

You Shall Not Steal.

(Aim to Be Honest.¹)

(Peace²)

The Seventh Commandment

- from -

Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

SH 8906. *You shall not steal.* That this signifies that no one's spiritual goods must be taken away from him, and that those things which belong to the Lord are not to be attributed to self, is evident from the signification of "stealing," as being to take away spiritual goods from any one. That this is signified by "stealing," is because riches and wealth in the spiritual sense are the knowledges of good and truth, in general all those things which are of faith and charity, that is, which are of spiritual life in a person. Wherefore to take these things away from any one is "to steal" in the spiritual sense. And because all spiritual goods, that is, all things of faith and charity, are from the Lord alone, and absolutely nothing from a person, therefore by "stealing" is also signified to attribute to one's self what belongs to the Lord. They who do this are also called "thieves and robbers" in John:

Truly I say to you, He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; but he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes not but that he may steal, and slay, and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have abundance (x. 1, 2, 9, 10);

"to enter by the door into the sheepfold" denotes to enter by the Lord, for the Lord is the "door," as He Himself says; "the sheep" are they who are in charity and thence in faith. These enter by the Lord when they acknowledge that from Him is everything of faith and charity, for then these flow in from Him. But to attribute them to others, especially to themselves, is to take them away, thus "to slay and to destroy." They who attribute to themselves what is the Lord's, also place merit in works, and make themselves righteousness (see n. 1110, 1877, 2027, 2273, 2340, 2373, 2400, 3816, 4007, 4174, 4943, 6388-6390, 6392, 6393, 6478). This then is "stealing" in the spiritual sense, and this comes to the angels in heaven when a person reads in the Word about "stealing," for the angels understand the Word only spiritually. [2] The like is signified by "stealing" in Hosea:

¹ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

² Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* 8867

When I healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was revealed, and the evils of Samaria; because they wrought a lie; and the thief comes, the troop spreads itself abroad; now do their works encompass them before my faces; they make the king glad by their wickedness, and the princes by their lies (vii. 1-3).

And in Joel:

The day of Jehovah comes. A fire devours before it, and after it a flame burns; the land is as the garden of Eden before it, but after it a waste wilderness. The appearance thereof is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so do they run, as the sound of chariots on the tops of the mountains; they run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall, they climb up into the houses, they enter in through the windows like a thief. The earth quaked before Him, the heavens trembled, the sun and the moon were made black, and the stars withdrew their shining (ii. 1-10);

the subject here treated of is the desolation of the church, when falsities break in and destroy truths; these falsities are the "thieves who climb up into houses and enter in through the windows." Who can help wondering why it is said that "the day of Jehovah will be as the appearance of horses," and that then "they shall run like horsemen, they shall run to and fro in the city, they shall run on the wall, shall climb up into the houses, shall enter in through the windows, the earth shall quake, the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be made black, and the stars shall withdraw their shining?" He who knows nothing of the internal sense, and who in his heart calls the holiness of the Word into doubt, will say that these are mere words devoid of anything Divine stored up within them, and perhaps will call them worthless sayings. But he who believes that the Word is most holy, because it is Divine, and who moreover knows that there is an internal sense which treats of the church, of heaven, and of the Lord Himself, will confess that every word herein has its own weighty import. It shall therefore be briefly unfolded what the words and sayings in this passage signify. [3] "The day of Jehovah" denotes the last state, or last time, of the church, when there is no longer any truth, but falsity in the place of truth; "the fire which devours before it" denotes the desire of evil; "the flame which burns after it" denotes the consequent desire of falsity; "the appearance of horses" denotes the intellectual reasoning from falsity as if from truth; "the horsemen who run" denote reasoners; "the chariots" denote doctrinal things of falsity; "a city" denotes the doctrine itself; "the wall upon which they run" denotes essential falsity; "the houses into which they climb" denotes the will of a person; "the windows through which they enter in" denote intellectual things; "the thief" denotes the falsity which takes away truth; "the earth which will quake before Him" denotes the church, so also do "the heavens which will tremble;" "the sun" denotes love to the Lord; "the moon," faith in Him, these are said to be "made black" when they no longer appear; "the stars" denote the knowledges of good and truth which will no longer have light from faith and love, thus from heaven, and this is meant by "withdrawing their shining." From all this it can be seen what these words involve in general, and also in what sense "that day," or the last state of the church, is called "a thief who will climb up into the houses, and enter in through the windows," namely, that it is falsity, which will then take possession of the whole person, both of his will and of his understanding, and thus will take away all truth and good. The like is signified by a "thief" in Obadiah:

The Lord Jehovah said to Edom, If thieves came to you, if destroyers by night (how you are cut off!), will they not steal till they have enough? (verses 1, 5).

