

Communications

The Authority of the Writings

It is gratifying to see the following statement under the title of *New Church Life*: “A monthly magazine devoted to the teachings revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg.”

Occasionally, clergy and laity alike omit the words “teachings revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg” in written articles and in speech. All too often they say, “Swedenborg says...” or “the Writings of Swedenborg say...” I wonder if Swedenborg would be appalled at this tendency to give the authorship to him!

I'm sure it is usually taken for granted that what is quoted or paraphrased was revealed to Swedenborg by the Lord. I think I speak for others when I say I would feel more comfortable if the source were stated, for example, “The Lord says...” or “the Heavenly Doctrine teaches...” We need only to recall the familiar number, 779, in *True Christian Religion* for the explanation of the true source of these marvelous teachings: the Lord! But if brevity is the issue, would it be better to refer to the teachings given in the Second Coming of the Lord as what “the Writings say” rather than what “Swedenborg says”?

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A Reflection

When loved ones go to the other world after a long illness from which there was no hope of recovery, we have mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are happy that they have been released from the limitations that the illness imposed on them. But on the other hand, we know that we will miss having them with us, talking with them, and doing things together.

If we stop to reflect, we realize that thousands of people are experiencing these feelings at any one time. On further

reflection, we can come to realize how fortunate we are to have the knowledge about the life after death that the Lord has revealed in the Heavenly Doctrine.

That knowledge does not remove our pain, but it has the power to bring us new certainty about the reality of the spiritual world and the life after death. It assures us that the sense we have of our loved ones' nearness to us is not a product of our imaginations. And it also assures us that we will be reunited with them and find them the same people that we knew and loved when they were with us in the natural world.

This knowledge is a great gift, and we need to find effective ways of sharing it with others that have not yet received it. Perhaps we can do this by speaking openly and frankly about our experiences and our convictions when we find appropriate opportunities to do so. We need not quote passages from the Writings or present specific truths about the life after death. Those things can wait until our listeners ask about them. Instead we can show by our words and behavior that the knowledge we have been given has enabled us to survive the grief that is inevitable when we lose a loved one.

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