

Editorials

The Case Herein Is This, In the Lord's Mercy below..

Swedenborg was born on January 29, 1688, 320 years ago. Let us look at some aspects of his role as revelator. The first book of *The Writings* he published using Lewis and Hart in London, was the *Arcana Coelestia*, starting in 1749. Did you know that the years of publication for the eight Latin volumes between 1749 and 1756, did not come out one per year? Volumes I through IV came out annually alright from 1749 through 1752, but then in 1753, both Vol. V and VI came out, in 1754 Vol. VII, but 1755 went by with no publication, and at last, in 1756 Vol. VIII came out. It was in these volumes that the phrase “*the case herein is this*” occurs over 800 times. Why so often, and why in this first work of *The Writings*?

In order for Swedenborg to be able to write, “*The case herein is this*,” first there had to be Divine enlightenment from the Lord who is the Divine Human, the glorified Christ. We know Swedenborg received this from the Lord. “*The Lord opened the sight of my spirit, thus admitting me to the spiritual world*” (*True Christian Religion* 779). “*Such immediate revelation is now made because that is what is meant by the Coming of the Lord*” (*Heaven and Hell* 1). This enlightenment from the Lord is necessary in order to see the internal sense of the Word (*De Verbo* 21 or 7:8). With such enlightenment, “*genuine truth which is to be the source of doctrine, is manifest in the sense of the letter of the Word*” (*Sacred Scripture* 57 title). The sense of the letter always refers to the text of Sacred Scripture, thus the Bible verses themselves. Swedenborg even gives an example of how “*I myself can certainly say that when I read the blood of the Lamb and think of the Lord's blood the angels present with me know no other than that Divine Truth emanating from the Lord*”

is what I read and that that Truth is what I think of” (Arcana Coelestia 9410).

However, the doctrine is never seen from the internal sense. *“The teaching can never first be seen from the spiritual sense” (De Verbo 21).* In other words, the Lord does not whisper the internal sense just as Swedenborg reads the text where it is contained. No—Instead, the *“doctrine of genuine truth can also be drawn in full from the sense of the letter of the Word, because in this sense the Word is like a man clothed whose face and hands are bare” (Sacred Scripture 55).* Swedenborg had to draw out the full meaning. Every doctrine we take for granted in the New Church, was first extracted from the text of Sacred Scripture. Swedenborg was enlightened to do this, first by seeing the “hand and face” parts of the Sacred Scripture, i.e. the Schmidius Bible he was reading in Latin. And so, when reading, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”*, Swedenborg’s enlightenment allowed him to understand that God starts life by making human beings with an internal man or soul and an external man or body (*Arcana Coelestia 16*). Swedenborg then used this “face truth” as a “lamp” to light up later “clothed” passages, where the spiritual sense was deeply concealed. For *“the Word cannot be understood without doctrine, and that doctrine is like a lamp that enables genuine truths to be seen” (Sacred Scripture 91).* In this manner, the correspondences between the spiritual and natural senses were gradually opened up, and the “signification” or “correspondence” of each word revealed. Both the “lamp” i.e. the “doctrine of genuine truth” and the spiritual sense that the lamp has uncovered, were revealed to Swedenborg. He had much help to move the process along very rapidly! *“The reason why the spiritual sense of the Word has been at this day disclosed by the Lord is that the doctrine of genuine truth [lamp] has now been revealed; and this doctrine, and no other, is in accord with the*

spiritual sense of the Word” (Sacred Scripture 25).

Therefore, as the internal or spiritual sense emerged bit by bit from the literal sense, it was then stated on its own as “doctrine.” “*Doctrine is what the internal sense teaches...The internal sense is doctrine itself...the internal sense is the same as the Doctrine they have in heaven*” (*Arcana Coelestia 10400, 9380, Heavenly Doctrine 7*). *The Writings* therefore not only describe their own method but also follow it. Since the process is by now a *fait accompli*, however, we can go right ahead and just read them! Their meaning is self-evident.

