

THE REAL ISSUE

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The real issue between the General Church of the New Jerusalem and the Lord's New Church Which is Nova Hierosolyma, is frequently misconceived. It is believed by some in the General Church that the issue is as to whether the Writings are the Divine Doctrine and as such the only Divine authority in the Church, or whether, the true authority lies in a Divine Doctrine drawn forth by the regenerating man of the Church.

We hold that this is not the real issue.

We believe equally with the General Church, that the Writings are the Word of God and as such the only authority, and that they are the Divine Doctrine Itself. Nor have we ever said that the Divine Doctrine to be derived from the Latin Word by the regenerating man of the Church is the true authority. The real issue is therefore entirely different.

The real issue is: Is it the Word understood or the Word not understood which has actual authority in the church? It is obvious that if the Church were in total darkness, the Word could not have any actual authority in the Church. When this question was brought up in the ministers of 1933 it was said, "We take the understanding of the Writings for granted." The real issue is therefore whether the understanding of the Writings can be taken for granted or not.

Every one who has not destroyed the functioning of the rational faculty, with which he is potentially born, can see truth in natural rational light, thus those in the Church can see the truths of the Word and of the Church in which they have been instructed from childhood, and this without any entering into spiritual lights or what is the same without any out pouring of the Holy Spirit. But no development or interior understanding can develop and grow in the Church without an enlightenment, that is without entering into the light of heaven which is above the natural rational light to which a man is born.

The discrete degrees of light are described as follows: "Rational truths are signified by leaves. But according to the species of the trees. The leaves of the olive and vine signify rational truths from celestial and spiritual light; those of the fig, rational truths from natural light; and those of the fir, poplar and pine, rational truths from sensual light." (A.R. 936.e)

To take the understanding of the Writings for granted is to ignore or deny the degrees of light, thus all that is taught concerning enlightenment and concerning the operation of the Holy Spirit; thus to avoid all the essential struggle by which the Church advances interiorly.

In the early days of the Academy this distinction was commonly made, for we frequently find in the writings of those days a speaking of the seeing the Writings in their own light, which they believed was the characteristic of the Academy and the seeing of the Writings in the light of the world, of which they charged the Convention.

Now whether we say that the Writings must be seen in their own light or in the light of heaven it is the same thing. But to see in the light of heaven always implies a new seeing of truth from the Lord in His Word. When the Church does not see the truths in the Word continuously new, it falls into natural rational light, and no longer sees the interiors of the Word.

Our position expressed in the plain and simple teaching given is: “Those are said to see the back parts of Jehovah and not His faces who believe and adore the Word; but only its external which is the sense of the letter, and do not penetrate more interiorly, as do those who have been enlightened, and who make for themselves doctrine from the Word, by which they see its genuine sense, thus its internal sense.... But those who do not believe in the Word, do not even see the back parts of Jehovah.” (A.C. 10584)

The real issue is therefore whether the understanding of the Writings may be taken for granted, or whether we acknowledge that by regeneration and the struggles of regeneration we are to advance from reading the Word according to discrete degrees of light: – from the rational truths of the Writings seen in sensual light, to rational truths seen in natural light, and thence to the rational truths seen in spiritual and celestial light, and that it is only the Writings seen in spiritual and celestial light that is properly the internal sense of the Word, and that the Writings so seen is the only genuine authority actually in the Church. If a man takes the truths seen in the first light he is given, for granted as being the internal truth itself, he can make no further advance. To this our position the objection is raised that there are passages in the fascicles of *De Hemelsche Leer*, such as the following, which make the doctrine drawn from the Writings the authority. To quote:

“By ‘the Doctrine of the New Church and by the spiritual sense of the Word and by the Doctrine which is in heaven’ are not signified the Writings.” (Third fascicle, 7)

“The concept that the Heavenly Doctrine is the Doctrine of the Church and that the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are the Heavenly Doctrine..... has up to the present kept the Church in a purely natural state.” (Third fascicle, p. 9)

“The truth which for some time now has been acknowledged by us as the very heart of the Second Coming of the Lord and the New Church, is the thesis taken from the Latin Word, first, that by the Doctrine of the Church not the Writings of Swedenborg are meant, but the vision of these Writings, which the Church gradually in an orderly way acquires for itself.” (First fascicle, p. 56)

“The spiritual sense is not apparent in the sense of the letter of Writings; it is in the interior within it, as the soul in the body. Since the Writings are interiorly spiritual, they have been written by pure correspondences. It was a fundamental mistake that those passages where the Writings disclose the spiritual sense of the Old and New Testament were regarded as being the spiritual sense itself.” (First fascicle p. 73)

