

How the Lord Loves Us

The essence of God consists of love and wisdom. The essence of His love consists of three things: to love others outside of Himself, to desire to be one with them, and to make them happy from Himself. Love desires these three things, and wisdom brings them forth.

The first essential, which is to love others outside of one's self, is recognized in God's love for the whole human race. The love of God goes forth and extends not only to good people and good things, but also to evil people and evil things; consequently not only to the people and things in heaven but also in hell.

The second essential of the love of God, which is a desire to be one with others, is recognized in His conjunction with the angelic heaven, with the church on earth, with everyone there, and with every thing good and true that enters into and constitutes a person and the church.

The third essential of the love of God, which is to render others blessed from Himself, is recognized in eternal life, which is the endless blessedness, happiness, and felicity that God gives to those who receive His love into themselves (see *True Christian Religion* 43:1,2).

For Reflection:

- The Lord's love extends to all people—good or evil—and they receive His love to the degree they have chosen to live according to His Word. Good people receive the Lord's love in an infinite number of ways. What are some of the qualities that you love in your family and friends that may reflect their reception of the Lord's love? (You might also note ways the beauty of nature calls the Lord's love to your mind.)

- Reflect on the Lord's wish to be joined together with you, "opening His arms and inviting you into His embrace" (see *TCR* 787). What is holding you back, separating you from the Lord?

- The Lord is devoted to the happiness of all people, and He inspires our efforts to make others happy. What are some ways that you can contribute to the happiness of other people?