

THE LORD'S LOVE

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.... For God is everywhere, and is from eternity to eternity the same. He says also: That He makes the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45). But the reason why evil people continue to be evil, and evil things continue to be evil, lies in the subjects and objects themselves. They do not receive the love of God as it is...but as they themselves are. In the same way as thorns and thistles receive the heat of the sun and the rain of heaven.

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. Moreover, love viewed in itself is nothing but an endeavor towards conjunction.... That this aim of the essence of love might be realized people were created by God into His own image and likeness, with which a conjunction is possible. That the Divine love continually seeks conjunction is evident from the Lord's own words: That He wishes them to be one, He in them and they in Him, and that the love of God might be in them (John 17:21-23, 26).

The third essential of the love of God, which is to make them happy 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. For as God is love itself, so is He blessedness itself.... Thus God from Himself makes the angels happy, and people after death. This He does by conjunction with them (see *True Christian Religion* 43:1-4).