

COLLEGE CHAPEL TALK

MAKING THE LORD YOUR GOD

By Rev. Ormond Odhner

Readings: Luke 6:43-49

“You shall have no other gods before My face.” Thus spoke the Lord in the book of Exodus. And in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church He says, “Everyone’s god is that which he loves above all things” (*Apocalypse Explained* 935). The implications are rather plain. We are to see to it that we love nothing else in life more than we love the Lord Jesus Christ. But what, in this sense, is love? What is meant by loving the Lord?

“He who loves Me keeps My commandments.” Thus spoke the Lord while on earth. Genuine love of the Lord involves honoring Him as the only Source of all good and the only Teacher of the truth that can lead to eternal happiness in heaven. And such honor must be more than a thing of the intellect alone. After all, purely intellectually, purely cold-bloodedly, anyone can see that the Lord knows more than he himself knows; anyone can see, intellectually, that the Lord can lead him to greater good than he can lead himself. No, this appreciation of the Lord, this honor of the Lord as the only Source of all that is good and true, must be a thing of the heart, primarily a thing of love and affection, moving the will.

However, a person cannot make himself love the Lord above all else in life. He is not born with such a love, and no person can change his own loves. Love is the deepest, most internal thing in life, and a person has no more control over the internals of his life or spirit than he has over the internal processes of digestion. All that a person can control are the externals of his life—the externals of his body and the externals of his spirit. But if a person does control the externals (control them properly), the Lord will take care of the internals. If a person controls his eating, the Lord will control his digestion and give him good health. And if a person controls his external thoughts and desires, shunning as sin the thought and the conscious desire of evil, the Lord will supplant his evil loves with good loves, causing him to love the Lord Jesus Christ above all else in life.

And how does a person do this in regard to the First Commandment? Rather simply. By refusing to let himself be led by anything or anyone less than the Lord Himself. Don’t let a poll influence your decision as to what is right and what is wrong. The fact that “everyone is doing it” does not make “it” right. Did not the Lord say, “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil”?

Don’t let any poll make your decisions as to spiritual right and wrong. Don’t let psychiatry. Don’t let any of your friends, no matter how much you respect them. And above all, don’t let yourself make those decisions. Go to the Lord in His Word. Find out what He actually says. Make that the rule of your life and stick to it, come what may. “You shall have no other gods before My face.” Stick to it, through all temptation, and the Lord will remove every evil love from your heart, and you will find that in actual fact you have come to love the Lord above all else and that He has, in reality, become your God.