“With regard to man not the Latin Word is the light, but the genuine Doctrine out of the Word. The Latin Word is indeed the Light Itself, for it is the Divine Human of the Lord. But with regard to man only the Doctrine is the light.” (p. 136)

“No longer will the literal sense of the Third Testament be the resting point or the point of support around which moves the thought of the Church.... In the literal sense of the Third Testament one is in the sensual fallacies of natural thought, which fallacies disappear by the rational thought of the Doctrine of the Church.” (Third fascicle, p.p. 1-2)

“In all the preceeding states of the Church there is ever present the state of the New Church itself, apart from the letter of the Third Testament.” (Third fascicle p. 7)

“Hence forward all thinking no longer follows the letter, but the letter follows the thinking.” (Fourth fascicle, p. 8)

It is our hope that the following may remove any misunderstanding that may have arisen in the mind from such passages as the above. Certain of the sentences in the above quotations might have been more precisely expressed, and yet if viewed in the light of the general principles with an open mind, they do not present any serious difficulty.

In the October *Life* of this year there is a general statement of our leading principles as to doctrine. In the *New Church Life* it appears as if I had drawn up these principles. This is a mistake. They were drawn up in Holland, and were unanimously agreed to in the year 1939.

This statement reads:

“1. The Lord Jesus Christ the One only God of heaven and earth has accomplished His Second Coming in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Those Writings are the Word in the Third or Latin Testament for the Lord’s New Church. The words of this Third Testament are Spirit and Life according to the saying in the Gospel of John 6:63: ‘The words which I speak unto you are Spirit and are life.’

“This Testament as to its spirit and life is the objective Esse and Existere of the Lord in the midst of the Church. This Esse and Existere is present from firsts to lasts according to discrete degrees. The visibility of the Word is thus according to the opening of the discrete degrees in the mind of man. Only through this objective Esse and Existere is the redemption of the human race. This redemption is directed to the beginning of the human which is in the inmost of the rational (A.C. 2106). The Third Testament is then also as to its essence in rational form. The literal sense, as this appears in the world, is significative and representative.

“2. The Lord is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, and thus present in the soul of every man of the present and future race. The Lord works from firsts, the presence in the soul, though lasts, the objective Esse and Existere of the Word, in the Third or Latin Testament, towards the forming of man into an Angel of heaven. Man cooperates as if from himself through his external obedience to the internal influx from the soul, and through his internal obedience to the external objective Esse and Existere of the Word. Hereby takes place the appropriation as if from himself of the things of the Lord, and man is in the Lord and the Lord in man. The Lord is then present not only in firsts and lasts with man, but also in intermediates, that is, within man. This internal is the Church in man. The essence of the Church thus concerns the true form in which the Lord is present. The presence of the Lord Himself is the understanding of the Word, or Doctrine, out of the Word. This presence is the spirit of the rational form of the literal

sense of the Third Testament, which is the internal sense. The internal sense is then the literal sense, and the literal sense the internal sense. Then there is the acknowledgment of the Second Coming of the Lord.”

In the first two quotations from Fascicle 1, p. 7 and 9, the word Writings is used in reference to their external appearance, or literal sense.

In regard to the third quotation, First Fascicle, page 56, it may be noted that in various places in *De Hemelsche Leer*, the teaching is quoted that the Word is the Doctrine Itself, and that this applies to the Third Testament. The point of the argument is that the Word while it is the Doctrine Itself, and is the potential Doctrine of the Church, it is not the actual Doctrine of the Church until it is actually in the Church, and it is not actually in the Church until it is genuinely understood and it is in the Church to the extent of the understanding, for we read:

“The Church is from the Word, and is such as its understanding of the Word.

“That the Church is from the Word does not admit of doubt, for the Word is the Divine Truth Itself; the Doctrine of the Church is from the Word, and through the Word there is conjunction with the Lord. But doubt may arise as to whether the understanding of the Word makes the Church, for there are those who believe they are of the Church because they have the Word, read it or hear it from a preacher, and know something of its sense of the letter, yet how this or that is to be understood they do not know, and some of them little care. It shall therefore be proved that it is not the Word which makes the Church but the understanding of it, and that such as the understanding of the Word among those who are of the Church, such is the Church itself. The proof is as follows:

