord and from charity toward the neighbor. Those which are not alive are not truths, because within them there are the love of self and the love of the world. In the other life spirits and angels can be discriminated by this, for every one has truths according to his life, that is, according to that which universally reigns with him.

SH 8869. *You shall not make to you a graven image.* That this signifies not from self-intelligence, is evident from the signification of "a graven image," as being that which is not from the Lord, but from what is a person's own. That which is a person's own of his intellect is signified by "a graven image," and that which is a person's own of his will is signified by "a molten image." To have either the one or the other for a god, or to adore it, is to love above all things all that which proceeds from self. They who do this entirely disbelieve that anything of intelligence and wisdom flows in from the Divine, for they attribute all things to themselves; everything else that happens to them they ascribe either to fortune or to chance. They totally deny the Divine Providence in such things. They suppose that if there is anything of Deity present, it is in the order of nature, to which they ascribe all things. They do indeed say with their lips that some Creator God has impressed such things upon nature; but still in their heart they deny any God above nature. Much are they who from the heart attribute everything to themselves and to their own sagacity and intelligence, and nothing to the Divine; and those of them who love themselves, adore what belongs to themselves and also desire to be worshipped by others, even as gods, and would do so openly if the church did not forbid. These are the formers of graven images, and the graven images themselves are what they hatch from their own, and wish to be adored as things divine. [2] That these things are signified in the Word by "graven images," is evident from the passages where they are mentioned, as in Jeremiah:

Every man is become a fool from knowledge; every founder is put to shame by his graven image; for his molten image is a lie, and there is no breath in them (x. 14; li. 17);

as by "a graven image" is signified that which does not proceed from the Lord, but from self-intelligence, therefore it is said, "Every man is become a fool from knowledge, and every founder is put to shame by his graven image;" and as in those things which are hatched from self-intelligence there is nothing of spiritual life, which is solely from the Lord, therefore it is also said, "and there is no breath in them." [3] In Habakkuk:

What profits the graven image that the maker thereof has graven it, the molten image, and the teacher of a lie, because the maker of his invention trusts upon this, when he makes dumb gods? there is no breath in the midst of it (ii. 18, 19);

here the "graven image" denotes those things which are hatched from self-intelligence, wherein there is nothing of life from the Lord. [4] In Jeremiah:

A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up; for it is a land of graven images, and they glory in horrors; therefore the ziim dwell with the iim, and the daughters of the owl dwell therein (l. 38. 39);

speaking of Chaldea and Babel; “a drought upon the waters, and they shall be dried up,” denotes truths wherein there is nothing of life; “the ziim, and the iim, and the daughters of the owl, dwell therein,” denotes evils and falsities, thus those things which are of death within; from this it is that they are called “a land of graven images.” [5] In Isaiah:

They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity; and their most desirable things shall not profit; and they are witnesses to themselves, they see not nor know (xliv. 9-11);

“they that fashion a graven image,” denotes those who hatch out doctrines which are not grounded in truths from the Word, but in self-intelligence, of which doctrines it is said that “their most desirable things do not profit,” and that “they see not nor know.” In what follows (verses 12-16 of that chapter) there is treated of the art of inventing and of hatching by reasonings from self-intelligence, things which they desire should be acknowledged as Divine, of which things it is thus finally said:

The residue thereof he makes into a god, his graven image, he adores it, he bows himself down, and yet they know not, neither do they understand; and their eyes do not see, that their hearts may not understand (verses 17, 18);

that “they know not, and understand not, and see not” denotes that truths and goods are not within, for all things which go forth from self-intelligence are not inwardly truths and goods, but falsities and evils, because they proceed from one’s own, and that this at its root is evil, see n. 210, 215, 694, 874-876, 987, 1023, 1044, 1047, 1581, 3812, 4328, 5660, 5786, 8480. [6] In the same:

To whom will you liken God? and what image will you compare with Him. The craftsman casts the graven image, and the founder overlays it with gold, and casts silver chains. He that is destitute of an oblation chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks him a wise craftsman to prepare a graven image that shall not be shaken (xl. 18-20);

“the graven image which the craftsman casts” denotes false doctrine which is from a person’s own; “the founder overlays it with gold, and casts silver chains,” denotes that through reasonings he makes the falsities of doctrine appear as truths. [7] In the same:

I Jehovah have called you in righteousness, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the bound one from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am Jehovah, this is My name, and My glory will I not give to another, nor My praise to graven images (xlii. 6-8);

speaking of the Lord, that He is Jehovah, and that from Him is all wisdom, and nothing of it from a person. That the Lord is here treated of is evident. That He is “Jehovah”

here is also evident, for it is said that "Jehovah has called Him in righteousness," and then, "I am Jehovah, this is My name, and My glory will I not give to another." That from Him is the wisdom that belongs to life, is signified by His "opening the blind eyes," and "bringing out the bound one from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house;" that nothing of wisdom is from a person, is signified by "I will not give My praise to graven images." [8] By "graven images" are also signified the things of self-intelligence in the following passages:

And there comes a chariot of a man, a pair of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babel is fallen; and all the graven images he has broken into the earth (Isa. xxi. 9).

Then will you judge unclean the covering of the graven images of their silver, and the clothing of the molten image of their gold; you shall scatter them as a menstruous cloth; it shall be called dung (Isa. xxx. 22).

Why have they provoked Me to anger by their graven images, by vanities of strangers? (Jer. viii. 19).