In like manner by a "thief," or "one who steals," in Zech. v. 1-4; Ps. l. 18-20; Matt. vi. 19, 20.

[4] As all the statutes commanded the sons of Israel by the Lord were founded on the laws of order which are in heaven, that is, derived their existence and essence from the spiritual world, so for the same reason were the statutes which were enacted concerning theft; as that he who stole an ox and sold it should restore five, if a sheep four (Exod. xxii. 1); also that if a thief be smitten in breaking in, there shall be no blood; but if the sun be risen, there shall be blood; the thief shall repay or shall be sold; if the theft be found in his hand, he shall restore double (Exod. xxii. 2-4).

He that steals a man, and sells him, but if he be found in his hand, dying he shall die (Exod. xxi. 16).

If a man be found who has stolen a soul of his brethren, of the sons of Israel, and has made gain in him, while he sold him, that thief shall be killed; that you may put away the evil from the midst of you (Deut. xxiv. 7);

in the internal sense "the men of the sons of Israel" denote those who are in the truths and goods of faith, thus in the abstract sense they denote the truths and goods of faith (n. 5414, 5879, 5951); and therefore "to steal a man of the sons of Israel" denotes to take these away, and "to sell him" denotes to cast them off, and also to make them serve. For the truths and goods of faith, being from the Lord, are in a free state, and serve the Lord alone; but when they are cast off, they then come into a servile state, for they serve any evil of the love of self or of the love of the world, thus any bodily cupidity; whence come the derivation and correspondence of the above law. And as then from being free the truth and good of the church become servile, thus from being alive become dead, therefore the penalty which is the effect, is "death."

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The Seventh Commandment

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The Apocalypse Explained

Emanuel Swedenborg

AE 967:3. The fifth commandment is, "You shall not steal."⁵ By "thefts" are meant thefts that are manifest and those not manifest, such as unlawful usury and gains, which are effected by fraud and craft under various pretenses to make them appear lawful, or so done clandestinely as not to appear at all. Such gains are commonly made by higher and lower managers of the goods of others, by merchants, also by judges who sell judgments and thus make justice purchasable. These and many other things are thefts that must be abstained from and shunned, and finally renounced as sins against God, because they are against the Divine laws that are in the Word and against this law, which is one among the fundamental laws of all religions in the whole globe. For these ten commandments are universals, given to the end that in living from these a person may live from religion, since by a life from religion a person is conjoined with heaven, while a life according to these from obedience to civil and moral law conjoins a person with the world and not with heaven, and to be conjoined with the world and not with heaven is to be conjoined with hell.

AE 969:2, 3. A person is so created as to be an image of heaven and an image of the world, for he is a microcosm. He is born of his parents an image of the world, and he is born again to be an image of heaven. To be born again is to be regenerated; and a person is regenerated by the Lord by means of truths from the Word and a life according to them. A person is an image of the world as to his natural mind, and he is an image of heaven as to his spiritual mind. The natural mind, which is the world, is beneath; and the spiritual mind, which is heaven, is above. The natural mind is full of all kinds of evils, such as thefts, adulteries, murders, false witnesses, covetousnesses, and even blasphemies and profanations of God. These evils and many others have their seat in that mind, for the loves of them are there, and thus the delights of thinking, willing, and doing them. These things are innate in that mind from parents, for a person is born and grows up into the things that are in that mind, and is restrained only by the bonds of civil law and by the bonds of moral life from doing them, and from thus manifesting the tendencies of his depraved will. Who cannot see that the Lord cannot

³ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

⁴ Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* 8867

⁵ In *The Apocalypse Explained*, the Commandment, "You shall not steal" is referred to as the fifth Commandment rather than as the seventh.

flow in out of heaven with a person and teach him and lead him before these evils have been removed? For they obstruct, repel, pervert, and suffocate the truths and goods of heaven, which present themselves from above, press down and strive to flow in. For evils are infernal and goods are heavenly, and everything infernal burns with hatred against everything heavenly. [3] This makes clear that before the Lord can flow in with heaven out of heaven and form a person to the image of heaven, those evils that lie heaped up in the natural mind must needs be removed. Moreover, as the removal of evils must come first before a person can be taught and led by the Lord, the reason is evident why in eight commandments of the Decalogue the evil works that must not be done are recounted, but not the goods that must be done. Good does not exist together with evil, nor does it exist before evils have been removed; for until then there is no way possible from heaven into a person. A person is like a dark sea, the waters of which must be removed on either side before the Lord in a cloud and in fire can give a passage to the sons of Israel. The "dark sea" signifies hell, "Pharaoh with the Egyptians" the natural person, and "the sons of Israel" the spiritual person.

