

Sermon: I am the Light of the World: Part II
Morning Star Chapel
Sep 12, 2015
Rev. Calvin Odhner

Text: John 8:12

Arcana

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Introduction

Good Morning and welcome to the Morning Star New Church. When you got up this morning the sun was coming up, light was shining through the windows and another day had begun....We don't think much about the light that shines all around us until we are in the dark! ...until we are without light! In fact a friend of mine moved to Arizona just for the mood altering light...from SAD...Seasonal Affective Disorder.....Light is such an important part of our life ...its something we would really, really miss if it were not in our life, but we are so used to it we don't think about it.

But our sunlight corresponds to a much deeper kind of light...spiritual enlightenment. Through correspondence we are going to explore both these kinds of "light."

The Word talks a lot about light and for the next three weeks we will be looking at how important it is to have light or "enlightenment" in our life.

From the beginning to the end of the Word there is a theme of "light" coming into the world...

"The earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Then God said 'Let there be light; and light there

was; and God separated the light from the darkness; and God saw that the light was good." (Genesis 1: 1-3)

... on the second to last page in the Word we read in Revelation:

And there shall be no night there; and they have no need of a lamp and the light of the sun; for the Lord God enlightens them; and they shall reign for ages of ages.

Rev. 22:5

In Exodus, the children of Israel wandered through the wilderness of Sinai; the Lord gave them a pillar of fire to lead them by night and a pillar of cloud and light to lead them by day... In Isaiah, eight centuries before the Lord was born, he talks about "the light"

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them has the light shined." (Isaiah 9:2).

And in the Gospel of John: speaking of Jesus, it says,

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 And the Light appears in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:4-5)

The Lord encourages us to

"Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness will not overtake you. If you walk in darkness, you do not know where you are going. Become the children of light." (John 12:32-36)

And finally in Matthew we read:

14 You are the light of the world. A city that is laid out on a mountain cannot be hidden.

15 Neither do they light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the lampstand, and it shines for all who are in the house. (Matthew 5:15)

Amen

Let's sing our next song (Please be seated)

Children's Talk

If the children would like to come up for the children's talk now is the time.

In those days so many people loved to follow the Lord and they would gather around Him and listen to His teachings. One day He told them

"ye are the light of the world....A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14) Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. " (John 5:14,15)

Let's see what the Lord means by this....can somebody put this lamp under the basket....now we'll turn the lights out so we can really see what He means....look how dark it is in here. So lets take the lamp back out...now we can see!! When we hide the truths we know and don't turn truths into good deeds, we are hiding our light under a bushel.

The Lord compares the light from this lamp to the truth inside us...and he says don't just know the truth.... use it! Go out and do good things with the truth you have! This is putting our lamp on a lampstand! And when we do that we begin to follow the Lord's paths that He has laid out for us...and all His paths lead us to heaven. Amen

Please bow your heads for the blessing on the children. May the Lord give His angels charge over you and keep you in all your ways. Amen

Ye are the light of the world; a city*** that is set on a mountain cannot be hid (Matt. 5:14). This was said to the disciples, by whom the church which is in truths from good is meant; therefore it is said, "Ye are the light of the world," "the light of the world" meaning the truth of the church. That it is not the truth unless it is from good is signified by "a city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid," "a city on a mountain" meaning truth from good. (AR 194:2, AE 785:4)

Sermon

The Lord was born into the world in a time of utter darkness. He came to be a source of light. As Simeon said when he saw the Lord as a baby being dedicated in the Temple, "My eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32).

Later the Lord would use very similar words to describe Himself and His mission, by proclaiming, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

In contrast, then, "darkness" must mean the opposite. It would symbolize a scarcity of truth (which breeds falsity), the absence of the Word, the lack of understanding, and little or no faith in the Lord. As one passage from the Heavenly Doctrines puts it, "Darkness" symbolizes falsity arising either from ignorance of the truth, or from a false principle of religion, or from a life of evil" (Apocalypse Revealed 413).

