

### **Selected Bibliography**

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## **HIGHLIGHTING THE WORD**

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When you have a look at the Swedenborg Society's new edition of Searle's Index, you will see at the back hundreds of references from all over the Writings to the book of Job, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. Yet one of the stumbling blocks for newcomers is the idea that Swedenborg excluded several books in the Old Testament and a whole chunk of the New. However, as the above references show, he did not.

What Swedenborg did was to show that while all the books that make up the Bible are useful to the church, there are particular ones that have an undreamed of inner power and glory. The Lord Himself revealed this spiritual sense to him, coming in the "clouds" of heaven—the clouds being the literal meaning of the books that carry that inward glory.

Take a Bible and in the Contents, highlight all the books from Genesis to Judges, Samuel and Kings, the Psalms, and Isaiah to Malachi. You have got most of the Old Testament, with the last

17 books in an unbroken series. Do the same for the New Testament and you have the four Gospels and Revelation. You have not taken away. You have just highlighted the books listed in the Writings as being Divine in every minute detail. These are “the Word” in the strict sense.

The places in the Writings that tell us which books are the Word in this strict sense are *The New Jerusalem & Its Heavenly Doctrine* 266, referring to *Arcana Coelestia* 10325; and *The White Horse* (no 16) which adds “The book of Job is an ancient book in which, indeed, there is an internal sense, but not in a connected order, (*Arcana Coelestia* 3540, 9942).”

So what are the requirements for a book to be the Word in the strict sense? Surprisingly, having correspondences and a spiritual sense is not enough. It has to have a continuous spiritual sense that runs in a connected order—an ‘inner text’. So we read, “...that [internal] sense is the very Word itself in which the Divine is most nearly present...” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3432:3).

Countless passages reveal amazing facts about the hidden treasures of the Word. In addition, in the light of these, we can see the hand of Providence in the inclusion in the Bible of other books “useful to the church” (see *Apocalypse Explained* 815:2). That enquiry will have to wait for another time. There are lots of questions!

Let’s conclude with a brief look at what is said in the Arcana in the section on Charity and Faith, beginning the explanation of Exodus 31: “Seeing therefore that man lives after death, and this to eternity; and that a life awaits him in accordance with his love and faith, it follows that from love toward the human race, the Divine has revealed such things as will lead to that life, and will conduce to man's salvation. That which the Divine has revealed is with us the Word” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10320).

Defined in this way, it follows that the Word is Divine both in general and in particular (*Arcana Coelestia* 10321). It comes

down through the heavens to humankind, accommodated to the angels on their level and adapted to the grasp of people on earth. Hence it has an inner spiritual meaning, and an outer one drawn from the natural world. The joining of heaven and man by the Word is possible because these two levels correspond (See *Arcana Coelestia* 10322).

Only people responsive to the Lord's love and who have faith in Him, are enlightened to see its real meaning. For He raises their minds into the light of heaven (*Arcana Coelestia* 10323). These ones can make doctrine from the Word to serve as a lamp (*Arcana Coelestia* 10324).

Then follows the passage, which tells us which books are the Word in this strict sense: "The books of the Word are all those which have an internal sense; and those which have not an internal sense 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, the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; and in the New Testament the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and Revelation" (*Arcana Coelestia* 10325).

The seed is distributed through the body in all directions, is received by the soul [anima] which is in the whole body, thus in the fibers and vessels everywhere, and then delights - gives pleasure - to the wife, and fills with delight; and thus she is molded into the form of the man. This is "Bone and flesh of my bone and flesh" [Genesis 2:3]. It produces intelligence in him; and...produces impregnation. It is allowable to love a pregnant wife. The reasons are numerous. *Spiritual Experiences* 6110:63, 64