

You Shall Not Covet....  
(Will That Your Neighbor Enjoy  
His or Her Own.<sup>1</sup>)

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments  
- from -  
*Secrets of Heaven*

Emanuel Swedenborg

SH 8909. Verse 14. *You shall not covet<sup>2</sup> your neighbor's house, you shall not covet<sup>3</sup> your neighbor's wife, and his manservant, and his maidservant, and his ox, and his ass, and anything that is your neighbor's,* signifies that one must beware of the love of self and of the world; and thus lest the evils which are contained in the preceding commandments become of the will, and so come forth.

SH 8910. *You shall not covet your neighbors house, you shall not covet your neighbors wife, and his manservant, and his maidservant, and his ox, and his ass, and anything that is your neighbor's.* That this signifies that one must beware of the love of self and of the world, and thus lest the evils which are contained in the preceding commandments become of the will and so come forth, is evident from the signification of "coveting (*concupiscere*)," as being to will from an evil love. That "coveting" has this signification, is because all concupiscence is of some love; for nothing is coveted (*concupiscitur*) unless it is loved, and therefore concupiscence (or "coveting") is the *continuous* of love, in this case of the love of self or of the world, and is as it were the life of its breath. For that which an evil love breathes is called "concupiscence," but that which a good love breathes is called "desire." Love itself belongs to the other part of the mind, which is called the will, for whatever a person loves he wills; but concupiscence belongs to both the will and the understanding, though it is properly of the will in the understanding. From all this it is evident whence it is that by the words, "you shall not covet the things that are your neighbor's," is signified that one must beware lest they become of the will; for the things which become of the will are appropriated to the person, because the will is the person himself. [2] It is believed in the world that the thought is the person; but there are two things which constitute the life of a person, the understanding and the will. To the understanding belongs thought, and to the will the affection which is of love. Thought without the affection which is of love does not make anything of life with a person; but thought from affection which is of love, thus understanding from will. That these two are distinct from each other is plain to every one who reflects, from the fact that a person can understand and perceive that to be evil which he wills, and that to be

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

<sup>2</sup> Latin, *concupisces*

<sup>3</sup> Latin, *concupisces*

good which he either wills or does not will; from which it is clear that the will is the person himself, but not the thought, except in so far as there passes into it something from the will. Hence it is that the things which enter into the thought of a person, and not through the thought into the will, do not defile him; but the things which enter through the thought into the will. These things defile him because they are then appropriated to him, and become his; for the will, as already said, is the person himself. The things which become of the will are said to enter into his heart and to come forth therefrom; whereas the things which are only of the thought are said to enter into the mouth, but to go out through the belly into the draughts--according to the Lord's words in Matthew:

Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man; but that which comes forth out of the mouth, this defiles the man. Whatsoever enters into the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught. But the things which come forth out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and these defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (xv. 11, 17-19.)

[3] From these words, as from all His other words, it can be seen of what nature was the Lord's speech, namely, that internal and spiritual things were meant, but that they were expressed by external or natural things, and this according to correspondences; for the mouth corresponds to the thought, as also all things that belong to the mouth, as the lips, the tongue, the throat; and the heart corresponds to the affection which is of love, thus to the will (that there is a correspondence of the heart with these, see n. 2930, 3313, 3883-3896, 7542). Consequently "to enter into the mouth" denotes to enter into the thought, and "to come forth out of the heart" denotes out of the will; "to go into the belly and to be cast out into the draught," or privy, is to be cast into hell, for the belly corresponds to the way toward hell, and the draught or privy corresponds to hell; hell is also so called in the Word. From this it is plain what is signified by, "whatsoever enters into the mouth goes into the belly and is cast out into the draught," namely, that evil and falsity are injected into the thought of a person from hell, and are sent back again thither. These things cannot defile the person, because they are sent back; for a person cannot stand apart from thinking evil, but from doing it. But so soon as he receives evil from the thought into the will, it then does not go out of him, but enters into him, and this is called "coming forth out of the heart." The things which come forth thence defile him, because what a person wills goes forth into speech and into act, in so far as external bonds, which are fear of the law, of the loss of reputation, of honor, of gain, and of life, do not forbid. From all this it is now evident that by "you shall not covet" is signified that one must beware lest evils become of the will, and so come forth. [4] That concupiscence (or "coveting") is of the will, thus of the heart, is also evident from these words of the Lord in Matthew:

You have heard that it was said to them of old, You shall not commit adultery; but I say to you, that if any one looks on a strange woman so that he lusts after (*concupiscat*) her, he has committed adultery with her already in his heart (v. 27, 28);

by "lusting after" is here meant to will, and unless fears (which are external bonds) restrained, to do; hence it is said that "he who looks on a woman so that he lusts after her has committed adultery with her in his heart." [5] The concupiscence of evil is also meant by "the right eye giving offense," and the concupiscence of falsity by "the right hand giving offense," in the Lord's words also in Matthew:

If your right eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from you; for it will be better for you that one of your members perish, and not your whole body be cast into Gehenna. And if your right hand offend you, cut it off, and cast it from you; for it will be better for you that one of your members perish, and not your whole body be cast into Gehenna (v. 29, 30);

from these words it is again evident in what manner the Lord spoke, namely, from the Divine, as everywhere else in the Word; thus that He expressed internal and heavenly things by external or natural things according to correspondences; here the affection of evil or the concupiscence thereof by "the right eye offending;" and the affection of falsity or the concupiscence thereof by the "right hand offending;" for the eye corresponds to faith, the left eye to the truth of faith, and the right eye to the good of faith, and in the opposite sense to the evil which is of faith; thus "the right eye offending" corresponds to the concupiscence thereof (n. 4403-4421, 4523-4534). But the hand corresponds to the power which is of truth, the right hand to the power of truth from good, and in the opposite sense to the power of falsity from evil, thus "the right hand offending" corresponds to the concupiscence thereof (n. 3091, 3563, 4931-4937, 8281). "Gehenna" denotes the hell of concupiscences. Every one can see that in this passage by "the right eye" is not meant the right eye, nor is it meant that the eye should be plucked out; also that by "the right hand" is not meant the right hand, and that it is to be cut off; but that something else is meant, which cannot be known unless it is known what is signified by "the eye," specifically by "the right eye," also what by "the hand" and specifically by "the right hand," and likewise what by "to give offence;" nor can it be known what is signified by these expressions except from the internal sense. [6] As concupiscences are things that come from an evil will, thus from an evil heart, and out of the heart or the will come forth murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, according to the words of the Lord in Matthew xv. 19, thus such things as are contained in the preceding commandments of the Decalogue, therefore it is said that by "not coveting those things which are the neighbor's," is signified that one must beware lest the evils which are contained in the preceding commandments become of the will, and so come forth. That by "not coveting those things which are the neighbor's" is signified that one must beware of the love of self and of the world, is because all the evils of concupiscence spring from these loves as from their fountains (see n. 2045, 7178, 7255, 7366-7377, 7488, 8318, 8678).

SH 8911. From what has been thus far said it can be seen how the case is with a person and his life, namely, that a person is such as his will is, and that he remains such after death, because death is not the end of life, but its continuation. As therefore a person is such as his will is, because, as before said, the will is the person himself, therefore "to be judged according to his deeds" signifies to be judged according to his will, for will and deed are not at variance, the deed being in the will and the will in the deed, provided external bonds do not hinder, such as fears of the law, of the loss of honor, of gain, of reputation, and of life. This is circumstanced like endeavor and motion. Motion is

nothing else than continuous endeavor; for when endeavor ceases, motion ceases, and therefore there is nothing essential in motion except endeavor. The learned know this, for it is an acknowledged and confirmed theorem. Endeavor in a person is will, and motion in him is action; they are so called in a person because in him endeavor and motion are living. To be judged according to the will is the same thing as to be judged according to the love, and also the same as to be judged according to the ends of life, likewise to be judged according to the life, for the will of a person is his love, and is his end of life, and is his very life itself. That this is the case is evident from the words of the Lord quoted above, that "whoever looks on a strange woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. v. 27, 28); also that "to kill" a person is not only to do so in act, but also to will to do it, which is signified by "being angry" with him and treating him with insult (Matt. v. 21). Moreover a person is judged according to his deeds, but no further than in so far and in such a manner as his deeds have proceeded from his will.