They have called themselves, so they went for the sake of themselves; they sacrifice to the Baals, and burn incense to graven images (Hos. xi. 2).

Cursed be the man that makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman (Deut. xxvii. 15).

SH 8870. *Nor any likeness.* That this signifies a semblance of those things which are from the Divine, is evident from the signification of a "likeness," as being a semblance. That it denotes a semblance of those things which are from the Divine, is plain from what precedes and from what follows--from what precedes, that they shall have "no other gods before the faces of Jehovah God," and that they shall not "make to themselves a graven image," by which words are signified truths from another source than the Divine, and yet which are set forth like them; and from what follows, as "of that which is in the heavens, or which is in the earth, or which is in the waters," whereby are meant such things as are from the Divine everywhere. [2] It must here be told what is meant by a semblance of those things which are from the Divine, because these things are treated of in what follows of this verse and in the beginning of the following verse. Semblances of those things which are from the Divine are made by people when they speak Divine things with the mouth, and also in act do such things as have been commanded by the Divine, and thus induce a belief that they are in good and truth, when yet at heart they think altogether otherwise, and will nothing but evil: such are dissemblers, hypocrites, and the deceitful, and these are they who make semblances of those things which are from the Divine. In the other life evil spirits make semblances of those things which are from the Divine, who set forth a likeness and appearance in outward things, within which there is nothing of the Divine. Dissemblers, hypocrites, and the deceitful learn to do this in the other life, and in general all who from frequent use have contracted the habit of speaking otherwise than they think, and of doing otherwise than they will. Some by such practices wish to get reputation, that they may seem to be good, and thus deceive; some that they may exercise command. [3] Moreover there, such things are abuses of correspondences. But the outward things

whereby they have made a pretense of such things as are of charity and faith, are successively taken away from them; for in this way they act from their very nature that has been acquired in the world, and no more from any pretense or hypocrisy. They who are of this character, and who perceive that these external things are to be taken away from them, say that if these external things were left them, they would be able to live with their associates in the other life, and do what is good in appearance, just as formerly in the world. But this cannot be done, because by the externals which are apparently good they would communicate in some measure with heaven, that is, with those who are in the encompassing parts there and are simple, who correspond to the cuticles in the Greatest Human; while by their internals they would communicate with the hells. And as the evils which are within rule, because they are of the will, and the goods that are made a pretense of in externals serve the evil as a means for acquiring dominion, therefore it is contrary to Divine order itself to leave them free to act with pretense and hypocrisy as in the world. Wherefore such things are taken away from them, and they are remitted into the very evil of their will.

SH 8871. *Of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is in the earth beneath.* That this signifies of those things which are in spiritual light, or of those which are in natural light, is evident from the signification of "a likeness of those things which are in the heavens above," as being those things which appear and are seen in spiritual light, all of which bear relation to the good and truth which are of faith, of charity toward the neighbor, and of love to the Lord--to counterfeit and make a pretense of these things is to "make a likeness of the things which are in the heavens above;" and from the signification of "a likeness of those things which are in the earth beneath," as being those things which appear and are seen in natural light, which are such as bear relation to civil and moral good and truth--to counterfeit and make a pretense of these things is to make a likeness of those things which are in the earth beneath. In the sense of the letter are meant such things as appear in heaven, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and such things as appear on the earth, as animals of various kinds, both flying, walking, and creeping; but in the internal sense are meant such things as are signified by these, all of which bear relation to good and truth, as was said above. [2] These things are further described in Moses, in these words:

Lest you make you a graven image in the shape of any likeness, the figure of male or of female, the figure of any beast that is on the earth, the figure of any winged bird that flies under heaven, the figure of anything that creeps on the earth, of a fish that is in the waters under the earth: and lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and look at the sun, and the moon, and the stars, all the army of the heavens, and you be impelled, and bow yourself to them, and serve them. Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image of any figure. For Jehovah your God is a devouring fire, a zealous God. When you shall beget sons, and sons' sons, and you shall have grown old in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image of any figure, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that perishing you shall quickly perish from off the land. Jehovah shall scatter you among the peoples, where you shall serve gods, the work of a man's hands, wood and stone (Deut. iv. 16-19; 23-28).

[3] The reason why it was so severely forbidden to make a likeness of anything in the heavens and on the earth, was chiefly for the reason that that people, which was from Jacob, was very prone to worship external things. The cause was that they were not willing to know anything about the internal things of the church, which belong to faith and love to the Lord, and to charity toward the neighbor. Therefore if they had been allowed to make likenesses of things, they would then have bowed themselves to them and worshipped them as gods; as is very evident from the golden calf which they made for themselves in the midst of so many miracles, and also from their frequent apostasy from Divine worship to idolatrous worship. Nevertheless in the internal sense such things as these are not meant, but the things which have been set forth above.