“The Word is the Word according to the understanding of it in a man, that is, as it is understood. If the Word is not understood the Word is indeed called the Word, but it is not the Word with the man. The Word is the truth according to the understanding of it, for it may not be the truth, because it may be falsified. The Word is spirit and life according to the understanding of it, for its letter if not understood is dead. And as a man has truth and life according to his understanding of the Word, so he has faith and love according thereto. Now as the Church exists by means of faith and love, and according to them, it follows that the Church is the Church through the understanding of the Word and according thereto; a noble Church if in genuine truths, an ignoble Church if not in genuine truths, and a destroyed Church if in falsified truth.” (D.S.S. 76, 77)

We read again: “Faith presents the Lord as present in man according to the quality of the perception of the Lord. Other things man does not acknowledge and therefore rejects; for in order that the Lord may operate any thing with man by faith the Divine must be present in man and not outside man.” (A.E. 815.8)

Is it not evident that what is said concerning the Word in the above quotation from the *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* applies to the Writings? Is it not also clear that faith with man is the Divine truth of the Writings, and that it is this Divine of which it is said: “For in order that the Lord may operate anything with man by faith the Lord’s Divine must be present in man, and not outside of him?” That this faith is according to his understanding of the Word is taught above.

History also testifies to the truth of the above, for the Jews thought that they were God's chosen people, and were superior to all others in the world because they were born in the church and had the Word of the Old Testament, and yet we are taught they were the worst of races because they had a false understanding of the Word.

The Protestants think they are in the truth, or as they call it, "in the light of the Gospels" because they have the New Testament, in which are the Lord's words and which He called His Doctrine, and which He said were "Spirit and Life", and because they believe these Gospels, and the rest of the Word, is the only Divine authority in the Church; and yet they are in total darkness because their understanding of the Word is false.

Convention thinks it is in the light because it has the Writings of Swedenborg and yet it is in a state of decline and disintegration because its understanding of the Writings is not true.

It is frequently assumed in the New Church that all men who acknowledge the Writings as the Word of God are in possession of the truth. But was it not this same assumption on the part of the Jews in regard to their Word, and the Protestants in regard to their Word, that kept these Churches in darkness? and is not the man in the New Church in the same danger as soon as he makes the same assumption? It is the spiritual sense of the Word which makes heaven. Is not the assumption that one who has faith in the Writings and their authority is in the internal sense and thus essentially in heaven, an assumption of faith-alone?

As to the quotation from the Second Fascicle: "With regard to man not the Latin Word is the light, but the genuine Doctrine out of the Word. The Latin Word in itself is indeed the Light itself, for it is the Divine Human of the Lord. But with regard to man only the Doctrine is the light." (p. 136)

We understand this passage to mean that the Writings which are indeed the light itself can not bring any light to the man of the Church apart from genuine Doctrine thence.

This teaching is plainly given in the Writings for we read:

"The Word can not be understood without Doctrine." "It is evident that they who read the Word without doctrine or do not acquire for themselves doctrine from the Word, are in obscurity as to every truth, and that their minds are wavering and uncertain, prone to errors, and pliant to heresies wherever inclination or authority favors, for the Word to them is like a lampstand without a lamp, and in their gloom they seem to see many things, and yet see scarcely anything, for doctrine alone is a Doctrine must be drawn from the sense of the letter, and be confirmed thereby." "That by means of Doctrine the Word not only becomes intelligible, but also as it were shines with light, is because without Doctrine it is not understood and is like a lampstand without a lamp. By means of doctrine therefore the Word is understood, and is like a lampstand with a lighted lamp. The man then sees more things than he had seen before, and understands those things which before he had not understood.... But doctrine is not only to be drawn from the sense of the letter, but also must be confirmed thereby; for if not so confirmed the truth of doctrine appears as if only man's intelligence were in it, and not the Lord's Divine Wisdom; and so the doctrine would be like a house in the air, and would lack a foundation." (S.S. 54)

“The genuine truth which must be of doctrine appears in the sense of the letter to none but those who are in enlightenment from the Lord. Enlightenment is from the Lord alone, and exists with those who love truths because they are truths and make them of use for life. For others there is no enlightenment in the Word. The reason why enlightenment is from the Lord alone is that the Lord is in all things of the Word. (S.S. 57)

“The reason why enlightenment exists with those who love truths and make them of use for life, is that such are in the Lord and the Lord in them..... this the Lord teaches in John: ‘ye are in Me and I in you. He that hath My commandments and doeth them, he loveth Me, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.’ And in Matthew: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.’ These are they who are enlightened when reading the Word.” (S.S. 57)

That in the above not the Latin Word itself is meant by the doctrine without which there is no light is self evident, for the doctrine without which the Word is in darkness, is said to be made by those in the Church who are in enlightenment from the Lord, and it is said of this doctrine: “that it must be confirmed from the sense of the letter of the Word; for if not so confirmed the truth of doctrine appears as if only man’s intelligence were in it and not the Lord’s Divine Wisdom.” (S.S. 54)

