

## THE HISTORY OF THE WORD REVEALED ON EARTH

We start with a general view. There has always been a Word of God on earth. However, since history spans eons of time, the Lord revealed the Word several times: “The Word has existed in all times, but not the Word of this day. There had been another Word in the Most Ancient Church before the flood, another Word in the Ancient Church after the flood; then the Word written by Moses and the prophets in the Jewish Church; and lastly the Word written by the Evangelists” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2895). This lists four dispensations of truth, including the Ancient Word, the Old Testament and the Gospels.

No Church or religion could exist except from a prior revelation of some kind. Thus, “the Church is from the Word, and according to the understanding of the Word” (*Sacred Scripture* 76 [title]). Everything “which makes the Church and also worship, must be from the Word” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10603). Moreover, in the New Church in particular, “Worship is prescribed in doctrine and is performed in accordance with it” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 880). At all times, acts of genuine worship have used the Word in order to elevate and conjoin. “Conjunction of heaven with man is by means of the Word” (*Heaven Hell* 303, *Life* 3, *Sacred Scripture* 18). “In its internal sense the Word is elevated to the angelic understanding, and at every point [it] embodies more than the whole of heaven is capable of comprehending, although in the letter it seems so ordinary and so crude” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2533). That is also why the New Church places the Word of Sacred Scripture on the altar, because it is the “base, container and support” of all internal meanings (*Sacred Scripture* 27-38). It’s opening and closing begins and ends formal worship.

The written Word was also the “principal reason why the Lord

was born on our planet, and not on another.” He came so that “the Word might be written and afterwards published throughout the whole earth, and preserved to all posterity,” thereby “making manifest even to all in the other life, that God became Man” (*Earths in the Universe* 113).

The Word is always adapted for our use: “The Word was spoken and written in accordance with the apprehension and genius of the people who then lived” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2520). “Were it not [written] according to appearances, no one would understand and acknowledge the Word; thus no one would receive it” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2242). That also explains why some Biblical stories are so abominable: “Would anyone say that the abominable matter involving Lot's daughters would be recorded in the Divine Word if more deeply within they did not embody some hidden Divine meaning?” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2310.3, referring to Genesis 19:30-38). For the sake of that Divine meaning, all stories are recorded “using only such words as in the internal sense may express these arcana” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1468). In the internal sense “one thing after another follow in marvelous array and perfect sequence. This special feature is what makes the Word different from all other literature” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2333:4). Here it is referring in particular to the Old Testament.

However, while He was on earth, the Lord Himself was the only source of truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 9818:14). In the New Testament, therefore, the Gospels contain all that the Lord “spoke and did” because they were “representative and meaningful” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2900, *Apocalypse Explained* 405:24). However, nothing was recorded while the Lord Himself was speaking with His own voice. It was only some time after the resurrection that the Lord again used angels to be the means of the Holy Spirit. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9818:14) The Gospels and Book of Revelation were then recorded under Divine enlighten-

ment, i.e. “from the spirit of His mouth” (*Sacred Scripture 2*), nonetheless utilizing the authors' own recollections of what they had heard “from the Lord's own mouth.” (ibid, cp. John 14.26, 16:4 “bringing to remembrance”) That was how the New Testament came about.

There are consequently Two Testaments, both of which contain a spiritual sense in every phrase and word. Those books that qualify, and “the rest” which do not, are listed in the Writings (*Arcana Coelestia 10325, Heavenly Doctrine 266, White Horse 16*). These Two Testaments are meant in Revelation: “I will give unto My two witnesses... denote the Word of both Testaments in respect to its witnessing concerning the Lord.” (Revelation 11:3, *Arcana Coelestia 9648:3*). The Two Testaments are consequently called the Word of “sacred scripture” (*Sacred Scripture 1*) because they constitute the “fullness, sanctity and power” of the Word (*Sacred Scripture 37*) just because they contain a spiritual sense.

This sense has been revealed in and by the Writings. How the Writings add themselves to the list of the Word revealed on earth (above, *Arcana Coelestia 2895*) we will also see in a later editorial. This series of editorials will follow exactly how the Word was successively given through all eons and eras of human history.

#### THE BOOKS OF THE WORD

The books of the Word are all those which have the internal sense; books which do not have it are not the Word. The books of the Word in the Old Testament are: The five Books of Moses; the Book of Joshua; the Book of Judges; the two Books of Samuel; the two Books of Kings; the Psalms of David; and the Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. And in the New Testament they are: The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; and the Book of Revelation. *Arcana Coelestia 10325*