SH 8872. *Or of that which is in the waters under the earth.* That this signifies such things as are in the sensuous corporeal, is evident from the signification of "a likeness of those things which are in the waters under the earth," as being the things below those which are in natural light; and that these things are such as are in the sensuous corporeal is manifest from the successive degrees of the light that belongs to the intellectual in a person. In the first degree in a person are those things which are in spiritual light, which are signified by "those which are in the heavens above." In the second degree are those which are in natural light, which are signified by "those which are in the earth beneath." And in the third degree are those which are in the sensuous corporeal, which are signified by "those which are in the waters under the earth." (What and of what quality is the sensuous corporeal, see n. 5084, 5089, 5094, 5125, 5128, 5580, 5767, 6183, 6201, 6310-6316, 6318, 6598, 6612, 6614, 6622, 6624, 6844, 6845, 6948, 6949, 7442, 7693.) To the sensuous corporeal bear relation those memory-knowledges which arise most immediately from the experience of the external senses and also of their delights. With the good these knowledges and their delights are good because they are applied to goods; but with the evil they are evil because they are applied to evils. To deceive by means of these, as dissemblers, hypocrites, and the deceitful are wont to do, is to "make a likeness of such things as are in the waters under the earth."

SH 8873. *You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them.* That this signifies that no Divine worship is to be paid them, is evident from the signification of "bowing down one's self," as being humiliation (see n. 2153, 5682, 6266, 7068); and from the signification of "serving," as being submission (n. 5164). That it denotes Divine worship, is because humiliation and submission are essentials of worship, for worship without them is not worship, but gesture in imitation of those who are in the truth of worship; in which gesture there is nothing of life, for life from the Lord flows in solely into a humble and submissive heart, because such a heart has been fitted to receive. That such is the case is because when the heart is truly humble, nothing of the love of self and of the love of the world stands in the way. That both expressions are used, is because "bowing down" signifies worship from the good of love, and "serving" signifies worship from the truth of faith.

SH 8874. *For I Jehovah your God.* That this signifies the Divine from the Lord in each and all things, is evident from what was unfolded above (n. 8864, 8865).

SH 8875. *Am a zealous God.* That this signifies that falsity and evil are therefrom, is evident from the fact that in the genuine sense "a zealous God" denotes the Divine truth of the Divine good, for "God" is predicated of truth (n. 2586, 2769, 2807, 2822, 3921,

4287, 4402, 7010, 7268, 8301), and “zealous” of good (as will be seen below). But relatively to those who do not receive the Divine truth of the Lord’s Divine good, “a zealous God” denotes falsity and evil; for they who are in the opposite perceive Divine truth as falsity, and Divine good as evil; because every one sees these things from his own quality. Hence it is that the zeal of the Lord, which in itself is love and compassion, appears to them as anger; for when the Lord from love and mercy protects His own in heaven, they who are in evil are indignant and angry against the good, and rush into the sphere where the Divine truth and Divine good are, with the endeavor to destroy those who are there; and then the Divine truth of the Divine good works in them and makes them feel torments such as are in hell. Hence it is that they attribute wrath and anger to the Divine, and also all evil, when yet in the Divine there is absolutely nothing of anger, and absolutely nothing of evil; but pure clemency and mercy. [2] From all this it is evident why “zealous” signifies falsity and evil, and “zeal” signifies anger. See what has been shown above on these subjects, namely, that wrath and anger are attributed to the Lord, when yet they are with those who are in evil, or who are in anger against the Divine (n. 5798, 6997, 8284, 8483). (That in like manner evils, punishments, and vastations are attributed to the Lord, when yet in the Lord there is nothing but love and mercy, see n. 2447, 6071, 6559, 6991, 6997, 7533, 7632, 7643, 7679, 7710, 7877, 7926, 8214, 8223, 8226-8228, 8282, 8632; also that the evil devastate themselves, and cast themselves into damnation and hell by endeavoring to destroy what is good and true, n. 7643, 7679, 7710, 7926, 7989; as also that the Lord appears to every one according to his quality, n. 1861, 6832, 8197.) That “the zeal of the Lord” denotes love and mercy, and that when the Lord protects the good against the evil, it appears as hostility and also as anger, is evident from the following passages in the Word. [3] That “the zeal of the Lord” denotes love and mercy, in Isaiah:

Look forth from the heavens, and behold from the habitation of Your holiness and of Your comeliness: and where is Your zeal and Your mighty deeds; the yearning of Your bowels and Your compassions toward me have restrained themselves (Ixiii 15);

where “zeal” denotes mercy, which is the “yearning of the bowels,” and is predicated of good; for it is said “Your zeal and Your mighty deeds,” where “zeal” is said of good, and “mighty deeds” of truth; in like manner “the yearning of the bowels” is said of good, and “compassions” is said of truth; so likewise “the habitation of holiness” denotes the heaven where they are who are of the celestial kingdom, and “the habitation of comeliness,” the heaven where they are who are of the spiritual kingdom. From this it is also evident that in the Word where mention is made of good, mention is also made of truth, on account of the heavenly marriage, which is that of good and truth, in every detail of the Word, as in the case of the two names of the Lord, “Jesus” and “Christ,” which signify the Divine marriage that is in the Lord (on which see n. 683, 793, 801, 2516, 4138, 5138, 5502, 6343, 7945, 8339). [4] In the same:

Unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and He called His name Wonderful, Counselor, God, Hero, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. To the multiplying of His government and peace there shall be no end. The zeal of Jehovah shall perform this (ix. 6, 7).