AE 970:2, 3. It has been said above that communication with heaven is not given before the evils and the falsities therefrom with which the natural mind is stopped up have been removed; for these are like black clouds between the sun and the eye, or like a wall between the light of heaven and the dim light of a candle in a chamber. For so long as a person is in the dim light of the natural person only he is like one shut up in a chamber where he sees by a candle. But as soon as the natural person has been purified from evils and falsities therefrom he is as if he saw through windows in the wall the things of heaven from the light of heaven. For as soon as evils have been removed, the higher mind, which is called the spiritual mind, is opened, and this, viewed in itself, is a type or image of heaven. Through this mind the Lord flows in and enables a person to see from the light of heaven, and through this He also reforms and at length regenerates the natural person, and implants in it truths in the place of falsities and goods in the place of evils. This the Lord does through spiritual love, which is the love of truth and good. A person is then placed in the midst between two loves, between the love of evil and the love of good; and when the love of evil recedes the love of good takes its place. It is solely through the life according to the commandments of the Decalogue, that is, through refraining from the evils there enumerated because they are sins, and finally shunning them as infernal, that the love of evil recedes. [3] In a word, so long as person does not refrain from evils because they are sins the spiritual mind is shut; but as soon as he refrains from evils because they are sins the spiritual mind is opened, and with that mind heaven also. And when heaven is opened a person comes into another light as to all things of the church, heaven, and eternal life; although so long as a person lives in this world the difference between this and the former light is scarcely noticeable, and for the reason that in the world a person thinks naturally even about spiritual things, and until he passes from the natural into the spiritual world spiritual things are enclosed in natural ideas; but in the spiritual world spiritual things are disclosed, perceived, and made evident.

AE 971:2-5. So far as a person refrains from evils and shuns and turns away from them as sins, good flows in from the Lord. The good that flows in is the affection of knowing and understanding truths, and the affection of willing and doing goods. But a person cannot refrain from evils by shunning and turning away from them of himself, for he himself is in evils from his birth, and thus from nature; and evils cannot of themselves

shun evils, for this would be like a person's shunning his own nature, which is impossible; consequently it must be the Lord, who is the Divine good and the Divine truth, who causes a person to shun them. Nevertheless, a person ought to shun evils as if of himself, for what a person does as if of himself becomes his and is appropriated to him as his own; while what he does not do as if of himself in nowise becomes his or is appropriated to him. What comes from the Lord to a person must be received by the person; and it cannot be received unless he is conscious of it, that is, as if of himself. This reciprocation is a necessity to reformation. This is why the ten commandments were given, and why it is commanded in them that a person shall not worship other gods, shall not profane the name of God, shall not steal, shall not commit adultery, shall not kill, shall not covet the house, wife, or servants of others, thus that a person shall refrain from doing these things by thinking, when the love of evil allures and incites, that they must not be done because they are sins against God, and in themselves are infernal. So far, therefore, as a person shuns these evils so far the love of truth and good enters from the Lord; and this love causes a person to shun these evils, and at length to turn away from them as sins. And as the love of truth and good puts these evils to flight, it follows that the person shuns them not from himself but from the Lord, since the love of truth and good is from the Lord. If a person shuns evils merely from a fear of hell they are withdrawn; but goods do not take their place; for as soon as the fear departs the evils return. [3] To a person alone is it granted to think as if of himself about good and evil, that is, that good must be loved and done because it is Divine and remains to eternity, and that evil must be hated and not done because it is devilish and remains to eternity. To think thus is not granted to any beast. A beast can do good and shun evil, yet not of itself, but either from instinct or habit or fear, and never from the thought that such a thing is a good or an evil, thus not of itself. Consequently one who would have it believed that a person shuns evils or does goods not as if of himself but from an imperceptible influx, or from the imputation of the Lord's merit, would also have it believed that a person lives like a beast without thought of, or perception of, or the affection of truth and good. That this is so has been made clear to me from manifold experience in the spiritual world. Every person after death is there prepared either for heaven or for hell. From the person who is prepared for heaven evils are removed, and from the person who is prepared for hell goods are removed; and all such removals are effected as if by them. Likewise those who do evils are driven by punishments to reject them as if of themselves; but if they do not reject them as if of themselves the punishments are of no avail. By this it was made clear that those who hang down their hands, waiting for influx, or for the imputation of the Lord's merit, continue in the state of their evil, and hang down their hands forever. [4] To shun evils as sins is to shun the infernal societies that are in them, and a person cannot shun these unless he repels them and turns away from them; and a person cannot turn away from them with repulsion unless he loves good and from that love does not will evil. For a person must either will evil or will good; and so far as he wills good he does not will evil; and it is granted him to will good when he makes the commandments of the Decalogue to be of his religion, and lives according to them. [5] Since a person must refrain from evils as sins as if of himself, these ten commandments were inscribed by the Lord on two tables, and these were called a covenant; and this covenant was entered into in the same way as it is usual to enter into covenants between two, that is, one proposes and the other accepts, and the one who accepts consents. If he does not consent the covenant is not established. To consent to this covenant is to think, will, and do as if of oneself. A person's thinking to shun evil and to do good as if of himself is done not by the person,

