

## SPIRITUAL TASK –FOLLOWING RACHEL (Genesis 29)

*By the Rev. Prescott Rogers*

**Story** Jacob was willing to do many difficult tasks because he loved Rachel. He was willing to even be victimized by Laban so that he might legally gain the love of his life. The result of his willingness to pursue and to persevere was blessing from the Lord in the form of wealth, many sons, and a marriage with Rachel.

**Meaning** If we allow the Lord to lead us by our good affections we too will be blessed in the form of spiritual wealth (truths), spiritual sons (the goods of use), and an ideal marriage in heaven (the union of good and truth).

**Definition** Affection is a very important and very much used term in the Writings for the New Church. The term literally means the process (-tion) of change (affect-). This means that a person is willing to change because of something or someone. If a person has the affection for truth, he or she is willing to change when hearing what is true, because it is true. If a person has an affection for goodness, he or she is willing to change because of the realization that something is good. If a person has an affection for marriage, he or she is willing to change for the sake of the marriage. There are literally myriads of illustrations. Notice the connection between affection and willingness, for our affections are in that part of our mind called the will, while thoughts are in the understanding or the intellect.

**Task** It is a teaching of the New Church that the Lord leads a person by his or her affections. He stirs those affections when we are stimulated from an experience in the hope that our response will be beneficial to others and to ourselves. The hells also lead us by our affections, our evil affections. A useful task, then, is to consider for what we are willing to change. What are the motivating forces in our lives? What has caused us to change in the past? When you have reflected on these matters, notice throughout the coming week your reactions to various experiences, with attention to how they have affected you. What brings you joy? What causes anger in its various forms? From such observations over time we are better able to practice self-examination and to work with the Lord on developing and enhancing our good affections, and on stopping or on purifying our evil affections.