From the above it can be seen that the teaching that the Word – thus also the Latin Word – does not give man light apart from genuine doctrine made in a state of enlightenment, is not our invention, but is a plain teaching of the Writings. This is most clear from the continuation of the series of numbers:

“The reason why the Word shines and is translucent with such, is that there is a spiritual and celestial sense in every particular of the Word, and these senses are in the light of heaven, so that through these senses and by their light the Lord flows into the natural sense, and into the Light of it with a man. This causes a man to acknowledge the truth from an interior perception, and afterwards to see it from his own thought and this as often as he is in the affection of truth for the sake of truth.” “With such men the first thing is to get for themselves doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, and thus light a lamp for their further advances. Then after doctrine has been procured, and a lamp thus lighted, they set the Word by its means.” (S.S. 58, 59)

As to the quotation from the Third Fascicle: “No longer will the literal sense of the Third Testament be the resting point or the point of support around which moves the thought of the Church In the literal sense of the Third Testament one is in the sensual fallacies of natural thought, which fallacies disappear by the rational thought of the Doctrine of the Church.” (p.p. 1-2)

That the Doctrine drawn forth by those in enlightenment is the support of the Word is the plain teaching of the Writings, for we read:

“Occasion again offering, it shall be briefly told how the case is with the support of the Word by Doctrine that is from the Word. He who does not know the arcana of heaven must needs believe that the Word is supported without Doctrine from it; for he supposes that the Word in the letter or in the literal sense is Doctrine itself. But be it known that all the Doctrine of the

Church must be from the Word, and that doctrine from any other source than the Word is not doctrine in which there is any thing of the Church, still less any thing of heaven. But the Doctrine must be collected from the Word, and while it is being collected, the man must be in enlightenment from the Lord, and he is in enlightenment when he is in the love of truth for the sake of truth, and not for the sake of self and the world. These are they who are enlightened in the Word when they read, and who see truth and from it make doctrine for themselves. The reason of this is that such communicate with heaven, thus with the Lord, and being enlightened by the Lord in this way they are led to see the truths of the Word such as they are in heaven, for the Lord flows through heaven into their understanding, because it is man's interior understanding that is enlightened. And at the same time the Lord flows in with faith by means of the cooperation of the new will, a feature of which is to be affected with truth for the sake of truth. From all this it is seen how the Doctrine of good and Truth is given man by the Lord.

“That this Doctrine supports the Word, in respect to its literal or external sense, is plain to every one who reflects; for every one in the Church who thinks from doctrine sees truths in the Word from his doctrine and according thereto..... that all do so, even heretics, is known. But they who are in the genuine doctrine of truth from the Word, and in enlightenment when they read the Word, see everywhere truth that agrees, and nothing whatever that is opposed; for they do not dwell upon what is said therein according to appearances, and according to the common apprehension of men, because they know that if the appearances are unfolded, and as it were unswathed, the truth is laid bare. Nor are they led astray by falsities from the fallacies of the external senses, as is the case with heretics and fanatics..... nor by falsities from the loves of self and the world. Is none of these can be enlightened, they hatch out from the external sense alone a doctrine in favor of their own loves; whereby the Word is by no means supported but falls. Be it known that the internal sense of the Word contains the genuine doctrine of the Church.” (A.C. 9424)

That the Doctrine here spoken of is made by men in enlightenment from the Lord is plainly taught.

That in another series the literal sense of the Writings is the support, we fully agree, for it is one of our leading principles that the *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* applies to the Writings and we read: “The sense of the letter of the Word is the basis, the continent, and the support of its spiritual and celestial senses.” (S.S. 27) And as quoted above: “The Doctrine is not only to be drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word, but also is to be confirmed thereby; for if not so confirmed the truth of doctrine appears as if only man's intelligence were in it, and not the Lord's Divine Wisdom; and so the Doctrine would be like a house in the air, and not on the earth, and would lack a foundation.” (S.S. 54)

As to the quotation: “In all the preceeding states of the Church there is ever present the state of the New Church itself, namely a revelation of the Doctrine of the Church as an internal Doctrine from the Holy Spirit itself, apart from the letter of the Third Testament.” (Third fascicle, p. 7)

The word translated from the Dutch in the above quotation “apart from,” is more correctly translated “loose from.”

The meaning is not that man is to be apart from the letter of the Third Testament, but that he is to be loose from the appearances. This is evident from the sentence just preceeding the quotation

which reads: “Then the Church enters into a spiritual state by seeing in the Third Testament the truly spiritual things.”