The Lord describes how He is the "Light" in this passage:

*In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and God was the Word: all things were made by means of Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the **light** of humankind. He was in the world, and the world was made by means of him. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory. (John 1: 1,3,4,10,14)*

In this passage it is clear that the the Lord is the one who is meant by "the Word," since it says that the Word was made flesh. The Word is the Divine Truth that is in the Lord and from the Lord...so, here it is called "the Light."

But what does it mean that the Lord is the source of light, or that the Lord is the light of this world, or Goodness and Truth themselves?

Light is used in the Word to symbolize several things—all of which give meaning to the central image of the Lord being the Light. For instance:

- Light is a symbol for the truth (see Apocalypse Revealed 897), specifically truth grounded in goodness, or which looks towards goodness—the truth which helps us live a good life (see Arcana Coelestia 2353).
- Light is a symbol for the **Lord's Word** which contains this truth (see Apocalypse Revealed 897).
- Light is a symbol for **understanding**, or the “enlightenment” the Lord offers us when we read the Word with a desire to discover the truth (see Apocalypse Revealed 914).
- Light is a symbol for **faith**—for our belief in the Lord Himself, for our understanding of those teachings in His Word which help us to comprehend what kind of God He is, what He cares about, and how He leads us (see Arcana Coelestia 897).

So the Word is the Divine Truth, called the “Light of the world,” which is the Lord, speaking to us.

In heaven, the Light, or Divine Truth, possess all power. In fact, angels are called “powers” because of the divine truth with them and we are told

“a thousand enemies” there cannot bear one ray of heavenly light(HH 137:2).

Yet, its hard for us to believe the power that the Light of Divine Truth has if we think of it only in terms of speaking, as most of us do. For instance, if I say “Joe, the trash is full (a truth), take it out to the road” and Joe obeys and does it. But this is not

the “power” in the light of truth that the heavenly Doctrines are talking about. We are told

“There is an intrinsic power within divine truth...a power of such a nature that buy means of it, heaven, the world, and everything in them were created” (HH 137:3).

This “Light,” this Divine Truth, that inflows into all of us all the time from the Lord, is illustrated in the Heavenly Doctrines in two ways:

1. Out of our intentions we act in the world right? Our intentions contain what is good in the will and what is true in the understanding. We set our whole body into motion, a thousand things rush to do our bidding from the good and the truth acting together within us...our whole body is formed to be obedient to what is good and true! This power comes from the light of truth (HH 137:3).
2. Another way we can see the power of truth is through the light and warmth from the sun in our world. Everything grows...trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, fruits and seeds...from the warmth and the light of the sun, so you can see the productive power inherent in warmth and light which corresponds to Divine Good and Divine Truth. Everything in all of heaven and earth has to do with what is good and true coming together in a union if it is to be anything at all (HH137:4).

But lets take a look at the different kinds of truth we can have in our life by looking at different kinds of light. Which one of these kinds of light do you see or use in your life.

Blue Clouds

Dim

Harsh

Stars

Just imagine if your life were this dark all the time....imagine what life would be like. But all of us have an opportunity to partner with the Lord right now...to create a talking relationship with Him where your asking Him what you should do...and through reading and partnering with Him the light begins to shine in our minds of how we should act...how we should love each other. If you have a red laser pull it out and shine it at the Word...make a connection with His Word...although we cant see the connection to Divine Truth it is there (spray) lifting us up, looking out for us, caring for our every spiritual need.

