

Quotes from the Word: I Am the Vine

OLD TESTAMENT

And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth....
(Genesis 9:7)

And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard;
You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.
(Leviticus 19:10)

Look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine
And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,
And the branch that You made strong for Yourself.
(Psalm 80:14-15)

Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing....
(Psalm 92:13-14)

In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing....
(Isaiah 4:2)

“Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them,
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”
(Isaiah 3:10)

“Take away her branches, for they are not the Lord’s.
For the house of Israel and the house of Judah
Have dealt very treacherously with Me,” says the Lord.
(Jeremiah 5:10)

I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
And according to the fruit of his doings.
(Jeremiah 17:10)

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:8)

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NEW TESTAMENT

“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16-20).

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:43-45).

He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down’” (Luke 13:6-9).

“A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven” (John 3:27).

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit....

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you....

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You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.”

(John 15:1-2,4-12,16-17)

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

Charity

By charity is meant the good that a person does to the neighbor (*Doctrine of Charity* 202).

A person is born that he may become charity. But he cannot become charity unless he perpetually does the good of use to the neighbor, from affection and delight (*Doctrine of Charity* 126).

The works of charity consist in each person doing what is right and fair in his employment, from a love of what is right and fair, and of what is good and true (*Arcana Coelestia* 4783:5).

There is no knowledge of what good and truth are without knowledge of what love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor are, since all good has to do with love and charity, and all truth has to do with good.... Charity consists in an inward affection for doing what is true, and not in an outward affection without an inward one. Charity equally consists of performing services for their own sake and its nature depends upon the services performed. Charity is a person's spiritual life.... A person resembles a garden when charity and faith are linked in him, a desert when they are not (*Last Judgment* 39: 9, 11, 12, 13).

The first thing of charity is not to do evil to the neighbor. To do good to him holds the second place.... Willing evil and doing good are two essentially two opposites. For evil belongs to hatred towards the neighbor and good belongs to love towards the neighbor.... The Lord teaches in many passages that a person cannot do good which is essentially good until evil has been removed (see *True Christian Religion* 435:1,2,4).

Anyone can do good to the neighbor, an evil as well as a good person. But no one can do it from good in himself unless from the Lord; nor unless he shuns evils as sins.... [T]hat no one can do it unless he shuns evils as sins, is because the Lord can flow into no one with good, so as to be received, unless the evils in him are removed. For evils do not receive good, but reject it (see *Doctrine of Charity* 202).

When people who are perceptive have feelings of compassion they know that they are being alerted by the Lord to offer help (*Arcana Coelestia* 6737).

Love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor are the life of faith (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2343:6).

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I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches

Everything good that is an aspect of love and every truth that composes faith originates in Him [the Lord], and none of it whatever in any human being (*Arcana Coelestia* 10773).

Falsities which have evil within them are like trees which bear bad fruit, which must be uprooted and thrown into the fire [see Matthew 7:17-20, 12:33 and John 15:4-6].... From this it is evident that all good which is going to bear any fruit begins in the Lord, and unless it comes from Him it is not good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9258:4).

No person left to himself is able to do what is good or think what is true. He can do so only with the Lord's help, as is clear in John 3:27 and John 15:5 (*Arcana Coelestia* 9445).

God is the All in all of the church and its religion. The acknowledgment of God in it, is like the soul in the body.... And it is like the prolific element in seed, which, abiding inmosty in all the sap drawn from the earth by the root, accompanies it from the first germination even to the fruit, in which it also is, and it disposes the vegetative process so that it proceeds in its own order. For this reason, the person of the church, without the acknowledgment of God...is like a tree the branches of which are cut off, and the trunk cut in pieces, and the whole piled up together in a heap reserved for the fire. For the Lord says: "Without Me ye can do nothing; if anyone abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather him, and cast him into the fire, and he is burned" (John 15:5-6) (*Coronis* 47).

The understanding of a spiritual person is made new and regenerated by truth which is from the Lord alone, therefore the Lord compares Himself to a "vine." And those who are implanted in the truth which is from Him, and consequently in Him, He compares to the "shoots" and the good therefrom to the "fruit" in John 15. In the supreme sense a "vine" symbolizes the Lord as to Divine truth, and in the internal sense a vine symbolizes the intellectual part of a person who is spiritual (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5113:15, 16).

The Fruit of Charity

All goods which are of love to the neighbor or charity are uses, and all uses are goods (*Doctrine of Charity* 127).

There is no charity apart from works of charity. It is in its practice or use that charity consists. He who loves the neighbor as himself perceives no delight in charity except in its exercise, or in use. Therefore a life of charity is a life of uses. Such is the life of the whole heaven. For the kingdom of the Lord, because it is a kingdom of mutual love, is a kingdom of uses. Every pleasure therefore which is from charity, has its delight from use. The more noble the use, the greater the delight. Consequently the angels have happiness from the Lord according to the essence and quality of their use (*Arcana Coelestia* 997).

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Real charity is dealing fairly and faithfully in whatever position, business or work one is engaged in, because everything a person so does is of use to the community (*True Christian Religion* 422).

The proper and genuine uses of charity are the uses connected with any one's function or administration. When any one carries them out from spiritual faithfulness and honesty—and all do this who love their uses because they are uses and who believe that all good is from the Lord—then their uses become goods of charity in which love to the Lord has existence, or with which that love is conjoined.

But in addition to these uses, there are other general uses as well, namely, faithfully loving one's married partner, duly bringing up one's children, and managing one's domestic affairs with prudence. These works become works of charity when they are done from a love of use, and in respect of a married partner, when they are done from mutual and chaste love.

There are other general uses, too; such as making suitable and due contributions towards the functioning of the Church, which good works become uses of charity in so far as the Church is loved as neighbor in a higher degree. Amongst general uses, too, is the expenditure of money and labor on the building and maintaining of orphanages, hospitable lodges, educational establishments and other institutions of the kind; not all of these are obligatory.

Rendering assistance to the needy, to widows and to orphans, merely because they are needy, widows or orphans, and giving to beggars, merely because they are beggars, are uses of external charity...they are not uses of internal charity except in so far as they are actuated by the use itself and by a love of it (*Divine Wisdom* 11:5).