Let us illustrate what is here meant. We are told that to understand the Word we must elevate the mind above the things of time and space. A very large part of the letter of the Third Testament treats of the historical churches, the Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, the Jewish Church, and the Catholics and Protestants and falsities these Churches fall into, these things being of the historical sense are in time.

The use of the Third Testament is to lead man out of evils and falsities into the genuine truth and this is for the sake of regenerating man into an image and likeness of God. Man to come to this state must enter into struggles and temptations against the falsities he is in.

A man brought up in the New Church is not in, nor has he been in, the falsities of the Jewish, the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, in the external form that these falsities took in those Churches. If those of the Church have their attention fixed on these historical falsities, and do not see the interior corresponding falsities in themselves and those that arise in the New Church generally, and struggle to overcome these falsities, then the reading of the Writings brings man into the supposition that he is in the truth, and is thankful that he has none of the falsities he reads about in the Writings. In a word he becomes like the Jew, who is proud of belonging to a chosen people or like the Protestant who is proud of being in the light of the gospel. With such the Writings lose all power to regenerate; for every man in the New Church before regeneration is in all the falsities of former churches in an interior form, and if the Doctrine of the Church does not manifest these falsities he remains in them.

We read: “When the historical sense or that of the letter is alone attended to, the internal sense is obliterated.” (A.C. 1783)

“They said because these (histories) have been Divinely inspired they have Divine power in the mind..... But regarded in themselves, historicals effect little towards man’s amendment; and not any thing towards eternal life, for in the other life historicals are given to oblivion.” (A.C. 1886)

“The Word is Divine principally in this, that each and all things in it do not regard one nation or people, but the universal human race, that is, which has been, and which will be, and what is still more universal, namely the Lord’s Kingdom in the Heavens; and, in the supreme sense the Lord Himself. As this is so the Word is Divine.” (A.C. 3305)

From the Fourth Fascicle the following is quoted: “Henceforward all thinking no longer follows the letter, but the letter follows the thinking.”

We read above: “Those who are enlightened in the Word when they read it, see truths and make doctrine for themselves. The reason is that such communicate with heaven, thus with the Lord and, being enlightened by the Lord in this way, they are led to see the truths of the Word such as they are in heaven, for the Lord flows through heaven into their understanding.?” And again: “For the Word does not shine of Itself, but only with the man who is in light from the internal, without this the Word is only the letter.” (A.C. 10,703) “The Word of the Lord is a dead letter; but it is

vivified by the Lord in the reader according to the capacity of each one; and it becomes living according to the life of his charity, and his state of innocence, and this with inexhaustible variety.” (A.C. 1776) With such a one does his thinking follow the letter, or does he see the letter from his thinking out of heaven from the Lord?

We read: “He who is in Divine things never regards the Lord’s Word from the letter; but he regards the letter and the literal sense as being representative and significative of the celestial and spiritual things of the Church and the Lord’s Kingdom. To him the literal sense is only an instrumental means of thinking of these.” (A.C. 1807) Is not this the same teaching as in the above quotation from the Fascicles?

To illustrate: Those who think merely from the letter of the Writings say that the books of the Word are all innumerable in certain numbers of the Writings, and because the Writings themselves are not included in this list they are not the Word, and they confirm this by the fact that when the Writings speak about the Word they always refer directly to the books in the Old and New Testaments and never to themselves. Many in the Convention therefore say that the power or authority and support, lies solely in the books of the Old and New Testaments.

The first principle of the Academy is: “The Lord has made His Second Coming in the Writings of the New Church, revealing Himself therein, in His Own Divine Human, as the only God of heaven and earth. In those Writings therefore, is contained the very essential Word, which is the Lord. From them the Lord speaks to His Church, and the Church acknowledges no other Authority, and no other law.” The General Church makes this a primary thing of the Doctrine of the Church, and yet with the exception of the first sentence it is not a truth which is stated literally in this form in the Writings themselves. Where then did it come from? Did it come from the Lord out of heaven when reading the Writings or did it come from the mere letter of the Writings? It may be said that this teaching is plainly stated in the Writings, and with this we would agree, but it could only be seen plainly stated from the Lord’s presence through the angels who are in the internal of the Writings and it never could have been seen from the mere letter of the Writings viewed from natural rational light. Many of those who view the Writings from natural light still do not see this teaching in the letter of the Writings.

