

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

OLD TESTAMENT

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

And the Angel of the Lord appear to the woman and said to her, "You shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him (see Judges 13: 3,5,24).

Now to his [Samson's] surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart...though he had nothing in his hand (Judges 14:5-6).

And they bound him with two new ropes. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it (see Judges 15:13-15).

And it came to pass, when she [Delilah] pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, that he told her his heart and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man" (Judges 16:16-17).

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. (Psalm 29:4)

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer,
The God of my strength, in Him I will trust,
My shield and the horn of my salvation,
My stronghold and my refuge....
I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.
For You are my lamp, O Lord;
The Lord shall enlighten my darkness.
The word of the Lord is proven;
He is a shield to all who trust in Him.
God is my strength and power,
And He makes my way perfect.

(2 Samuel 22: 2-4, 29, 31, 33)

O God of our salvation, You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth. Who has established the mountains by His strength, being clothed with power (see Psalm 65:5-6).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

NEW TESTAMENT

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:1,3-4).

"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25).

"I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:1-11).

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. (Matthew 6:13)

"With God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come" (Revelation 12:10).

"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (John 4:13,14).

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).

"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

THE POWER OF DIVINE TRUTH

Divine Truth possesses almighty power (*Arcana Coelestia* 8281:3).

Divine truth emanating from the Lord has all power in the spiritual world... Moreover, the power of Divine truth rests entirely in the literal meaning of the Word. The spiritual meaning has no power in it apart from the literal meaning (*De Verbo* 20:2).

Divine Truth has power in itself, and such power that, by means of it, heaven was created and the world with all things therein. That there is such power latent in Divine Truth may be illustrated by two comparisons, namely, by the power of truth and good in people, and by the power of light and heat from the sun in the world (*Heaven and Hell* 137:3).

All power in the spiritual world belongs to truth from good, and falsity from evil has no power whatever. That is why all power is in heaven, and none in hell (see *Heaven and Hell* 539).

From all this it can now be seen why God came into the world as the Word, and became Man, namely, that the work of redemption might be accomplished. For God then, by means of His Human, which was Divine truth, put on all power, overthrew the hells (which had grown up even as far as to the heavens where the angels were), and subjugated them, and reduced them to obedience to Himself, and this was done not by a spoken word but by the Divine Word which is Divine truth. From all this it can be seen that the power of Divine truth is inexpressible (*True Christian Religion* 224:3,4).

THE LORD IS THE WORD

The Word is from the Lord, about the Lord, and is the Lord (*Apocalypse Revealed* 200).

The Lord is the Word because He is the Divine truth; also because the Word is from Him, and treats of Him. And because it treats of the Lord alone in its inmost sense, the Lord Himself is therein (see *White Horse* 14).

'The Word' is the Lord in respect of Divine Truth. Through this Truth all things in heaven and in hell are arranged into order. It is the source of all order on earth too; and all miracles were accomplished through it. In short, Divine Truth holds all power within itself, so completely that it is power itself (*Arcana Coelestia* 8200:1,2).

THE LITERAL MEANING OR SENSE OF THE WORD

All the holiness of the Word resides in its literal sense, and there is no holiness in its spiritual meaning apart from the literal sense. The spiritual meaning apart from the literal meaning would be like a house without a foundation, thus like a house in the air (*De Verbo* 20).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

The Word is not the Word apart from its outmost meaning, which is the meaning of the letter. For the literal meaning of the Word is like a decanter filled with fine wine. If therefore the decanter is broken, all the wine is lost. Or the literal meaning of the Word is like the bones and skin of a person. If these are taken away, the whole person disintegrates. This is the reason that the integrity, indeed, the power of the whole Word lies in its outmost meaning, which is the meaning of the letter. For this meaning sustains and contains all the Divine truth within (*De Verbo* 10:5).

The sense of the letter of the Word is the very Word itself, for within this sense there are spirit and life, the spiritual sense being its spirit, and the celestial sense its life. This is what the Lord says: "The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The spiritual sense and the celestial sense without the natural sense which is the sense of the letter, are not the Word. For without it they are like spirit and life without a body; and are like a palace without a foundation (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 39).

