

THE LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST REIGNS

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“The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, Whose kingdom shall be for ages of ages” (True Christian Religion 791)

This is the message the twelve disciples proclaimed throughout the whole spiritual world on the nineteenth day of June in the year 1770. These words signaled the fulfillment of the prophecy given in the book of Revelation: “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever... ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One Who is and Who was and Who is to come, because you have taken Your great power and reigned’” (Rev, 11:15, 17).

The words of our text; “The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, Whose kingdom shall be for ages of ages,” are very familiar to New Church people. This message is repeated annually at our New Church day celebrations. It is on the basis of this proclamation that our Church—The New Church—is founded.

While these words are very familiar to us, how often have we reflected on their meaning and import? We tend to think of them solely in regard to their historic importance—as the proclamation that heralded the establishment of the New Church in the spiritual world. Important as that was, there is much more meaning contained in these few words. In this sermon we would invite your reflection on them so that we may more fully appreciate their meaning.

“The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.” These words state explicitly Who He is that reigns—the Lord Jesus Christ—Who is the one only God. This truth is not new to us, but it was new to most of those to whom this proclamation was made. Most of those to whom this message was given were brought up to believe that God, the invisible Father, reigns, and that

redemption was effected through His Son, Jesus Christ. They did not know that the fullness of divinity was in the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was God on earth in Human form, and that it was He who reigns. It appears that they had forgotten His declaration after His resurrection: “All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt, 28:18).

Not only was this truth new to those to whom it was preached at that time, but it is new in the world today outside of the New Church. To many in the Christian world, Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the intercessor between God the Father and man but not the ruler and creator of the universe—not the one only God of heaven and earth.

In the world of Islam, Allah is God. Jesus Christ was one of his greatest prophets. In the pagan religions of the east, various deities are acknowledged. And then, in what remains of the communist world, there is a denial of the existence of God.

Out of the vast populations of this world, only a handful of people acknowledge the truth that it is the Lord God Jesus Christ Who created the universe and reigns over its inhabitants. The importance of this truth to mankind cannot be over-estimated, or over-emphasized. It is the fundamental truth of life—the fundamental reality.

Let us first consider the meaning of our text as it applies to the Lord Himself. Prior to His incarnation and glorification, the Lord did indeed reign. But His operations in regard to leading people to heaven were exercised through the mediation of the angels of the celestial heaven. When manifesting himself to people on earth, He would infill an angelic society with His presence and present Himself as the angel of Jehovah, as He did with Abraham and many of the prophets. The Writings call it a “borrowed” human.

But, in the process of time, as the human race removed itself further and further from the true order of life, this mode of leading mankind was no longer adequate. So the Lord bowed the

heavens and came down. By birth into the world He took on the ultimate plane of life through which He could immediately approach mankind, and He glorified his Human—made it Divine. He assumed the Divine Human. Therefore, after His resurrection He could declare: “All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Although the Lord glorified His Human while on earth, the revelation of His Divine Human, or the revealing of His Divine humanity, had to await the time when people could receive that revelation with their understanding and could rationally understand that Jesus Christ, while on earth, was God Himself in Human form.

The Lord Himself spoke of this to His disciples, saying: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.... He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:12-15).

The fulfillment of this promise to the disciples took place when the revelation of his Divine Human was completed—when the Writings were completed. Then the Lord was present with mankind in all the power of His Word, presenting Himself, or revealing Himself, to every plane of the human mind and thought—from the lowest to the highest. He could now establish a kingdom that would endure for ages of ages. He therefore called together the twelve disciples who followed Him on earth and sent them throughout the whole spiritual world to proclaim this gospel.

Let us next consider the meaning of our text as it relates to the New Church. How do these words apply to us as members of the New Church? While it is true that the Lord reigns throughout his creation, it can nevertheless be said that He reigns only in those who willingly receive Him and co-operate with Him—who

freely respond to His Divine leading. If a person rejects the Lord in heart, then it is the hell of self-love that reigns supreme in that person's life.

If the Lord is to reign in the New Church which He has established, the men and women of that Church must freely turn to Him and receive Him in heart and life. What does it mean to receive the Lord in heart and life? Very simply, it means that the Divine truth of the Word must be transferred from the printed page to the minds and hearts of the men and women of the Church. It must be inscribed upon our minds.

The Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom are fully present in the Word. When we receive these in our understanding and love and practice them in our lives, then the Lord reigns in us and in his Church.

If, then, the words of our text are to be a reality in the New Church—if the Lord God Jesus Christ is to reign in the Church—it is incumbent upon us to go to his Word, regularly and faithfully, and receive it into ourselves, inscribe it on our hearts and minds, so that our loves, our thoughts, and our lives may be an expression of the Lord's love and wisdom.

The Holy Supper, which often is celebrated at the time of the nineteenth of June, is a sacrament which corresponds to the conjunction of the Lord with his Church. The bread of the Holy Supper is a symbol of, and corresponds to, the Lord's love. The wine is a symbol of, and corresponds to, His wisdom. When we willingly, with sincerity and humility, receive these elements, we are expressing our hope and firm intention that in us, individually, the Lord God Jesus Christ will reign, and that His kingdom shall endure for ages of ages. *Amen.*

Lessons: John 16:1-15; *True Christian Religion* 791