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

AMEN let us pray

AC 9410:5

What truth "in its power" is, shall also be briefly told. That in the Word the angels are called "powers," and also that they are powers, is known in the church. Yet they are not powers from themselves, but from the Lord, because they are recipients of the truth Divine which is from the Lord. They have such power from the Lord that one of them can drive away, shut up in the hells, and restrain, a thousand of the diabolical crew. For the truth Divine which is from the Lord fills the heavens, and makes the heavens; and if you will believe it, all things have been made and created through it. The Word, which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, through which all things were created, and through which the world was made (John 1:1-14) is Divine truth. That this is the one only substantial thing, from which are all things, few are able to apprehend, because no other idea is at this day held about Divine truth than as of the speech of the mouth of one in authority, in accordance with which his commands are executed; but what idea ought to be held about it may be seen above (n. 9407). The omnipotence of the Divine truth which is from the Lord is described in many passages in the Word; and also in John: There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels; but they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:7, 8, 11). That "the blood of the Lamb" denotes the Divine truth that proceeds from the Divine Human of the Lord, see n. 4735, 6978, 7317, 7326, 7850, 9127, 9393, 9395; and that "the word of their testimony" denotes the truth Divine which is received, is plain.¹⁴⁾

AE 151:4

This is clearly stated in many passages in the Old Testament Prophets, as well as in the Evangelists; of these I will cite only the following in John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And that Light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. It was the true Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world. He was in the world, but the world acknowledged Him not. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (John 1:1-14). It is plainly evident that the Lord in respect to the Human is here meant by "the Word," for it is said, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." It is also evident that the Lord made His Human to be Divine, for it is said, "the Word was with God and God was the Word, and this became flesh," that is, a man. And since all Divine truth proceeds from the Lord's Divine Human, and this is His Divine in the heavens, therefore by "the Word" is also signified Divine truth; and thence He is said to be "the Light which lighteth every man coming into the world." Moreover, "light" is Divine truth; and because men from being internal became so external or natural as no longer to acknowledge Divine truth or the Lord, therefore it is said that "the darkness apprehended not the light," and that "the world acknowledged Him not." (That the Word is the Lord in respect to the Divine Human and Divine truth proceeding therefrom, see The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, n. 263, 304. That "light" is Divine truth, and "darkness" the falsities in which those are who are not in the light, see in the work on Heaven and Hell, n. 126-140, 275.)

[5]

That they who acknowledge the Lord and worship Him from love and faith, and are not in the love of self and the love of the world, are regenerated and saved, is also taught in these words in John:

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to be children of God, even to them that believe in His name; which were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12, 13). Here "of bloods" means such as destroy love and charity. "The will of the flesh" is every evil from the love of self and love of the world, also man's will-proprium, which in itself is nothing but evil; "the will of man" is falsity thence that comes from that will-proprium. That those who are not in these loves receive the Lord and are regenerated and saved, is meant by its being said that those who "believe in His name become children of God," and are "born of God." (That to "believe in the Lord's name" is to acknowledge His Divine Human and to receive love and faith from Him, see above. n. 102-135. That "bloods" are the things that destroy love and charity, see Arcana Coelestia, n. 4735, 5476, 9127; that "flesh" is man's will-proprium, which in itself is nothing but evil, n. 210, 215, 731, 874-876, 987, 1047, 2307, 2308, 3518, 3701, 3812, 4328, 8480, 8550, 10283, 10284, 10286, 10732; and that man's proprium is the love of self and the love of the world, n. 694, 731, 4317, 5660. That "man" [vir] is the intellectual, and therefore truth or falsity, since the intellectual is of the one or the other, see n. 3134, 3309, 9007. Thus "the will of man" [viri] is the intelligence-proprium, which, when it exists from the will-proprium [which in itself is nothing but evil], is nothing but falsity, for where evil is in the will there is falsity in the understanding. That to be "born of God" is to be regenerated by the Lord, see Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, n. 173-184. Moreover, that all in the universe, from influx out of heaven and from revelation, worship the Divine in the human form, see Earths in the Universe, n. 98, 121, 141, 154, 158, 159, 169; likewise all angels of the higher heavens, see in the work on Heaven and Hell, n. 78-86.)

The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined (Isaiah 9:2).