The reason why the power of Divine truth or of the Word is in the sense of the letter, is that there the Word is in its fullness and it is also because the angels and people on earth are in that sense at the same time (see *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 49:4).

A doctrinal teaching whose genuine truth is verified by the literal meaning has power. An appearance of Divine truth also has power—but less so—to the degree that it can be harmonized with genuine truth. On the other hand, when the literal meaning of the Word is falsified, it has no power (*De Verbo* 20:5).

The ultimates of the Word, which constitute the sense of its letter, are all things of the Divine truth and of the Divine good, even from their firsts. And as all things of the Divine truth and the Divine good are together in their ultimate, which is the sense of the letter of the Word, there evidently is the power of Divine truth—the omnipotence of the Lord in saving people. For when the Lord operates, He operates not from first things through mediates into ultimates, but from first things through ultimates and thus into mediates. This is why the Lord is called in the Word the First and the Last. And this is why the Lord assumed the Human, which in the world was the Divine truth or the Word, and glorified it even to the ultimates, which are the bones and the flesh, in order that He might operate from first things through ultimates. This power in ultimates was represented by the hair with the Nazirites, as with Samson, for the hair corresponds to the ultimates of the Divine truth (*Apocalypse Explained* 1086:5).

But still, many things in the literal meaning of the Word are naked, unclothed so to speak, and these correspond to a person's face, and also to his hands—parts that are bare. These things in the Word are serviceable for the doctrine of the church, because they are in themselves spiritual truths on a natural plane. Consequently it can be seen that there is nothing to prevent a person from finding and seeing naked truths even in the literal sense of the Word (*De Verbo* 10:7).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

THE POWER OF SAMSON

The power of the Word in its outmosts was represented by the Nazirites. In the book of Judges we read that Samson was a Nazirite from his mother's womb, and that his strength lay in his hair. No one can know why the Naziriteship, which means the hair, was instituted, and why Samson's strength lay in his hair, unless he knows what is meant in the Word by the "head." The "head" means the intelligence that people and angels have from the Lord through Divine truth; and therefore the "hair" means intelligence from Divine truth in things outmost or last (*True Christian Religion* 223).

"Nazirites" stand for the Lord in respect to Divine truth. Hair was a sign of being a Nazirite and symbolizes Divine truth in ultimates. And because Divine truth in ultimates has strength and power, the strength of Samson was in his hair (see *Apocalypse Explained* 196:3).

The chief reason why the ultimate existence of Samson's strength lay in his hair was so that he might represent the Lord who from the natural man as regards truth was to fight the hells and overcome them. This He did before putting on Divine Good and Truth even as regards the natural man (*Arcana Coelestia* 301:4)

Hair and beards symbolize the outmost aspects of heaven and so also the outmost aspects of Divine truth or the Word. For this reason Samson's strength lay in his hair, and with the cutting of it he became weak. The hair of a Nazirite was consecrated, because a Nazirite represented the Lord in regard to His outmost aspects, and also heaven in its outmost aspects (see *De Verbo* 10:4).

SAMSON AND THE LION

The meaning of a "lion" is Divine truth proceeding from the Lord in respect to power and effect. Because all power is from the Lord through Divine truth, this also is symbolized by a "lion". "Lions" in the Word can also symbolize the power of falsity from evil (see *Apocalypse Explained* 278:1,9,11).

It is recorded of Samson, that after he had rent the young lion, and taken a wife from the nation of the Philistines, he found "a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion" (Judges 14:8). This circumstance stood for faith separated from charity, which the Philistine nation symbolized. Such faith, because it destroys the good of charity, was represented by the young lion which attacked Samson with intent to tear him in pieces. But Samson, because he was a Nazirite, and by his Naziriteship represented the Lord as to His ultimate Natural, rent the lion in pieces and afterwards found in its carcass "a swarm of bees and honey". This meant that when such faith is dissipated, the good of charity succeeds in its place (see *Apocalypse Explained* 619:18).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

THE POWER OF THE ANGELS IS FROM DIVINE TRUTH

In heaven Divine Truth has all power, and apart from it there is no power whatever. From the Divine Truth all angels are called powers, and are powers to the extent that they are receptions or receptacles of it. By means of it, they prevail over the hells and over all that oppose them. A thousand enemies there cannot endure a single ray of the light of heaven which is Divine Truth (*Heaven and Hell* 137:2).