SH 8912. It must also be explained briefly what is meant in the internal sense by the things here mentioned, namely, "house," "wife," "manservant," "maidservant," "ox," and "ass," which are not to be coveted. They are all the goods and truths of faith in one complex, which are not to be taken away from any one, and to which no injury is to be done; and they are the same things which in the internal sense are signified by "keeping the Sabbath day holy," "honoring father and mother," "not killing," "not committing adultery," "not stealing," "not bearing false witness," all which things have been shown above to be in the internal sense such as are of love and faith. By "house" is meant all good in general; by "wife," all truth in general; by "manservant," the affection of spiritual truth; by "maidservant," the affection of spiritual good; by "ox," the affection of natural good; and by "ass," the affection of natural truth. These are the things which are "not to be coveted," that is, which are not to be taken away from any one, or to which harm must not be done. That these things are meant in the internal sense, is because the Word in this sense is for those who are in heaven, for those who are there do not perceive the Word naturally, but spiritually, thus not house, nor wife, nor manservant, nor maidservant, nor ox, nor ass, but the spiritual things that correspond to them, which are the goods of love and the truths of faith. In a word, the external sense or the sense of the letter is for those who are in the world, but the internal sense is for those who are in heaven, and also for those who are in the world, yet in so far as they are at the same time in heaven, that is, so far as they are in charity and faith.

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His or Her Own.<sup>4</sup>)

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments

- from -

*The Apocalypse Explained*

Emanuel Swedenborg

AE 1021:2. The ninth commandment, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house,” is now to be treated of.

There are two loves from which all lusts spring and flow forth perpetually like streams from their fountains. These loves are called the love of the world and the love of self. Lust is love continually willing, for what a person loves, that he continually longs for. But lusts belong to the love of evil, while desires and affections belong to the love of good. Now because the love of the world and the love of self are the foundations of all lusts, and all evil lusts are forbidden in these last two commandments, it follows that the ninth commandment forbids the lusts that flow from the love of the world, and the tenth commandment the lusts that flow from the love of self. “Not to covet a neighbor’s house” means not to covet his goods, which in general are possessions and wealth, and not to appropriate them to oneself by evil arts. This lust belongs to the love of the world.

AE 1022:2, 3. “You shall not covet (or desire) your neighbor’s wife, his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass.” These are lusts after what is a person’s own, because the wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, and ass, are within his house, and the things within a person’s house mean in the spiritual internal sense the things that are his own, that is, the wife means the affection of spiritual truth and good, “manservant and maidservant,” the affection of rational truth and good serving the spiritual, and “ox and ass” the affection of natural good and truth. These signify in the Word such affections; but because coveting and desiring these affections means to will and eagerly desire to subject a person to one’s own authority or bidding, it follows that lusting after these affections means the lusts of the love of self, that is, of the love of ruling, for thus does one make the things belonging to a companion to be his own. [3] From this it can now be seen that the lust of the ninth commandment is the lust of the love of the world, and that the lusts of this commandment are lusts of the love of self. For, as has been said before, all lusts are of love, for it is love that covets; and as there are two evil loves to which all lusts have reference, namely, the love of the world and the love of self, it follows that the lust of the ninth commandment has reference to the love of the world, and the lust of this commandment to the love of self, especially to the love of ruling.

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<sup>4</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

(That all evils and the falsities therefrom flow from these two loves may be seen above, n. 159, 171, 394, 506, 517, 650d, 950, 951, 973, 982, 1010, 1016; and in *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem*, n. 65-83.)

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*You are not to covet your neighbor's household;  
you are not to covet your neighbor's wife  
or his servant or his maid or his ox or his donkey  
or anything that is your neighbor's.*

TC 325. In the catechism that is circulated these days, these have been divided into two commandments. One of them is the ninth commandment: "You are not to covet your neighbor's household." The other is the tenth: "You are not to covet your neighbor's wife or his servant or his maid or his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor's." Because these two commandments are united and form just a single verse in Exodus 20:17 and in Deuteronomy 5:21, I have taken them up together. It is not my intention, however, to connect them into one commandment. I want to keep them distinguished into two commandments as they have been, since all the commandments are referred to as the ten words (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4).