This is said of the Lord and of His coming; “the zeal of Jehovah shall perform this,” denotes that He will do it from the ardent love of saving the human race. Again:

Out of Jerusalem shall go forth remains, and an escape from Mount Zion.
The zeal of Jehovah shall perform this (xxxvii. 32);

“the zeal of Jehovah shall perform this” denotes that He will do it from love and mercy.
[5] In Ezekiel:

Thus said the Lord Jehovih, Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob,
and will have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be zealous
for the name of My holiness (xxxix. 25);

where being “zealous” denotes to have compassion. In David:

The zeal of Your house has eaten me up (Ps. lxix. 9);

speaking of the Lord; “the zeal of the house of Jehovah” denotes His love toward those who receive good and truth, for these are “the house of Jehovah.” [6] That when the zeal or mercy of the Lord protects the good it appears as hostility, is manifest in Isaiah:

Jehovah shall go forth as a Hero; He shall stir up zeal like a man of war;
He shall shout and cry, He shall prevail over His enemies (xlii. 13).

In Joel:

Jehovah shall be zealous for His land, and shall spare His people (ii. 18).

[7] That the zeal of the Lord is called “anger” and “wrath” because mercy so appears to the evil, is manifest in these passages:

You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples which are
around you, for Jehovah your God in the midst of you is a zealous God;
lest the anger of Jehovah your God be kindled against you, and He
destroy you from off the faces of the earth (Deut. vi. 14, 15).

They provoked Him to zeal with strange ones, with abominations they
rendered Him angry. They sacrificed to demons. They have moved My
zeal with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with
their vanities (Deut. xxxii. 16, 17, 21).

When My anger shall be spent and I shall make My wrath to rest on them,
it shall repent Me; and they shall know that I Jehovah have spoken in My
zeal, when I shall have consummated My wrath upon them (Ezek. v. 13).

The angel of Jehovah in me said to me, Cry you, saying, Thus said Jehovah
Zebaoth, I have been zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal.
For with great indignation I am indignant against the careless nations
(Zech. i. 14, 15; viii. 2).

I will pour upon them My indignation, all the wrath of My anger; for all the earth shall be devoured in the fire of My zeal (Zeph. iii. 8).

Jehovah will not please to pardon him, but then the angel of Jehovah shall smoke; and His zeal against that man, and all the curse shall rest upon him (Deut. xxix. 20).

How long, O Jehovah! will You be angry for ever? Shall Your zeal burn like a fire? Pour out Your anger upon the nations that have not known You (Ps. lxxix. 5, 6).

In like manner the zeal of Jehovah is described as "anger" in Ps. xxxviii. 1; Ezek. xvi. 42; xxiii. 25; xxxviii. 19.

From all this it can be seen what is meant by "the zeal of Jehovah," or what by "a zealous God;" namely, that in the genuine sense are meant love and mercy; but in a sense not genuine, such as appears to those who are in evils and falsities, anger and vastation are signified. [8] Be it known that Jehovah, that is, the Lord, is especially called "zealous," or "an avenger," when that is corrupted which ought to reign universally with the person of the church, namely, the Divine, which must be loved, or thought of, or feared, above all things. When this has been corrupted or destroyed, then instead of heavenly light mere thick darkness usurps its place, for there is no longer any influx of this light from the Divine, because there is no reception. For this reason it is said, "I am Jehovah your God, a zealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the thirds and upon the fourths of them that hate Me," and this in case they worshipped other gods or made to themselves a graven image or likenesses for these things corrupt the Divine which ought to reign universally. [9] Therefore it is declared in like manner elsewhere in Moses:

Take heed lest you make you a graven image of any figure, for Jehovah God is a devouring fire, a zealous God (Deut. iv. 23, 24).

You shall not adore another god; for Jehovah, whose name is Zealous, zealous is He (Exod. xxxiv. 14).

This was so severely forbidden in the case of the Israelite nation because the adoration of other gods, of graven things, and of images, was destructive of every representative of the church among them; for in heaven Jehovah, that is, the Lord, is the universal regnant; His Divine fills all things there, and makes the life of all. If anything had been worshipped instead of the Divine, every representative would have perished, and thus the communication with heaven.

SH 8876. *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons.* That this signifies the consequent proliferation of falsity derived from evil, is evident from the signification of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers," as being the proliferation of evils; that "to visit" denotes proliferation is because the state of those who utterly reject from themselves the Divine is here treated of, who therefore are no longer receptions of good, but of evil, and this continually, for with such, evil is continually increasing, and this is

proliferation (that “father” denotes good, and in the opposite sense evil, see n. 3703, 5902, 6050, 7833, 7834); and from the signification of “sons,” as being truths (n. 1147, 2623, 3373), consequently in the opposite sense falsities. In the sense nearest the letter, by “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons” is not meant that the sons suffer the penalty of the iniquity of their fathers, for this is contrary to the Divine (Deut. xxiv. 16); but that evil increases with the fathers, and thus is by heredity carried over into the children, and that there is a consequent successive accumulation of evil (n. 2910, 3701, 4317, 8550, 8551). But in the spiritual sense by “fathers” are not meant fathers, but evils; nor are sons meant by “sons,” but falsities; therefore by the above words is signified the continual proliferation of falsity derived from evil.

SH 8877. *Upon the thirds and upon the fourths.* That this signifies in a long series and the conjunction of them, is evident from the signification of “three,” as being what is full from beginning to end (see n. 2788, 4495, 7715), thus what is in a long series, and therefore “the third sons” denote falsities in a long series (that “sons” denote falsities see just above, n. 8876); and from the signification of “four,” as being conjunction, in like manner as “two” (n. 1686, 5194, 8423); therefore “the fourth sons” denote falsities conjoined in a long series. That this is the signification of “the third and fourth sons” must needs seem like a paradox, or foreign to the sense of the Word; but be it known that in the internal sense numbers do not signify numbers, but things (n. 482, 487, 575, 647, 648, 755, 813, 1963, 1988, 2075, 2252, 3252, 4264, 4495, 4670, 5265, 6175).