but by the Lord. This is done by the Lord for the sake of reciprocation and consequent conjunction; for the Lord's Divine love is such that it wills that what is its own shall be a person's, and as these things cannot be a person's, because they are Divine, it makes them to be as if they were a person's. In this way reciprocal conjunction is effected, that is, that the person is in the Lord and the Lord in the person, according to the words of the Lord Himself in John (xiv. 20); for this would not be possible if there were not in the conjunction something belonging as it were to the person. What a person does as if of himself he does as if of his will, of his affection, of his freedom, consequently of his life. Unless these were present on a person's part, as if they were his there could be no receptivity, because nothing reactive, thus no covenant and no conjunction; in fact, no ground whatever for the imputation that the person had done evil or good or had believed truth or falsity, thus that there is from merit a hell for any one because of evil works, or from grace a heaven for any one because of good works.

AE 972:2. He who refrains from thefts, understood in a broad sense, and even shuns them from any other cause than religion and for the sake of eternal life, is not cleansed of them; for in no other way can he open heaven. For it is through heaven that the Lord removes evils with a person, as through heaven He removes the hells. For example, there are higher and lower managers of property, merchants, judges, officers of every kind, and workmen, who refrain from thefts, that is, from unlawful modes of gain and usury, and who shun these, but only to secure reputation and thus honor or gain, because of civil and moral laws, in a word, from some natural love or natural fear, thus from merely external constraints, and not from religion; but the interiors of such are full of thefts and robberies, and these burst forth when external constraints are removed from them, as takes place with every one after death. Their sincerity and rectitude is nothing but a mask, a disguise, and a deceit.

AE 973:2. So far then as the various kinds and species of thefts are removed, and the more they are removed, so far the kinds and species of good to which they by opposition correspond enter and occupy their place; and these have reference in general to what is sincere, right and just. For when a person shuns and turns away from unlawful gains through fraud and craft he so far wills what is sincere, right, and just, and at length begins to love what is sincere because it is sincere, what is right because it is right, and what is just because it is just. He begins to love these things because they are from the Lord, and the love of the Lord is in them. For to love the Lord is not to love the Person, but to love the things that proceed from the Lord, for these are the Lord with a person; thus it is to love sincerity itself, right itself, and justice itself. And as these are the Lord, so far as a person loves these, and thus acts from them, so far he acts from the Lord and so far the Lord removes insincerity and injustice as to the very intentions and volitions in which they have their roots, and always with less resistance and struggle, and therefore with less effort than in the first attempts. Thus it is that a person thinks from conscience and acts from integrity, not indeed the person of himself but as if of himself; for he then acknowledges from faith and also from perception. It indeed appears as if he thought and did these things from himself, and yet he does them not from himself but from the Lord.