TC 326. These two commandments look back to all the commandments that precede them. They teach and enjoin that we are not to do evil and that we are also not to crave doing evil. Therefore the Ten Commandments are not only for the outer self but also for the inner self. Someone who does not do evil things but nevertheless craves doing them is still doing them. The Lord says,

If some man craves someone else's wife, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27, 28)

Our outer self does not become internal or become one with our inner self until our cravings have been removed. The Lord teaches this as well, when he says,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, because you clean the outside of your cup and plate, but the insides are full of plundering and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of your cup and plate, so that the outside may be clean as well. (Matthew 23:25, 26)

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<sup>5</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

The Lord says more on this in that whole chapter from beginning to end. The inner problems that are pharisaical are the cravings to do what the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments say not to do.

It is generally known that while he was in the world, the Lord gave the church inner teachings. The inner teachings for the church tell us not to crave doing evil. He taught us this so that our inner and outer self would become one, which is the same as being born anew—something the Lord discussed with Nicodemus (John 3). Only through the Lord can we be born anew or regenerated, and therefore become inner people.

These two commandments look back to all the commandments that came before as things not to be coveted. Therefore the household is mentioned first; then the wife; then the servant, the maid, the ox, and the donkey; and finally everything that belongs to one's neighbor. The "household" comes before everything on the rest of the list, for the husband, the wife, the servant, the maid, the ox, and the donkey are all part of it. The "wife," who is mentioned next, comes before everything on the rest of the list after that, for she is the woman in charge of the household, as her husband is the man in charge of it. The servant and the maid are under them, and the ox and the donkey are under the servant and the maid. Finally, everything below or beyond the servant and the maid is covered by the phrase "anything that is your neighbor's." This shows that generally and specifically, in both a broad and a narrow sense, these two commandments look back to all the prior commandments.

TC 327. In the *spiritual meaning*, these commandments prohibit all the cravings that go against the spirit, that is, against the spiritual qualities taught by the church, which primarily relate to faith and goodwill. If our cravings were not tamed, our flesh would pursue its own freedom and would quickly fall into every kind of wickedness. From Paul we know that "The flesh has cravings that go against the spirit and the spirit has cravings that go against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17). From James we know that "All are tested by their own craving. When they become captivated, then after the craving conceives, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it reaches its final stage, brings forth death" (James 1:14, 15). From Peter we know that "The Lord holds for the judgment day the unjust who are to be punished, especially those who walk according to the flesh in craving" (2 Peter 2:9, 10).

In brief, these two commandments taken in their spiritual meaning look back to the spiritual meaning of all the commandments previously given, adding that we are not to crave doing those evil things. The same goes for all the commandments previously given in the heavenly meaning, but there is no point in listing them all again.

TC 328. The cravings of the flesh—of the eyes and the other senses—when separated from the cravings of the spirit (meaning its feelings, desires, and pleasures) are identical to the cravings animals have. On their own, therefore, the cravings of the flesh are beastly. The desires of the spirit are what angels have; they are to be called desires that are truly human. Therefore the more we become addicted to the cravings of the flesh, the more of a beast and a wild animal we become; the more we give the desires of our spirit their due, the more of a human being and an angel we become.

The cravings of the flesh could be compared to grapes that have been parched and burnt or to wild grapes, while the desires of the spirit could be compared to juicy, flavorful grapes and to the taste of wine that has been pressed from them.

The cravings of the flesh are like stables that hold donkeys, goats, and pigs, while the desires of the spirit are like stables that hold thoroughbred horses, as well as sheep and lambs. In fact, the cravings of the flesh differ from the desires of the spirit the way a donkey differs from a horse, a goat from a sheep, and a pig from a lamb. They differ as much as slag and gold, lime and silver, coral and a ruby, and so on. A craving and a deed are as closely connected as blood and flesh or oil and flame. The craving is in the deed the same way air from our lungs is in our breath and speech; or the wind is in the sail when we are sailing; or the water is in the waterwheel, causing the machinery to move and act.