SH 8878. *Of them that hate me.* That this signifies who absolutely reject the Divine of the Lord, is evident from the signification of “them that hate God,” as being those who are in evil and thence in falsity, for these are they who reject the Divine of the Lord; and so far as they are in evil and thence in falsity, so far they not only reject it, but also hold it in hatred. That it is the Divine of the Lord which they reject, is because they who are in evil are not in heavenly light, but in natural light, and finally are in sensuous light which is from the corporeal. From this light they cannot possibly see the Human of the Lord otherwise than as human, for they cannot perceive what the Divine Human is, because they have an idea about the Divine that is utterly empty and worthless. If they are told that the Divine Itself is Divine love, that the Divine love is the being of all life, and that from conception the Lord was this love, which was thus the inmost being of His life, thus was Jehovah, and that He glorified His Human to the likeness of this, that is, made it Divine, all this may indeed be in some measure apprehended by those who are endowed with some intellectual penetration; but still they do not believe it, for when they descend from the intellectual light in which they then are, into their own natural and sensuous light, they fall into mere thick darkness in respect to this truth, and from this into denial.

SH 8879. *And doing mercy to thousands.* That this signifies good and truth to them forever, is evident from the signification of “mercy,” as being the influx of good and truth from the Lord and the consequent spiritual life, which is bestowed by means of regeneration (see n. 6180, 6307), for the Lord in mercy bestows such things as belong to eternal life and happiness; and from the signification of “a thousand,” as being very much, and when it is said of the Divine mercy, as being forever (n. 2575, 8715).

SH 8880. *Of them that love Me.* That this signifies who receive the good of love, is evident from the signification of “those who love Jehovah,” that is, the Lord, as being to

receive the good of love, for they who love the Lord do not love from themselves but from the Lord; for all good flows in from Him, and those love who desist from evil, because evil stands in the way and rejects the influx of good from the Lord. Wherefore when evil has been removed, good is received, which is continually present from the Lord and endeavoring to enter.

SH 8881. *And keep My commandments.* That this signifies who receive the truths of faith, is evident from the signification of “commandments,” as being the truths of faith (n. 3382, 8362). That “to keep” these denotes to receive, is because in order that the truths which are called the truths of faith may be of faith, and may be living with a person, these also flow in from the Lord. They are indeed learned by the person, and stored up in the memory, but so long as the person does not will them, and consequently does not do them, they do not become living. But when they are brought forth from the memory, and are insinuated through the intellectual into the will, that is, through the thought into the affection, and thence into act, they then become living, and are truths of faith. This is effected by the Lord when the person desists from evils (as was said just above, n. 8880).

You Shall Not Make to Yourself Other Gods. (Worship the True God.²)

The First Commandment
- from -
The Apocalypse Explained

Emanuel Swedenborg

AE 950:3. "You shall not make to you other gods" includes not loving self and the world above all things; for that which one loves above all things is his god. There are two directly opposite loves, love of self and love to God, also love of the world and love of heaven. He who loves himself loves his own (*proprium*); and as a person's own (*proprium*) is nothing but evil he also loves evil in its whole complex; and he who loves evil hates good, and thus hates God. He who loves himself above all things sinks his affections and thoughts in the body, and thus in his own (*proprium*), and from this he cannot be raised up by the Lord; and when one is sunk in the body and in his own (*proprium*) he is in corporeal ideas and in pleasures that pertain solely to the body, and thus in thick darkness as to higher things; while he who is raised up by the Lord is in light. He who is not in the light of heaven but in thick darkness, since he sees nothing of God, denies God and acknowledges as god either nature or some person, or some idol, and even aspires to be himself worshipped as a god. From this it follows that he who loves himself above all things worships other gods. The same is true, but in a less degree, of one who loves the world; for there cannot be so great a love of the world as of one's own (*proprium*); therefore the world is loved because of one's own, and for the sake of one's own, because it is serviceable to it. The love of self means especially the love of domineering over others from the mere delight in ruling and for the sake of eminence, and not from the delight in uses and for the sake of the public good; while the love of the world means especially the love of possessing goods in the world from the mere delight in possession and for the sake of riches, and not from the delight in uses from these and for the sake of the good therefrom. These loves are both of them without limit, and rush on to infinity so far as opportunity is given.

AE 951:8, 9. It is not believed in the world that the love of ruling from the mere delight of ruling, and the love of possessing goods from the mere delight of possession, and not from the delight of uses, conceal in themselves all evils, and also a contempt for and rejection of all things pertaining to heaven and the church; and for the reason that a person is stirred up by the love of self and the love of the world to doing good to the church, the country, society, and the neighbor, by making good deeds honorable and looking for reward. Therefore this love is called by many the fire of life, and the

² Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

incitement to great things. But it is to be known that so far as these two loves regard uses in the first place and self in the second they are good, while so far as they regard self in the first place and uses in the second they are evil, since a person then does all things for the sake of self and consequently from self, and thus in every least thing he does there is self and what is his own (*proprium*), which regarded in itself is nothing but evil. But to regard uses in the first place and self in the second is to do good for the sake of the church, the country, society, and the neighbor; and the goods that a person does to these for the sake of these are not from the person but from the Lord. The difference between these two is like the difference between heaven and hell. A person does not know that there is such a difference, because from birth and thus from nature he is in these loves, and because the delight of these loves continually flatters and pleases him. [9] But let him consider that the love of ruling from the delight of ruling, and not from the delight of uses, is wholly devilish; and such a person may be called an atheist; for so far as he is in that love he does not in his heart believe in the existence of God, and to the same extent he derides in his heart all things of the church, and even hates and pursues with hatred all who acknowledge God, and especially those who acknowledge the Lord. The very delight of their life is to do evil and to commit wicked and infamous deeds of every kind. In a word, they are very devils. This a person does not know so long as he lives in the world; but he will know that it is so when he comes into the spiritual world, as he does immediately after death. Hell is full of such, where instead of having dominion they are in servitude. Moreover, when they are looked at in the light of heaven they appear inverted, with the head downwards and the feet upwards, since they gave rule the first place and uses the second, and that which is in the first place is the head, and that which is the second is the feet; and that which is the head is loved, but that which is the feet is trampled upon.

AE 952:2. He is deceived who supposes that he acknowledges and believes that there is a God before he abstains from the evils forbidden in the Decalogue, especially from the love of ruling from the delight in ruling, and from the love of possessing the goods of the world from the delight of possession, and not from the delight of uses. Let a person confirm himself as fully as he can, from the Word, from preachings, from books, and from the light of reason, that there is a God, and be persuaded that he believes, yet he does not believe unless the evils have been removed that spring from the love of self and of the world. The reason is that evils and their delights block up the way, and shut out and repel goods and their delights from heaven, and prevent their confirmation. And until heaven is confirmed there is only a faith of the lips, which in itself is no faith, and there is no faith of the heart, which is real faith. A faith of the lips is faith in externals, a faith of the heart is faith in internals; and if the internals are crowded with evils of every kind, when the externals are taken away (as they are with every person after death), a person rejects from them even the faith that there is a God.

AE 954:2. So far as a person resists his own two loves, which are the love of ruling from the mere delight of ruling and the love of possessing the goods of the world from the mere delight of possession, thus so far as he shuns as sins the evils forbidden in the Decalogue, so far there flows in through heaven from the Lord, that there is a God, who is the Creator and Preserver of the universe, yes also that God is one. This then flows in for the reason that when evils have been removed heaven is opened, and when heaven is opened a person no longer thinks from self but from the Lord through heaven; and that there is a God and that God is one is the universal principle in heaven which

comprises all things. That from influx alone a person knows, and as it were sees that God is one, is evident from the common confession of all nations, and from a repugnance to thinking that there are many gods. A person's interior thought, which is the thought of his spirit, is either from hell or from heaven; it is from hell before evils have been removed, but from heaven, when they have been removed. When this thought is from hell a person sees no otherwise than that nature is God, and that the inmost of nature is what is called the Divine. When such a person after death becomes a spirit he calls any one a god who is especially powerful; and also himself strives for power that he may be called a god. All the evil have such madness lurking inwardly in their spirit. But when a person thinks from heaven, as he does when evils have been removed, he sees from the light in heaven that there is a God and that He is one. Seeing from light out of heaven is what is meant by influx.

AE 955:4, 5. When a person shuns and turns away from evils because they are sins, he not only sees from the light of heaven that God is and that God is one, but also that God is Human. For he wishes to see his God, and he is incapable of seeing Him otherwise than as Human. Thus did the ancients before Abraham and after him see God; thus do the nations in countries outside the church see God from an interior perception, especially those who are interiorly wise although not from knowledges; thus do all little children and youths and simple well-disposed adults see God; and thus do the inhabitants of all earths see God; for they declare that what is invisible, since it does not come into an idea, does not come into faith. The reason of this is that the person who shuns and turns away from evils as sins thinks from heaven; and the whole heaven, and every one there, has no other idea of God than as that of Human; nor can he have any other idea, since the whole heaven is a person in the largest form, and the Divine that proceeds from the Lord is what makes heaven; consequently to think otherwise of God than according to that Divine form, which is the human form, is impossible to angels, since angelic thoughts pervade heaven. (That the whole heaven in the complex answers to one Human may be seen in the work on *Heaven and Hell*, n. 51-86; and that the angels think according to the form of heaven, n. 200-212.) [5] This idea of God flows in from heaven with all in the world, and has its seat in their spirit; but it seems to be rooted out with those in the church who are in intelligence from what is their own (*proprium*), indeed so rooted out as to be no longer a possible idea; and this for the reason that they think of God from space. But when these become spirits they think otherwise, as has been made evident to me by much experience. For in the spiritual world an indeterminate idea of God is no idea of Him; consequently the idea there is determined to some one who has his seat either on high or elsewhere, and who gives answers. From the general influx which is from the spiritual world people have received ideas of God as Human variously according to the state of perception; and for this reason the triune God is with us called Persons; and in paintings in churches God the Father is represented as Human, the Ancient of Days. It is also from a general influx that people, both living and dead, who are called saints, are adored as gods by the common people in Christian Gentilism, and their sculptured images are loved. The same is true of many nations elsewhere, of the ancient peoples in Greece, in Rome, and in Asia, who had many gods, all of whom were regarded by them as people. This has been said to make known that there is an intuition, namely, in a person's spirit, to see God as Human. That is called an intuition which is from general influx.