AE 974:2. When a person begins to shun and turn away from evils because they are sins all things that he does are good, and also may be called good works; with a difference according to the excellence of the uses. For what a person does before he shuns and

turns away from evils as sins are works done by the person himself; and as the person's own (*proprium*), which is nothing but evil, is in these, and they are done for the sake of the world, therefore they are evil works. But the works that a person does after he shuns and turns away from evils as sins are works from the Lord, and because the Lord is in these and heaven with Him they are good works. The difference between works done from the person and works done from the Lord in the person is not apparent to people's sight, but is clearly evident to the sight of angels. Works done from a person are like sepulchers outwardly whitened, which within are full of the bones of the dead. They are like platters and cups outwardly clean, but containing unclean things of every kind. They are like fruits inwardly rotten, but with the outer skin still shining; or like nuts or almonds eaten by worms within, while the shell remains untouched; or like a foul harlot with a fair face. Such are the good works done from a person himself, since however good they appear on the outside, within they are full of impurities of every kind; for their interiors are infernal, while their exteriors appear heavenly. But after a person shuns and turns away from evils as sins his works are good not only outwardly but inwardly also; and the more interior they are the more they are good, for the more interior they are the nearer they are to the Lord. Then they are like fruits that have a fine-flavored pulp, in the center of which are depositories with many seeds, from which new trees, even to whole gardens, may be produced; but every thing and all things in his natural person are like eggs from which swarms of flying creatures may be produced, and gradually fill a great part of heaven. In a word, when a person shuns and turns away from evils as sins the works that he does are living, while those that he did before were dead, for what is from the Lord is living, but what is from a person is dead.

AE 975:2. It has been said that so far as a person shuns and turns away from evils as sins he does goods, and that the goods that he does are the good works which are meant in the Word, for the reason that they are done in the Lord; also that these works are good so far as a person turns away from the evils opposed to them, because so far they are done from the Lord and not from the person. Nevertheless, works are more or less good according to the excellence of the use; for works must be uses. The best are those that are done for the sake of the uses of the church. Next in point of goodness come those that are done as uses of one's country; and so on, the uses determining the goodness of the works. The goodness of works increases with a person according to the fullness of truths from affection for which they are done; since the person who turns away from evils as sins wishes to know truths because truths teach uses and the quality of their good. This is why good loves truth and truth loves good, and they wish to be conjoined. So far, therefore, as such a person learns truths from the affection of them so far he does goods more wisely and more fully, more wisely because he knows how to distinguish uses and to do them with judgment and justice, and more fully because all truths are present in the performance of uses, and from the spiritual sphere that the affection of them produces.

AE 976:2, 3. Take judges for an example: All who make justice venal by loving the function of judging for the sake of gain from judgments, and not for the sake of uses to their country, are thieves, and their judgments are thefts. It is similar if they judge according to friendships and favors, for friendships and favors are also profits and gains. When these are the end and judgments are the means, all things that they do are evil, and are what are meant in the Word by "evil works" and "not doing judgment and

justice, perverting the right of the poor, of the needy, of the fatherless, of the widow, and of the innocent," Yea, even if they do justice, and yet regard profit as the end they indeed do a good work, but to them it is not good; for justice, which is Divine, is to them a means, and such gain is the end; and that which is made the end is everything, while that which is made the means is nothing except so far as it is serviceable to the end. Consequently after death such judges continue to love what is unjust as well as what is just, and are condemned to hell as thieves. I speak this from what I have seen. These are such as do not abstain from evils because they are sins, but only because they fear the punishments of the civil law and the loss of reputation, honor, and office, and thus of gain. [3] It is otherwise with judges who abstain from evils as sins and shun them because they are contrary to the Divine laws, and thus contrary to God. These have justice for their end, and they venerate, cherish, and love it as Divine. In justice they see God, as it were, because everything just, like everything good and true, is from God. They always join justice with equity and equity with justice, knowing that justice must be of equity in order to be justice, and that equity must be of justice in order to be equity, the same as truth is of good and good is of truth. As such make justice their end, their giving judgments is doing good works; yet these works, which are judgments, are to them more or less good as there is in their judgments more or less of regard for friendship, favor or gain; also as there is more or less in them of a love of what is just for the sake of the public good, which is that justice may reign among their fellow citizens, and that those who live according to the laws may have security. Such judges have eternal life in a degree that accords with their works; for they are judged as they themselves have judged.