While we agree that the Writings are the Doctrine Itself and as such the only authority in the Church, we can come to see that the Writings have an internal and an external, the internal is in heaven and the external is on earth, but the internal can be communicated to man while he reads the Writings for we read: “By revelation is meant enlightenment when the Word is read, for they who are in good and long for truth are taught in this way from the Word. The reason is that those who are in good have revelation, and those in evil have no revelation, is that in the internal sense each and all things treat of the Lord and of His Kingdom and the angels who are with man perceive the Word according to the internal sense. This is communicated to the man who is in good, and reads the Word, and from affection longs for truth, and consequently has enlightenment and perception. For with those who are in good, and from this in the affection of truths the intellectual part of the mind is opened into heaven, and their soul, that is their internal man is in fellowship with Angels; but it is otherwise with those who are not in good..... This revelation is not manifest neither is it altogether hidden.” (A.C. 8694)

Again: “They who are in enlightenment are in the light of heaven as to their internal man.... They who are thus illuminated apprehend the Word according to its interior things, and therefore make for themselves Doctrine from the Word, to which they apply the sense of the letter.” (A.C. 9382)

Is it not evident that the perception that the Writings are the Word of the Lord descended from their internal which is in heaven and was not a mere taking up from the letter? If there were not those in the Church who loved the presence of the Lord in His Second Coming in the Writings could this truth ever have been seen? And is this not true of every vital truth which comes to the Church? Such truths are drawn out of the letter from the descent of the internal out of heaven. In such a state man is in internal communication with the angels who guide his thinking, the letter then comes into its own order in his mind out of such thinking. It is this that is meant by thinking no longer following the letter, but the letter the thinking. Such truth, however does not have power or authority until it is confirmed by the letter.

There is only one genuine authority in the Church, namely, the authority of the internal of the Latin Word in its external. The internal by itself lacks power, and authority, while the external apart from its genuine internal has a false authority in the Church as testified by the history of all the Churches.

If the internal of the Word, not perceived and therefore outside of the Church, could save the Church, none of the Churches which had the Word in the past would have fallen. Can we imagine that the Divine order has so changed that we can be in the internal of the Word without temptation, without struggle, without effort on our part, except to read and have faith in the authority of the Writings? Such an idea is so contrary to all that is taught in the Writings that it is difficult to see how any one could hold such an idea.

Some assume that all men who acknowledge the Writings as the Word of God are in possession of the truth.

With those in the early days of the Academy who struggled to come to the truth expressed in the first Principle of the Academy and who were prepared to give their all to establish and defend this truth, and gave their life to this end; this was indeed a spiritual truth with them, a truth which made all other truths with them living. But with those brought up in the Academy, and who have been taught this principle from early childhood, and whose natural affections are bound to this truth, and who live in a sphere that makes it easier to accept, than reject this principle, for all their natural affections and associations support it, this truth remains a mere scientific with them, a thing of the external memory, unless they go through a struggle corresponding to that of their fathers to come to a living understanding of the Word. If they fail to do this they are in no essential truth of the Church no matter how many things they have from the Writings and the Academy traditions in their memory, and are able to reason about them.

For we read: “Truths of faith outside of man, spirit, and angel are not the truths of faith... With those who are learning them for the first time they are scientifics.” (A.C. 5951)

“All the scientifics with man are natural.... Even scientifics concerning spiritual and celestial things.... But the regenerate man who is spiritual and the unregenerate man who is merely natural see them in different ways.” (A.C. 4967)

If one holds to the first principle of the Academy and interprets it in such a way as to deny the teaching of the Writings concerning the great importance of Doctrine drawn by the men of the Church in enlightenment, and that this doctrine is the lamp which alone gives light on the Word; does not one, in theoretically upholding the Divine authority of the Writings, in practice, deny it; for he places the first Principle of the Academy doctrine, superficially understood, above the actual teaching of the Writings themselves?

If one does this, does he not do the thing which we are charged with doing?

In the early days of the Academy, the question of the distinction between the internal and the external of the Writings had not arisen, nor the question of how the Word becomes the Word with man, nor the question of the nature of doctrine drawn from the Word by men in enlightenment. The important thing with them was to establish the general principle, which we all hold to, that the Writings are the only source of Divine Truth, that they are the Word and are the only Divine authority. To make this general teaching oppose what the Writings themselves teach concerning doctrine drawn from the Word by men in a state of enlightenment is absurd.

What is the real issue then? Is it as to what is the authority in the Church? Namely as to whether it is internal dictates from the Holy Spirit in the individual man of the Church or whether it is the plain teaching of the Writings themselves?

