

EDITORIALS

THE LORD'S REDEMPTION AT EASTER.

The Writings teach us that there was no other way for the Lord to make His Advent, than by being born as a human being “like any other” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:7). The need for the Advent was because hereditary evils accumulate from parents to children, generation after generation, and this “is the principal reason for the degeneration of a church” (*Arcana Coelestia* 494). However there must always be a Church somewhere on earth which “has the Word and knows the Lord” (*Heavenly Doctrine* 244, *Sacred Scripture* 104, *True Christian Religion* 267). For if the church has an end, the connection between heaven and the Church also ends, and the human race perishes. Thus it is of “the Lord's Divine Providence [that] some revelation should come into existence, for [the] Word is the general recipient vessel ...conjoining heaven and earth, without [which] heaven and earth would [be] disjoined, and the human race [perish]”(*Arcana Coelestia* 1775).

To prevent the human race from “perishing in eternal death” (*Lord* 18) and since “the Divine cannot take evil upon Itself”, therefore only by birth into the world could the Lord “overcome evil by His own power” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:7). To remove this threat from hell, therefore, the Lord assumed the heredity of the human race. “This diversion of iniquities and evils to Himself can never come about except through a hereditary channel” (*Ibid.*). The Lord thereby made His Advent while at the same time granting the hells access to the “Divine truth bound”—meant by Isaac bound for sacrifice by Abraham (*Arcana Coelestia* 2813). “Divine truth bound” also refers to the Lord under the title the Son of Man, who always “must suffer” in the Gospel stories. Assuming this human by birth was thus the only way for the Lord to overcome human hereditary evil, through which the hells were threatening to destroy the human race. For overcoming the hells no human being “has ever been able to do

or ever can do.” Therefore, the Lord alone was “willing to be born like any other human being” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2034.).

The Lord on earth knew that the salvation of the entire human race depended on Him. That is why He was willing to “bear our iniquities” which means suffer temptations from our sins, just as we do (*Lord* 15). However, the Lord’s temptations were most grievous (*Arcana Coelestia* 2816, 1661), in fact so severe that “no other could ever endure one ten thousandth part of them” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1573:4). In fact, the Lord still suffers the temptations “in every individual human being” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4287:3), since He alone overcomes them. That is why our repentance can at best be motivated by a love “not to harm the Lord” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8925).

That is how the Lord’s mercy works, by the Divine love grieving (*Arcana Coelestia* 5480). So great was the Lord’s “love” or “end in view” that “His inmost joy [was] for the salvation of the human race, which He had in view in the union of Himself with His Father” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2034:3). We see how the Lord rejoiced that human salvation lay in His own union with His Divine soul. Since the “Lord’s love [was] towards the whole human race,” and since “the intensity of the love determines the intensity of the temptation...it becomes clear how severe His conflicts were” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1690e). Despite such “most malignant wiles and venom” which the hells employed against Him (*Arcana Coelestia* 1820), yet because of the nature of the Divine love moving Him, “He could not but conquer” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1812).

By such conquests the Lord made Himself “righteousness” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8273) and became “the Redeemer” (*Lord* 33, 65, *True Christian Religion* 579:3) by “His own power” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1787, 1921, *passim*), and not by that of the Divine Itself, which is above temptations (*Arcana Coelestia* 2795:2).