AE 977:2, 3. Take as an example managers of the goods of others, higher and lower. If these secretly by arts or under some pretext by fraud deprive their kings, their country, or their masters of their goods, they have no religion and thus no conscience, for they hold the Divine law respecting theft in contempt and make it of no account. And although they frequent temples, devoutly listen to preachings, observe the sacrament of the Supper, pray morning and evening, and talk piously from the Word, yet nothing from heaven flows in and is present in their worship, piety, or discourse, because their interiors are full of theft, plundering, robbery, and injustice; and so long as these are within, the way into them from heaven is closed; consequently all the works they do are evil. [3] But the managers of property who shun unlawful gains and fraudulent profits because they are contrary to the Divine law respecting theft, have religion, and thus also conscience; and all the works they do are good, for they act from sincerity for the sake of sincerity, and from justice for the sake of justice, and furthermore are content with their own, and are cheerful in mind and glad in heart whenever it happens that they have refrained from fraud; and after death they are welcomed by the angels and received by them as brothers, and are presented with goods even to abundance. But the opposite is true of evil managers; these after death are cast out of societies, and afterwards seek alms, and finally are sent into the caverns of robbers to labor there.

AE 978:2, 3. Take merchants as an example: All their works are evil works so long as they do not regard as sins, and thus shun as sins illegitimate gains and unlawful usury, also fraud and craft; for such works cannot be done from the Lord, but are done from a person himself. And the more expert they are in skillfully and artfully contriving devices from within for overreaching their companions the more evil are their works. And the more expert they are in bringing such devices into effect under the pretense of

sincerity, justice, and piety, the more evil still are their works. The more delight a merchant feels in such things the more do his works have their origin in hell. But if he acts sincerely and justly in order to acquire reputation, and wealth through reputation, even so as to seem to act from a love of sincerity and justice, and yet does not act sincerely and justly from affection for the Divine law or from obedience to it, he is still inwardly insincere and unjust, and his works are thefts, for through a pretense of sincerity and justice he seeks to steal. [3] That this is so becomes evident after death, when a person acts from his interior will and love, and not from the exterior; for then he thinks about and devises nothing but sharp practices and robberies, and withdraws himself from those who are sincere, and betakes himself either to forests or deserts, where he devotes himself to stratagems. In a word, all such become robbers. But it is otherwise with merchants who shun as sins thefts of every kind, especially the more interior and hidden, which are effected by craft and deceit. All their works are good, because they are from the Lord; for the influx from heaven, that is, through heaven from the Lord, for accomplishing such works is not intercepted by the evils just mentioned. To these riches do no harm, because to them riches are means for uses. Their tradings are the uses by which they serve their country and their fellow citizens; and through their riches they are in a condition to perform those uses to which the affection of good leads them.

AE 979:2. From what has been said above, what is meant in the Word by good works can now be seen, namely, that they are all works done by a person when evils have been removed as sins. For the works done after this are done from the person only as if from him; for they are done from the Lord, and all works done from the Lord are good, and are called the goods of life, the goods of charity, and good works; as for instance, all the judgments of a judge who has justice as his end, and who venerates and loves it as Divine, and who detests as infamous decisions made for the sake of rewards or friendship, or from favor. Thus he consults the good of his country by causing justice and judgment to reign therein as in heaven; and thus he consults the peace of every innocent citizen and protects him from the violence of evil doers. All these are good works. So all services of managers and dealings of merchants are good works when they shun unlawful gains as sins against the Divine laws. When a person shuns evils as sins he daily learns what a good work is, and the affection of doing good grows with him, and the affection of knowing truths for the sake of good; for so far as he knows truths he can perform works more fully and more wisely, and thus his works become more truly good. Cease, therefore, from asking in yourself, "What are the good works that I must do, or what good must I do to receive eternal life?" Only cease from evils as sins and look to the Lord, and the Lord will teach and lead you.

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(Peace⁷)

The Seventh Commandment

- from -

*The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem
from the Ten Commandments*

Emanuel Swedenborg

*In proportion as any one shuns thefts of every kind
as sins, in the same proportion
he loves sincerity.*

Life 80. To “steal,” in the natural sense, means not only to commit theft and robbery, but also to defraud, and under some pretext take from another his goods. But in the spiritual sense to “steal” means to deprive another of his truths of faith and his goods of charity. And in the highest sense to “steal” means to take away from the Lord that which is His, and attribute it to one’s self, and thus to claim righteousness and merit for one’s self. These are the “thefts of every kind.” And they also make a one, as do adulteries of every kind, and murders of every kind, of which we have already treated. The reason why they make a one is that they are one within another.