The answer is it is both of these together. For the Word apart from the presence of the Holy spirit is seen in merely natural light; and as such light is essentially obscure, the genuine truths of the Word cannot be plainly seen taught in such light. There is a passage, which we have quoted in the past, but which we cannot locate at present, which says that the Doctrine by itself does not have authority, but that together with the literal sense it has authority.

We read: "An intelligent person is able to know that the Word is most holy, and that its literal sense is holy from its internal sense. Therefore they who lay stress on the sense of the letter of the Word alone, and neither have nor procure for themselves from the Word Doctrine that is agreement with its internal sense can be drawn into any heresy whatever." (A.C. 10276)

"Man looks inwardly not from self but from the Lord; because in respect to his interiors which are of the will and understanding he is raised by the Lord to heaven and thus to the Lord. As the man is then among the angels, there is communicated to him from them, that is through them from the Lord, the understanding of truth and the affection of good." (A.C. 10330)

"When the Divine Truth flows in with man and is received by him, it is the spirit of truth, the spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit; for it flows in immediately from God, and also mediately through angels and spirits." (A.C. 9818:3)

"The interior, and even the internal sense and the highest sense, can be communicated to him. For man has communication with the three heavens." (A.C. 4300)

To say one believes in the authority of the Writings and to pay no attention to what the Writings teach concerning the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine drawn by men in enlightenment out of the Word

and its great importance is to believe in the authority as an abstraction, but not in actual practice. “It may be said we can not recognize the authority of what *de Hemelsche Leer* calls doctrine out of the Word.” The primary question is not whether one recognize what we call doctrine out of the Word, but whether one recognize what the Writings call “Doctrine out of the Word.”

It may be argued that the Word is the Divine law and the law exists and has authority whether men understand it or not. That it is not man’s understanding of the law of gravity which makes it a law, that it is a law of the universe whether man understands it or not.

Laws of creation operate and are felt whether man understands them or not, but this does not apply to human laws, nor to laws of the Divine Human. A law, no matter how wise it may be, written in a statute book has no actual authority in a kingdom unless the law is promulgated and understood.

The truth that the Writings are the Word of the Lord, and that they are of Divine Authority was in the Writings before this truth came to be seen in the Church. But as long as this truth was only in the Writings and was not seen by the Church, it had only potential authority and power, but no actual power to inspire, to elevate, and to save the Church. Thus the authority of this truth which was in the Word had no actual authority in the Church.

The truth that the Writings have an internal sense is a truth that always existed in the Writings, whether men see it or not, but the power to uplift, to give life to the Church, is effective and of actual authority only to the extent that this sense becomes visible in the Writings to the men of the Church. Although all authority is potentially in the Word itself, the actual authority in the Church is only in the truth which is visible and therefore present in the Church. To worship the potential authority of the Word outside of the visible Divine Truth is to worship an invisible God, which is to depart from the primary Doctrine of the New Church.

We are charged with placing the authority in man’s reception of the Word and not in the Word Itself. Our position is exactly that stated in the *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture*. “The Word is the Word according to the understanding of it in man.... If the Word is not understood, the Word is indeed called the Word, but it is not the Word with the man.” (S.S. 76)

The Word to have genuine authority must be the Word with man, if the Word not being understood is, “not the Word with man” what authority, can it have but a false authority?

It is held by some that Doctrine formulated by men of the Church – even though they are regenerating, – is and will be only the understanding of the man of the Church – an understanding which at all times is fallible and subject to errors. Note that to the extent that a man is actually of the Church, that is of the New Jerusalem or Nova Hierosolyma this statement is not true, for it is totally opposed to what is taught in the Writings concerning the New Church, for we read:

“‘The measure of a man which is an angel,’ signifies the quality of that Church, that it makes one with heaven.” (A.R. 910)

“‘And the City was of pure gold like unto pure glass,’ signifies that everything of that Church is the good of love flowing together with light out of heaven from the Lord.” (A.R. 912)

““And the city hath no need of the sun and the moon to shine in it and its lamp is the Lamb,’ signifies that the men of that Church will not be in self love in their own intelligence, and thence in natural light alone, but in spiritual light from the Divine Truth out of the Word from the Lord alone.” (A.R. 919)

““And the nations which are saved shall walk in the light of it,’ signifies that all who are in the good of life will there live according to Divine Truths, and will see them inwardly in themselves as an eye sees objects.” (A.R. 920)

““And the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it,’ signifies that all who are in spiritual wisdom from spiritual good, will confess the Lord, and ascribe to Him every truth and every good that is with them.” (A.R. 921)

““And the gates of it shall not be shut by day,’ signifies that they will be continually received into the New Jerusalem or Nova Hierosolyma, who are in truths out of good from the Lord, because there is not any falsity of faith there.” (A.R. 922)

The above of course applies to man only to the extent that he is actually of the Church and not merely in it, for to the extent that man is only in, but not of the New Church, he is not actually in the New Jerusalem, or Nova Hierosolyma.