But it must be understood that the angels have no power whatever from themselves, but that all their power is from the Lord; and that they are powers only so far as they acknowledge this. Whoever of them believes that he has power from himself instantly becomes so weak as not to be able to resist even a single evil spirit (*Heaven and Hell* 230).

Scarcely anyone in the world can know what the power possessed by truth coming from good is. People in possession of truth that comes from good or faith derived from charity, possess power that comes through truth from good. All angels possess that power for they have the power to restrain evil spirits. Even one angel can restrain a thousand. Their power they use most especially among people. Sometimes they protect a person from numerous hells. This power that angels possess comes to them through the truth of faith derived from the good of charity. But because the faith they have comes from the Lord, the Lord alone is the power that resides with them (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6344:4,5).

WONDERFUL THINGS RELATING TO THE WORD IN HEAVEN

The wonderful things arising from the Word in the spiritual world are many. In the shrines of the temples there the Word itself shines before the eyes of the angels like a great star, sometimes like a sun. And also from the bright radiance round about it there are seen as it were most beautiful rainbows. This happens as soon as the shrine is opened (*True Christian Religion* 209).

That each truth and all truths of the Word shine has been made evident to me by the fact that when any least sentence from it is written out upon paper, and this is thrown into the air, the very paper shines in the form in which it has been cut (*True Christian Religion* 209:2).

Besides these there are many other wonderful things there which are from the Word. For instance, if anyone who is in falsities looks towards the Word as it lies in its holy place a darkness comes over his eyes, and in consequence the Word appears to him to be black, and sometimes as if covered with soot; and if he likewise touches the Word an explosion follows with a crash, and he is thrown to a corner of the room, and lies there for a brief hour as if dead. If something from the Word is written on a paper by one who is in falsities, and the paper is thrown up toward heaven, a like explosion follows in the air between his eyes and heaven, and the paper is torn to shreds and vanishes; the same thing happens if the paper is thrown towards an angel standing near (*True Christian Religion* 209:3).

Quotes from the Word: The Power of the Lord's Word

The power of the Word in the sense of the letter is the power to open heaven, whereby communication and conjunction are effected, and also the power to fight against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. A person who is in genuine truths from the sense of the letter of the Word can disperse and scatter the whole diabolical crew...merely by a look and by an effort of the will. In brief, in the spiritual world nothing can resist genuine truths confirmed by the sense of the letter of the Word (*Apocalypse Explained* 1086:6).

As the Word in its inmost depths, because of its celestial sense, is like a gentle flame that enkindles, and in its intermediate depths, because of its spiritual sense, is like a light that enlightens, so in its outmost because of its natural sense it is like a transparent object receiving both the flame and the light. From the flame it is ruddy like purple, and from the light is white like snow. Thus it is comparatively like a ruby and a diamond, like a ruby from celestial flame, and like a diamond from spiritual light (*True Christian Religion* 216).

THE POWER THAT THE LORD GIVES US

By the Lord's Divine power one should here understand Divine Truth emanating from the Lord, for power resides within Divine Truth to such an extent that it is power itself. Divine Truth emanating from the Lord flows into every person by way of his interiors into his exteriors, right down into the external sensory and the bodily levels, and everywhere it flows it stirs to life things attuned to it in their proper order (*Arcana Coelestia* 6948:2).

The statement that truths springing from good possess such power is unintelligible to those who have the idea that truth or a belief in truth is no more than mental activity, when yet a person's mental activity, under the control of his will, constitutes all the strength which the body has. If the Lord were to instill it through His Divine Truth into that body the person would possess the strength of Samson. But yet it is the Lord's good pleasure to impart strength to a person through faith springing from love in the things that belong to his spirit and that contribute to eternal life (*Arcana Coelestia* 10182:6).

The power of Divine truth is directed especially against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. The fight against these must be waged by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. Moreover it is by means of the truths in a person that the Lord has the power to save him. For a person is reformed and regenerated and is at the same time taken out of hell and introduced into heaven, by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word. This power the Lord took upon Himself, even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word down to its ultimates (*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* 49).