AE 956:2. As a person from a general influx out of heaven sees in his spirit that God is Human, it follows that those who are of the church where the Word is, if they shun and turn away from evils as sins, see, from the light of heaven in which they then are, the Divine in the Lord's Human, and the trine in Him, and Himself to be the God of heaven and earth. But those cannot see this who by intelligence from what is their own (*proprium*) have destroyed in themselves the idea of God as Human; neither do they see from the trinity that is in their thought that God is one; they call Him one with the lips only. But those who have not been purified from evils, and therefore are not in the light of heaven, do not in their spirit see the Lord to be the God of heaven and earth; but in place of the Lord some other being is acknowledged; by some of these some one whom they believe to be God the Father; by others some one whom they call God because he is especially powerful; by others some devil whom they fear because he can bring evil upon them; by others nature, as in the world; and by others no God at all. It is said "in their spirit," because they are such after death when they become spirits; therefore what lay concealed in their spirit in the world then becomes manifest. But all who are in heaven acknowledge the Lord only, since the whole heaven is from the Divine that proceeds from Him, and relates to Him as Human and for this reason no one can enter heaven unless he is in the Lord, for he enters into the Lord when he enters into heaven. If others enter they become impotent in mind and fall backwards.

AE 957:3, 4. The idea of God is the primary of all ideas; for such as this idea is such is a person's communication with heaven and his conjunction with the Lord, and such is his enlightenment, his affection of truth and good, his perception, intelligence, and wisdom; for these are not from a person but from the Lord according to conjunction with Him. The idea of God is the idea of the Lord and His Divine, for no other is the God of heaven and the God of earth, as He Himself teaches in Matthew:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (xxviii. 18).

But the idea of the Lord is more or less full and more or less clear; it is full in the inmost heaven, less full in the middle, and still less full in the ultimate heaven; therefore those who are in the inmost heaven are in wisdom, those who are in the middle in intelligence, and those who are in the ultimate in knowledge. The idea is clear in the angels who are at the center of the societies of heaven; and less clear in those who are round about, according to the degrees of distance from the center. [4] All in the heavens have places allotted them according to the fullness and clearness of their idea of the Lord, and they are in correspondent wisdom and in correspondent felicity. All those who have no idea of the Lord as Divine, like the Socinians and Arians, are under the heavens, and are unhappy. Those who have a twofold idea, namely, of an invisible God and of a visible God in a human form, also have their place under the heavens, and are not received until they acknowledge one God, and Him visible. Some in the place of a visible God see as it were something aerial, and this because God is called a spirit. If this idea is not changed with them into the idea of Human, thus of the Lord, they are not accepted. But those who have an idea of God as the inmost of nature are rejected, because they cannot help falling into the idea of nature as being God. All nations that have believed in one God, and have had an idea of Him as Human, are received by the Lord. From all this it can be seen who those are that worship God Himself and who those are that worship other gods, thus who live according to the first commandment of the Decalogue and who do not.

There Shall Be No Other God in My Presence.

(Worship the True God.³)

The First Commandment

- from -

True Christianity

Emanuel Swedenborg

There is to be no other god before My face.

TC 291. These are the words of the first commandment (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7). In their *earthly meaning*, which is their literal meaning, the most accessible sense is that we must not worship idols; for it goes on to say,

You are not to make yourself a sculpture or any form that is in the heavens above or the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You are not to bow yourself down to them, and you are not to worship them, because *I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God.* (Exodus 20:4, 5)

The most accessible meaning of this commandment is that we must not worship idols, because before the time [when this commandment was given] and after it right up to the coming of the Lord much of the Middle East had idolatrous worship. What caused the idolatrous worship was that all the churches before the Lord came were symbolic and emblematic. Their symbols and emblems were designed to present divine attributes in different forms and sculpted shapes. When the meanings of these forms were lost, common people began worshiping the forms as gods.

The Israelite nation had this kind of worship in Egypt, as you can see from the golden calf that they worshiped in the wilderness instead of worshiping Jehovah. That type of worship never became foreign to them, as you can see from many passages in both the historical and the prophetic parts of the Word.

292. This commandment, "There is to be no other God before my face," also has an earthly meaning that we must not worship any person, dead or alive, as a god. Worshiping people as gods was another practice in the Middle East and in various surrounding areas. The many gods of the nations there were of this type, such as Baal, Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Milcom, and Beelzebub. In Athens and Rome there were Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, Apollo, Athena, and so on. People worshiped some of these at first as holy people, then as supernatural beings, and finally as gods. The fact that these nations also worshiped living people as gods can be seen from the edict of Darius the

³ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

Mede that for a thirty-day period no one was to ask anything of God, only of the king, or be thrown into the lions' den (Daniel 6:8–28).

293. In the earthly meaning, which is the literal meaning, the first commandment also entails that we are to love above all else no one except God and nothing except what comes from God. This also accords with the Lord's words (Matthew 22:37–39; Luke 10:25–28). Someone we love above all else is a god to us; and something we love above all else is divine to us. For example, if we love ourselves above all else, or if we love the world above all else, to us we ourselves are our god, or else the world is. This explains why under these circumstances we do not believe at heart in any god; because of this we are connected to people like ourselves in hell, where all are gathered who have loved themselves or the world above all else.

TC 294. *The spiritual meaning* of this commandment is that we must worship no other God except the Lord Jesus Christ, because he is Jehovah, and he came into the world and brought about redemption. If he had not done so, not one person and not one angel could have been saved.