Life 81. The evil of theft enters more deeply into a person than any other evil, because it is conjoined with cunning and deceit; and cunning and deceit insinuate themselves even into the spiritual mind of the person in which is his thought with understanding. That a person possesses a spiritual mind and a natural mind will be seen below.

Life 82. That in proportion as any one shuns theft as a sin, in the same proportion he loves sincerity, is because theft is also fraud, and fraud and sincerity are two opposite things, so that in proportion as any one is not in theft in the same proportion he is in sincerity.

Life 83. Sincerity is to be understood as including integrity, justice, fidelity, and rectitude. In these no person can be from himself so as to love them from and for themselves. But *he* is in them who shuns as sins, fraud, cunning, and deceit, and is therefore in them not from himself but from the Lord (as shown above, n. 18-31) Such is the case with a priest, a magistrate, a judge, a trader, and with every one in his own office and his own work.

⁶ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

⁷ Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* 8867

Life 84. This is taught by the Word in many passages, among which are the following:

He that walks in righteousnesses, and speaks uprightnesses; he that despises oppressions for gain, that shakes his hands from holding bribes, that stops his ears from the hearing of bloods, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil he shall dwell on high (Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16).

Jehovah, who shall abide in Your tent? who shall dwell in the mountain of Your holiness? He that walks uprightly, and does righteousness; he that slanders not with his tongue, nor does evil to his companion (Ps. xv. 1-3, etc.).

My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me he that walks in the way of the upright, be shall minister to Me. He that works deceit shall not dwell in the midst of My house he that speaks lies shall not stand before My eyes. In the dawning will I cut off all the wicked of the land, to cut off from the city all the workers of iniquity (Ps. ci. 6-8).

That unless a person is interiorly sincere, just, faithful, and upright, he is insincere, unjust, unfaithful, and base, is taught by the Lord in these words:

Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. v. 10).

The “righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees” means the interior righteousness in which is the person who is in the Lord. That he is in the Lord is taught by the Lord Himself in John:

The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them (xvii. 22, 23, 26).

From this it is evident that they are “perfect” when the Lord is in them. These are they who are called

The pure in heart, who shall see God; and, Those who are perfect as is their Father in the heavens (Matt. v. 8, 48).

Life 85. It has been said above (n. 81), that the evil of theft enters more deeply into a person than any other evil because it is conjoined with cunning and deceit, and that cunning and deceit insinuate themselves even into the spiritual mind of a person in which is his thought with understanding. Something shall therefore now be said about the mind of a person. (That the mind of a person is his understanding and will together, see above, n. 43.)

Life 86. A person possesses a natural mind and a spiritual mind. The natural mind is below, and the spiritual mind above. The natural mind is the mind of a person's world, and the spiritual mind is the mind of his heaven. The natural mind may be called the animal mind, and the spiritual mind the human mind. A person is discriminated from an animal by possessing a spiritual mind. By means of this mind he can be in heaven while still in the world; and it is by means of this mind also that a person lives after death.

[2] In his understanding a person is able to be in the spiritual mind, and consequently in heaven, but unless he shuns evils as sins he cannot be in the spiritual mind and consequently in heaven, as to his will. And if he is not there as to his will, he is not in heaven, in spite of the fact that he is there in understanding, for the will drags the understanding down, and causes it to be just as natural and animal as it is itself.

[3] A person may be compared to a garden--his understanding to light, and his will to heat. In winter time a garden is in light but not in accompanying heat, but in summer time it is in light accompanied by heat. Just so a person who is in the light of the understanding alone is like a garden in winter time, whereas one who is in the light of the understanding and at the same time in the heat of the will is like a garden in summer time. Moreover the understanding is wise from spiritual light, and the will loves from spiritual heat, for spiritual light is Divine wisdom, and spiritual heat is Divine love.

[4] So long as a person does not shun evils as sins, the concupiscences of evils block up the interiors of the natural mind on the part of the will, being like a thick veil there, and like a black cloud beneath the spiritual mind, and they prevent its being opened. But in very deed the moment a person shuns evils as sins, the Lord inflows from heaven, takes away the veil, dispels the cloud, opens the spiritual mind, and so introduces the person into heaven.

