

Quotes from the Word: Using Our Talents

OLD TESTAMENT

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

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

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).

With your wisdom and understanding you have gained riches for yourself (Ezekiel 28:4).

NEW TESTAMENT

“I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Revelation 2:23).

“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).

“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).

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ... So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them. His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:14-16, 20-21).

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:18-21).

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15: 12, 14).

“Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38).

Quotes from the Word: Using Our Talents

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

What Is the Use of Charity?

To perform useful services is to act honestly, rightly, justly and faithfully in the work connected with one's occupation (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 431).

Every person is valued and loved, not for his will and understanding alone, but for the use which he performs or is able to perform from them (see *Apocalypse Explained* 1193:2).

To perform use is to will well to others for the sake of the common good, and not to perform use is to will well to others for the sake of self (see *Heaven and Hell* 64).

Every person who loves a good use, and performs it from the love of it, is loved by the Lord and received with joy by the angels in heaven (*Apocalypse Explained* 1226:6).

Charity is a person's spiritual life (*Last Judgment* 39:12).

Works are what save a person or what condemn him, good works being those that save, evil those that condemn (*Arcana Coelestia* 3934:7).

Good works are love and charity in act (*Apocalypse Explained* 798:4)

The Parable of the Talents

That the knowledges of truth and good from the Word will be taken away from those who have not acquired spiritual life for themselves, is meant in the Lord's parables respecting the talents and pounds given to the servants that they might trade and make gain.... Here "talents," "pounds," and "money," stand for the knowledges of truth and good from the Word. "To trade," "to make gain," "to put it to the bankers," or "in the bank," means to acquire for oneself thereby spiritual life and intelligence (*Apocalypse Explained* 193: 10).

By the servant who received five talents are meant those who have received goods and truths from the Lord, and so, have received remains. By "him who received two" are meant people who have joined charity to faith when well on in years. And by "him who received one" are meant those who have received faith alone without charity. Faith without charity cannot make gain or bear fruit (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5291:4,5).

Everyone who is being reformed and regenerated has charity and faith conferred on him from the Lord, but each individual receives these according to his ability and state (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2967:2).

Quotes from the Word: Using Our Talents

Someone wise is a person who is moved by love to put truths into practice. Someone intelligent is a person who is moved by faith to put them into practice. Someone with knowledge is a person who applies his knowledge to doing so. “Work” is that which is actually done by them. Thus “work” means those three talents when put to use, within which they all combine. Nobody can be said to have wisdom, intelligence, or knowledge in the true sense of these words if they are not put to use by him. For wisdom, intelligence, and knowledge have to do with the life a person should lead, and not with doctrine without reference to that life. Life is the end for the sake of which they exist (*Arcana Coelestia* 10331:2-4).

“Hiding these in the earth” or “in a napkin” means in the memory of the natural man only.... This takes place with all in the other life who have acquired for themselves knowledges from the Word, and have not committed them to the life, but only to the memory.... Committing knowledges from the Word to the life is thinking from them, when one, left to himself, thinks from his spirit, and also willing them and doing them (*Apocalypse Explained* 193: 10,11).

If you wish to be led by Divine Providence, use prudence as a servant or assistant who faithfully manages the goods of his lord. This prudence is the mina given to each of the servants to do business with, of which they were to render an account, in Luke 19:12-25, cf. Matt. 25:14-30. This prudence appears to a person to be his own, and he believes it be his own as long as he keeps shut up in him the most implacable foe of God and Divine providence, namely, love of self. This love dwells in the interior qualities of every person from birth. If you do not recognize it (for it does not wish to be recognized), it dwells secure, and it guards the door to keep the person from opening it and thus the Lord from casting it out. A person opens that door by refraining from evils as sins as though of himself, with the acknowledgment that he does so from the Lord. It is this prudence with which Divine Providence acts in concert (*Divine Providence* 210:2).

Being a Good and Faithful Servant

Serving the Lord is performing uses (*Heaven and Hell* 112).

Affection or love constitutes the life of everyone. Consequently those who are in the affection of truth constantly serve the Lord, even when they are in their vocations, business, and employments, for the affection that is within reigns continually and serves. Moreover, this is the service the Lord desires, but not being constantly in temples and in worship. To be in temples in worship there, and not in truths, is not serving the Lord, but serving the Lord is to be in truths, and to act sincerely and justly in everything. For then the principles of truth, sincerity, and justice, that are with a person, serve the Lord (*Apocalypse Explained* 478:3).

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

Quotes from the Word: Using Our Talents

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 (*Divine Wisdom* 11:5).

A person is concerned for his physical well-being, endeavoring to be properly nourished, clothed and housed, to take care of his household, to seek employment in order to be useful and also to be entertained and recreated by delights of the world—all of these for the sake of an end, which ought to be useful service. For through these endeavors he is in a state to serve the Lord and to serve the neighbor. However, when he has no love of serving the Lord and serving the neighbor, and only a love of serving himself for the sake of the world, then that love from being heavenly becomes hellish (see *Divine Love and Wisdom* 396).

It is a general rule that as is a person's character, so is every work he performs.... For works are the product of the love and faith residing in a person (*Arcana Coelestia* 10331:6).

Enter into the Joy of Your Lord

To those who faithfully perform uses, the Lord gives the love of use and its reward, which is internal blessedness, and this is eternal happiness (*True Christian Religion* 736:3).

Angels have happiness from the Lord according to the essence and quality of their use (*Arcana Coelestia* 997).

Everyone has heavenly joy according to the quality of his faithfulness, sincerity and justice. The reason for this is that a mind devoted to its employment and work from the love of use is held together, and is then in spiritual delight, which is the delight of fidelity, sincerity and justice, and is withheld from the delight of fraud and malice, also from the delight of idle conversation and feasting, which is the delight of idleness (see *Divine Wisdom* 10:4).

Loving the Lord as a Person and not loving uses, is loving Him from oneself, and that is not loving. He who does uses, or goods, from the Lord, is also doing them for His sake. These things can be illustrated by the celestial love in which angels of the third heaven are. These angels are in love to the Lord more than angels of the other heavens. They do not understand loving the Lord to be anything else than doing goods that are uses, declaring that uses are the Lord with them. By "uses" they mean the uses and good services of one's office, administration or occupation, as well in the case of priests and officials, as of those engaged in trade and

Quotes from the Word: Using Our Talents

industry. Good services that do not come within the scope of their duties they do not call “uses” but alms, benefactions and favors (*Divine Love* 13)

The angelic heaven hangs together as a unified whole, yet it exhibits an infinite variety, in that no two people there are ever entirely alike—not in their souls and minds, nor in their affections, perceptions and consequent thoughts, nor in their inclinations and consequent intentions, nor in the sounds of their voices, facial features, physical characteristics, gestures or manner of walk (*Conjugal Love* 324).