It is clear from the following passages in the Word that there is no other God except him:

It will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him to free us. This is Jehovah whom we have waited for. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." (Isaiah 25:9)

The voice of one crying in the desert, "Prepare a way for Jehovah; make a level pathway in the solitude for our God. For the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together. Behold, the Lord Jehovah is coming with strength; like a shepherd he will feed his flock." (Isaiah 40:3, 5, 11)

"The only God is among you; there is no other God." Surely you are the God who was hidden, O God *the Savior* of Israel. (Isaiah 45:14, 15)

Am not I Jehovah? There is no other God except me. I am a just God, and there is no *Savior* except me. (Isaiah 45:21, 22)

I am Jehovah, and there is no *Savior* except me. (Isaiah 43:11; Hosea 13:4)

So that all flesh may know that I, Jehovah, am *your Savior* and *your Redeemer*. (Isaiah 49:26; 60:16)

As for *our Redeemer*, Jehovah Sabaoth is his name. (Isaiah 47:4; Jeremiah 50:34)

Jehovah, my rock and *my Redeemer*. (Psalms 19:14)

Thus says Jehovah, *your Redeemer*, the Holy One of Israel: "I am Jehovah, your God." (Isaiah 48:17; 43:14; 49:7; 54:8)

Thus said Jehovah, *your Redeemer*: "I, Jehovah, am the maker of all things. I alone [stretch out the heavens. I extend the earth] by myself." (Isaiah 44:24)

Thus said Jehovah, the King of Israel and its *Redeemer*, Jehovah Sabaoth: "I am the First and the Last, and there is no God except me." (Isaiah 44:6)

Jehovah Sabaoth is his name, *your Redeemer*, the Holy One of Israel. He will be called God of all the earth. (Isaiah 54:5)

Abraham did not know us and Israel did not acknowledge us. You, Jehovah, are our Father; our *Redeemer* from everlasting is your name. (Isaiah 63:16)

A Child is born to us; a Son is given to us. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, God, Hero, *Father of Eternity*, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Behold, the days are coming when I will raise up for David a righteous offshoot who will reign as king; and this is his name: *Jehovah is our Justice*. (Jeremiah 23:5–6; 33:15–16)

Philip said to Jesus, "Show us the Father." Jesus said to him, "Those who see me see the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (John 14:8, 9, 10)

All the fullness of divinity dwells physically in Jesus Christ. (Colossians 2:9)

We are in the truth in Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves away from idols. (1 John 5:20, 21)

These passages make it very clear that the Lord our Savior is Jehovah himself, who is the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Regenerator in one. This is the spiritual meaning of this commandment.

TC 295. *The heavenly meaning of this commandment* is that the Lord Jehovah is infinite, immeasurable, and eternal; and omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is the First and the Last; the Beginning and the End; the One who was, is, and will be. He is love itself and wisdom itself, or goodness itself and truth itself. Therefore he is life itself. He is the sole being; all things come from him.

TC 296. All people who acknowledge and worship another god besides the Lord the Savior Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah God himself in human form, sin against this first commandment. So do all those who convince themselves that there are three actually existing divine persons from eternity. As these people reinforce themselves in this mistake, they become more and more earthly and mindless. They cannot inwardly comprehend any divine truth. If they hear and accept divine truth, they nonetheless pollute it and wrap it in mistaken ideas. For this reason they can be compared to people who live on the lowest or underground level of a house—they do not hear any of the conversation of people on the second or third floors, because the ceiling over their heads stops the sound from getting through.

[2] The human mind is like a three-story house that contains people on the bottom floor who have convinced themselves that there have been three gods from

eternity, while on the second and third floors there are people who acknowledge and believe in one God in a human form that can be seen—the Lord God the Savior.

People who are mindlessly physical and utterly earthly are actually complete animals; the only thing that differentiates them from true brute animals is their ability to speak and to make false inferences. They are like someone who lives at a zoo where there are wild animals of every kind, who plays the lion one day, the bear the next, the tiger the next, the leopard or the wolf the next, and could play a sheep but would be laughing inside.

[3] People who are merely earthly think about divine truths only on the basis of worldly phenomena and the mistaken impressions of their own senses. They cannot lift their minds above them. As a result, their body of religious teaching could be compared to a soup made of chaff that they eat as if it were the finest cuisine. Or their body of teaching could be compared to the loaf of bread and the cakes that Ezekiel the prophet was commanded to mix from wheat, barley, beans, lentils, spelt, and human excrement or cow dung in order to represent what the church was like in the Israelite nation (Ezekiel 4:9 and following). It is the same with the body of teaching of a church that is founded and built on the idea of three divine persons from eternity, each of whom is individually god.

[4] By picturing it mentally as it truly is, anyone can see the hideous wrongness of this faith. It is like three people standing next to each other in a row: the first person is distinguished by a crown and a scepter; the second person's right hand is holding a book, which is the Word, while his left hand holds a golden cross spattered in blood; and the third person has wings strapped on and stands on one foot in an effort to fly off and take action. Over the three there is an inscription: *These three people, each of whom is a god, are one God.* Any wise man would see this picture and say to himself, "That's ridiculously unrealistic!"

He would say something very different if he saw a picture of one divine person whose head was surrounded with rays of heavenly light, with the inscription: *This is our God—our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator in one, and therefore our Savior.* He would kiss this picture and take it home next to his heart, and when he and his wife and their children and servants would look at it they would feel uplifted.