The internal or spiritual sense of the Word, and Doctrine (or Teaching) are thus on a par, and constitute the contents of the Word of Lord in His Second Coming. We call the *Writings* or the *Heavenly Doctrine* “the Word” because the *Writings* often identify themselves with doctrine. “*Because this was revealed to me out of heaven, it is called HEAVENLY DOCTRINE, and to present this is the purpose of this book*” (*Heavenly Doctrine 7*). “*Divine doctrine itself constitutes the Word in the highest sense... Divine doctrine also constitutes the Word in the internal sense*” (*Arcana Coelestia 3712*). Moreover, since the internal sense—thus also doctrine—is as a soul to the sense of the letter (*Sacred Scripture 4*), consequently the Word of *Heavenly Doctrine* thus the *Writings* as books, constitute the “soul” to the “body” of the Scriptures as books. These scriptures are Sacred, “the Word in the literal sense” (*Arcana Coelestia 3712*). Because the Lord Himself who has revealed the Word of *Heavenly Doctrine*, is “doctrine itself” (*Arcana Coelestia 5321, 3364*), it is consequently clear how Swedenborg could at the end of the above process state “*Ita Se Habet.*” The Lord taught Swedenborg the process, and you can read the product after these words: “*The Case here is this.*” “*The situation is as follows.*” How often have you read this phrase in the *Writings*? Do you recall where?

Practically all such phrases occur in the *Arcana Coelestia*, or in works published in 1758 but written during 1757. Thus, they occur mostly prior to the Last Judgment. There are 546 instances in the *Arcana* of “*ita se habet*” and 3 in *Heaven and Hell*. There are 248 instances of “*hoc se habet*” in the *Arcana*, 3 in *Heaven and Hell*, 2 in the *True Christian Religion*. There are 20 instances of “*ita enim habet*,” only in the *Arcana*. There are still other variations of the phrase. All can translate into “*This is the case*” or “*The situation is as follows*.” A clear doctrine follows. All the later works are extracted either from the *Arcana* or from the *Apocalypse Explained*, and so are doctrinal works. *Apocalypse Revealed* is a new start. All through these works, doctrine is just presented as the staple diet, having been drawn from Scripture already.

Now we come to another phrase, “*more in the Lord's mercy may be seen below...*” “*Ex Divina Domini Misericordia, in sequentibus.*” It occurs over 120 times. Do you remember reading that one also? Where? We find also this phrase only prior to the Last Judgment, and almost exclusively in the *Arcana Coelestia*. Why? Well, in *Lord 61:2* published in 1763, we read: “*This was not seen from the Word before, because... the Last Judgment had not yet been accomplished; ...hell, would have plucked it out of the hearts of men, and would...have profaned it. This power was completely broken by the Last Judgment....After that ...every man who desires may become enlightened and attain wisdom.*”

Prior to 1757, it was too dangerous to publish plainly stated doctrines! There had to be some protection offered to the truths. Since the *Arcana Coelestia* did come out before 1757, what was its protection? It was by scattering and postponing. What better protection than to “scatter” the plain doctrine into an excruciating maze of “this signifies this, and that signifies that,” etc., phrase after phrase. Nothing is clear. “That this is the

[internal] sense cannot be seen from the first exposition wherein everything is scattered, that is to say, from what was said in #3366” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3376). “*These things are disconnected, [and what] they involve in their series cannot appear unless they are all collected together into a single idea*” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3074). Well, “*ita se habet*” does collect all things together into a single idea. However, just when a profaner thought he could gather enough truth to profane it, along comes another “*but more of the Lord’s mercy below.*” The truth is postponed until later. Without the reference-tools we have today, the profaner would have been frustrated and put the book down, or died of apoplexy, thus unwittingly saving him from grievous harm. Only good people have the patience to read a few more pages until along comes another “*the case herein is this*” which puts everything into “*a most beautiful sequence*” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3376) again. After 1757, the Writings can therefore declare, “*Now every man who desires may become enlightened and attain wisdom.*” “*More mercifully later*” is no longer needed to prevent profanation, but was once needed. The danger is past. Now it is all “*Ita se habet*” even for readers of the *Arcana*! Just keep on reading until the next “*the case herein*” comes along. Alternatively, read the summary doctrinal works.

It was no doubt because the Last Judgment had removed the danger of profanation, that in 1758, five small works were published. They summarize or “bring into a single idea or beautiful sequence,” the doctrines found scattered and postponed all through the eight volumes of the *Arcana Coelestia: Heaven and Hell, The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine, The Last Judgment, The White Horse, and Earths in the Universe*. Each contains a more or less massive reference system to the *Arcana Coelestia*. Of these, *Heaven and Hell* is such a best seller that it should be a Guinness Record: most widely read book of the *Writings*, translated into more languages than other works of the *Writings*, most continuously read modern work, etc. This year 2008 marks the 250th anniversary of its publication. That is the case!