

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE
NEW JERUSALEM
CONCERNING THE
SACRED SCRIPTURE**

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The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Concerning the Sacred Scripture by Emanuel Swedenborg

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OF
THE NEW JERUSALEM
CONCERNING THE
Sacred Scripture

BY
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

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DOCTRINE
OF
THE NEW JERUSALEM
CONCERNING THE
SACRED SCRIPTURE.

I.

THE SACRED SCRIPTURE, OR THE WORD, IS THE
DIVINE TRUTH ITSELF.

1. It is generally confessed that the Word is from God, is Divinely inspired, and therefore holy; but still it has hitherto remained unknown wherein its divinity resides. For in the letter the Word is to all appearance like an ordinary book, strange in style, neither sublime nor lucid, as the writings of the present age are. Owing to this, a person who worships nature instead of God, or more than God, and who therefore thinks from himself and his *proprium*, and not from heaven and from the Lord, may easily fall into error concerning the Word, and into contempt for it, and say within himself while he is reading it, "What is this? What is that? Is this Divine? Can God Who has infinite wisdom so speak? Wherein is its holiness? and whence, unless from some religious system, and persuasion from it?"

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2. But he who so thinks does not consider that Jehovah Himself, Who is the God of heaven and earth, spake the Word through Moses and the Prophets, and that it must therefore be the Divine Truth itself; for that which Jehovah Himself speaks can be nothing else. Nor does he consider that the Lord, Who is the same as Jehovah, spake the Word as recorded by the Evangelists, many things from His own mouth, and the rest from the Spirit of His mouth, which is the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that He says that in His words there is life and that He Himself is the Light which enlightens, and that He is the Truth. That Jehovah Himself spake the Word by the Prophets has been shown in the "Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord" (n. 52, 53). That the words which the Lord Himself spake in the gospels are Life, may be seen in John: "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*" (vi. 63). In the same gospel: Jesus said to the woman at Jacob's well, "*If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life*" (John iv. 10, 14). By "*Jacob's well*" is signified the Word (as also in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 28), and therefore the Lord sat there, and talked with the woman; and by *the water* is signified the truth of the Word. Again: Jesus said, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*" (John vii. 37, 38). And again: Peter said to Jesus, "*Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (John vi. 68). And therefore the Lord says in Mark,

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (xiii. 31). The Lord's words are life because He is the Truth and the Life, as He teaches in John: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"* (xiv. 6). And in the same gospel: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; in Him was life, and the life was the light of men"* (i. 1, 4). By the *Word* is here meant the Lord as to Divine Truth, in Whom alone there is life and light. From this it is that the *Word* which is from the Lord, and which is the Lord, is called *"the fountain of living waters"* (Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13); *"the fountain of salvation"* (Isa. xii. 3); *"a fountain"* (Zech. xiii. 1); and *"a river of the water of life"* (Apoc. xxii. 1); and it is said that *"The Lamb, Who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters"* (Apoc. vii. 17); besides other passages where the *Word* is also called a *"Sanctuary"* and a *"Tabernacle"* in which the Lord dwells with man.

3. But still the natural man cannot even from these considerations be persuaded that the *Word* is the Divine Truth itself, in which are Divine Wisdom and Divine Life; for he judges of it from its style, in which he does not see those things. Yet the style of the *Word* is the Divine style itself, with which no other can be compared, however sublime and excellent it may seem; for any other is like thick darkness, compared with light. The style of the *Word* is such that holiness is in every sentence, and in every word; indeed, in some places in the very letters: hence the *Word* conjoins man with the Lord, and opens heaven. There are two things which proceed from the Lord, Divine Love and Divine Wisdom; or, what is the same, Divine Good and Divine Truth; for Divine Good is of His

Divine Love, and Divine Truth is of His Divine Wisdom Itself. The Word in its essence is both of these; and because it conjoins man with the Lord and opens heaven, as already said, therefore the Word fills the man who reads it from the Lord and not from himself alone, with the good of love and the truths of wisdom; his will with the good of love, and his understanding with the truths of wisdom. Hence man has life through the Word.

4. Lest, therefore, man should remain in doubt whether the Word is of this character, its internal sense has been revealed to me by the Lord. This in its essence is spiritual, and is, to the external sense which is natural, as the soul is to the body. This sense is the spirit which gives life to the letter; it can therefore bear witness to the Divinity and Holiness of the Word, and is able to convince even the natural man, if he is willing to be convinced.

II.

IN THE WORD THERE IS A SPIRITUAL SENSE, HITHERTO UNKNOWN.

This subject shall be considered in the following order.

1. *What the Spiritual Sense is.* 2. *That this Sense is in the whole and in every particular of the Word.* 3. *That it is on this account that the Word is Divinely inspired and holy in every word.* 4. *That this Sense has been hitherto unknown.* 5. *And that it will not be made known to any one hereafter who is not in genuine truths from the Lord.*

5. (1) **What the Spiritual Sense is.** The

spiritual sense is not that which shines forth from the sense of the Word when one is studying and explaining the Word to confirm some dogma of the church; this sense is the literal sense of the Word. But the spiritual sense does not appear in the sense of the letter; it is inwardly in it, as the soul is in the body, as the thought is in the eyes, and as affection is in the face, which act as one, like cause and effect. It is especially this sense which makes the Word spiritual, and of use not for men only, but also for angels. Wherefore the Word by this sense communicates with the heavens.

6. From the Lord proceed the Celestial, the Spiritual, and the Natural, one after another. That is called the CELESTIAL which proceeds from His Divine Love, and is Divine Good. That is called the Spiritual which proceeds from His Divine Wisdom, and is Divine Truth. The Natural is from both, and is their complex in the ultimate. The angels of the Lord's celestial kingdom, of whom the third or highest heaven is composed, are in that Divine proceeding from the Lord, which is called Celestial; for they are in the good of love from the Lord. The angels of the Lord's spiritual kingdom, of whom is the second or middle heaven, are in the Divine that proceeds from the Lord which is called Spiritual; for they are in truths of wisdom from the Lord.* But men of the Church in the world are in the Divine Natural, which also proceeds from the Lord. It follows from this that the Divine, proceeding from the Lord to its ultimates, descends by three degrees, and is termed CELESTIAL, SPIRITUAL, and NATURAL. The Divine which descends from the Lord to man descends through these three

* That there are two kingdoms of which the heavens consist, one of which is called the celestial kingdom, and the other the spiritual, may be seen in the work on "Heaven and Hell" (n. 20-28).