

WHAT IS THE WORD?

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You have probably heard your parents and others talk many times about the Word, and about how important it is that we listen to the Word, because then we know what the Lord wants us to do.

What is the Word? It is a few books that the Lord Himself gave to us. The Lord chose several servants, who would write down the things He wanted them to write, and He put His words into their minds, and He told them what to write. And they were good men, who wrote these things down, just as the Lord told them. He spoke to them, in a way that He doesn't speak to other people, and they heard His voice and wrote down what He said.

If you look at the book that we open in worship, that is part of the Word. It is a lovely red book, and we always treat it in a very special way, because it is one of the Lord's books. Now that book has three parts of the Word in it, called the Old Testament and the New Testament and the True Christian Religion (some copies at the front of our churches have only the Old and New Testaments).

The Old Testament has many stories in it that tell us about people, and how the Lord led them, and what the Lord wanted them to do. There are the stories of Abraham, and Joseph, and King David, and Samson, and Elijah, the great prophet, and many others. They are wonderful stories, telling of how the Lord talked to people in the olden days and told them what He wanted them to do. These stories also tell at times of people who were bad and how the Lord had to punish them.

What is also wonderful is that when we read these stories on earth, the angels see many, many things in these stories that we don't. They know the internal sense or the spiritual meaning of the Word.

Now the New Testament tells stories about the Lord Himself, and how He came to earth as a tiny Baby, grew up, lived in the land of Canaan, and taught people the way to heaven. You remember the stories about Christmas, don't you? These are some of the stories of the New Testament. You might remember others-like the story the Lord told about the man who fell among thieves and the Good Samaritan who helped him.

But there is the third part of the Word which is just as special, and that is the Word the Lord gave through Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg was told by the Lord to write down many things, and he did. He wrote thirty-five books, and these books are all the Lord's books. They weren't really Swedenborg's books at

all, because the Lord put into Swedenborg's heart what to write. Because he loved the Lord very much, Swedenborg wrote only what the Lord wanted him to write. He wrote books about what life is like after death, in heaven, hell and the world of spirits; about the joys of marriage; about how the Lord made the world and how he builds our minds; about his leading; and about many other things. He also told us a great deal about himself, so that we can know and love him. We call these books the Word for the New Church, or the Writings, or sometimes the Heavenly Doctrines. These thirty-five books tell us many different things that the Lord wants us to know about.

When you pick up any part of the Word and read it, then the Lord is talking to you. Because it is His Word, He wrote it, and it is as if He was speaking to you in His own voice. Every time you hear the Word or read it, then the Lord is very close to you, helping you to understand and love what He has said there. The Word is the most special set of books anywhere in all the world. So we always treat these books in a special way, never putting other books on top of them. And we often keep them in a special place in our homes, because they are the Lord's books.

So think of the Lord, loving us, and wanting us to know about all the happiness He can give us. He wants us to know what evil is like and what the hells are like so that we can turn away from them. He wants us to know what He is like. He longs to have us understand the life of heaven and all its joys. When you pick up a book of the Lord's Word, think of how the Lord is speaking to you in it, showing His love, and wisely leading you to heaven.