From the above we believe it can be seen that the real issue is not the Divine Authority of the Writings in the Church, but is, whether the Word particularly the Writings are actually the Word in the Church only when genuinely understood in the light of genuine doctrine, or whether we can take the understanding of the Writings for granted, or, whether we can assume that all who acknowledge the Writings as the Word are in possession of the truth.

But there are two aspects of the essential issue between the General Church of the New Jerusalem and the Lord’s New Church which is Nova Hierosolyma. The one issue is as to the nature of Doctrine drawn from the Third Testament, the other which is of equal importance, is the nature of the Writings as the Word of the Lord. That the Writings of Swedenborg are the Word of the Lord, that they have an internal sense in which are the angels of heaven, is an idea which is accepted by many in the General Church, although it appears that there are few who believe, that the following quotations apply to the man of the New Church in reading the Writings: “The angels who are with man perceive the Word according to the internal sense. This is communicated to the man who is in good and reads the Word.” (A.C. 8694)

“That the interior, and even the internal and the highest sense can be communicated to man. For man has communication with the three heavens.” (A.C. 4300) Must this not apply to the man of the New Church in reading all three Testaments?

The truth that the Writings have an internal sense, by itself would not make them to be the Word of the Lord; for books may have an internal sense even a genuine internal sense and still may not be the Word, for we read concerning the book of Job, which is said to be, “an excellent and useful book... that is full of correspondences according to the method of the writings of the time,” (A.E. 740) as follows:

“That the book of Job is a book of the Ancient Church is evident from the representative and significative style therein. But it is not of those books which are called the Law and the Prophets, because it has not an internal sense which treats solely of the Lord and His Kingdom; for this alone is what makes a book of the genuine Word.”

There are three characteristics besides having an internal sense which the Word must have in order to be the Word.

First. It must be in a continuous Divine series, which, in its internal sense, treats solely of the glorification of the Lord and the regeneration of man.

Second. Every word in the Word must open to infinity.

Third. It must be perfect in its ultimates.

It is these characteristics which make the Writings to be the Word, for any book which lacks these characteristics is not the Word, for we read:

“The Word has this peculiar feature, not possessed by the writings of the Ancients, that each of the subjects in a continuous series represents the celestial and spiritual things of the Lord’s Kingdom, and in the supreme sense the Lord Himself; even the historicals themselves being of the same character.” (A.C. 4442)

“In the inmost sense of the whole Word, it treats solely of the Lord, and of the glorification of His Human, as to the internal sense it treats of regeneration.” (A.C. 771)

“There are inexhaustible things in every word of the Word.” (A.C. 1936)

“It is from the spiritual sense that the Word is ... holy in every word.” (D.S.S. 18)

“There is not a single word in the Word that does not involve a celestial Arcana.” (A.C. 4136)

“That the Word is distinct from all other writings, is from the fact that... all the words have a spiritual sense.” (A.C. 2311)

There is a passage which states that if every word in the Word did not open to Infinity it could not be the Word of God.

“The literal sense of the Word is the basis, the containent, and the support of its spiritual and celestial senses. In every Divine Work there is a first, middle and ultimate.... Every Divine work is complete and perfect in the ultimate.” (D.S.S. 27, 28)

If we regard the Writings of Swedenborg in merely natural light they do not appear to have the three characteristics which make the Word to be the Word, for they do not appear to treat in a continuous Divine series of the glorification of the Lord, they appear at times to treat of many things which have little reference to the Lord’s glorification such as for example, the earths in the universe (sic). Nor is it obvious that every word has an internal sense that opens up to Infinity. Nor does it appear that they are perfect in their ultimate; for, like the Old and New Testament, if

viewed from without, the ultimate appears to contain imperfections. But any one who is willing, if he sees that they are the Word of the Lord in His Second Coming, can see that they are a work purely Divine and must therefore have all the Divine qualities which make the Old and New Testament Divine, and that it is impossible to think of them as less purely Divine and Holy than the former Testaments.

If we can see that the Writings in their inmost sense treats in a continuous Divine series of the glorification of the Lord. It can be seen that their internal sense is at times as obviously remote from the sense of their letter as is the case in the Old and New Testament.

To truly believe that the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg are the Word of the Lord, we must believe that they have all of the essential characteristics which we are taught make the Word to be the Word of the Lord.