[5] So long as the concupiscences of evils block up the interiors of the natural mind (in the way we have indicated), so long is the person in hell; the moment however that these concupiscences have been dispersed by the Lord, the person is in heaven. Furthermore: so long as the concupiscences of evils block up the interiors of the natural mind, so long is the person natural; but the moment they have been dispersed by the Lord, he is spiritual. Furthermore: so long as the concupiscences of evils block up the interiors of the natural mind, so long is the person animal, differing only in his ability to think and speak, even of such things as he does not see with his eyes, which ability he derives from his capacity of uplifting his understanding into the light of heaven. The moment however that these concupiscences have been dispersed by the Lord, the person is a person, because he then thinks what is true in the understanding from what is good in the will. And furthermore: so long as the concupiscences of evils block up the interiors of the natural mind, the person is like a garden in winter time, but the moment these concupiscences have been dispersed by the Lord, he is like a garden in summer time.

[6] The conjunction in a person of the will and the understanding is meant in the Word by "heart and soul," and by "heart and spirit." For example: that we must love God,

With all the heart, and with all the soul (Matt. xxii. 37).

And that God will give,

A new heart, and a new spirit (Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26, 27).

The "heart" means the will and its love, and the "soul" and the "spirit," the understanding and its wisdom.

You Shall Not Steal.
(Aim to Be Honest.⁸)
(Peace⁹)

The Seventh Commandment

- from -

True Christianity

Emanuel Swedenborg

You are not to steal.

TC 317. In the *earthly meaning*, this commandment literally covers not stealing, robbing, or privateering during a time of peace. It generally means not using stealth or pretense of any kind to take away someone else's possessions. It also covers all swindling, and illegal ways to profit, earn interest, and collect funds; also fraud in paying taxes and fees and in repaying loans.

Workers transgress against this commandment when they do their work dishonestly and deceptively; retailers, when they mislead customers with their merchandise, weighing, measuring, and calculations; officers, when they dip into their soldiers' pay; judges, when they tilt their judgments toward friends or relatives, or for bribes or other inducements, and thus bias their judgments or investigations and deprive others of goods that belong to those others by law.

TC 318. In the *spiritual meaning*, "stealing" refers to using false and heretical ideas to deprive others of the truths of their faith. Priests are spiritual thieves if they minister only for financial benefit or status and they teach things that on the basis of the Word they see, or at least could see, are not true. They rob people of the means of salvation, which are the truths related to faith.

Priests like this are called thieves in the following passages in the Word:

Those who do not enter through the door to the sheepfold but climb up some other way are thieves and robbers. Thieves do not come in except to steal, slaughter, and destroy. (John 10:1, 10)

Store up treasures, not on earth but in heaven, where thieves do not come in and steal. (Matthew 6:19, 20)

If thieves, if people who knock things over in the night, come to you, how might you be cut off? Are they not going to steal whatever satisfies them? (Obadiah, verse 5)

⁸ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 330

⁹ Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* 8867

They run here and there in the city, they run on the wall, they climb into houses, they come in through windows like a thief. (Joel 2:9)

They made a lie; the thief comes in, and the crowd scatters outside. (Hosea 7:1)

TC 319. In the *heavenly meaning*, thieves stand for people who take divine power away from the Lord and people who claim the Lord's merit and justice for themselves. Even if these people worship God, they trust themselves, not him, and believe in themselves, not in him.

TC 320. There are people who teach false and heretical things and convince the public that these things are true and theologically correct, and yet they read the Word and are therefore able to know what is false and what is true. There are also people who use errors to support false religious beliefs and lead people astray.

These people can be compared to con artists who perpetrate acts of fraud of every kind. Because the things just mentioned are actually thefts in a spiritual sense, these people can be compared to con artists who mint counterfeit coins, gild them or color them gold, and trade them as pure. They can also be compared to people who know skillful ways to cut and polish rock crystals, harden them, and sell them as diamonds. They can also be compared to people who would dress baboons and apes in human clothing with veils over their simian faces and lead them through town on horses or mules, claiming that they are nobles of an old and distinguished family.

They are also like people who would put masks covered in makeup over their own natural faces to hide their good looks. They are like people who would display selenite or mica, which gleam like gold and silver, and sell them as ore containing precious metals. They are like people who would put on theatrical performances to divert others from true divine worship and to lure those others away from church buildings to theaters.

People who support falsities of all kinds and care nothing for the truth, who play the part of priests solely for financial benefit or status and are therefore spiritual thieves, are like thieves who have master keys with which they can open the doors of any home. These people are also like leopards and eagles that look around with sharp eyes for areas that are rich in prey.