

# **Because the Word is the Lord, It Alone Has the Power to Regenerate the Human Mind**

## **John 1:1-4, 12**

1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men....12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become sons of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

DSS 49. Thus far it has been shown that the Word in the natural sense, which is the sense of the Letter, is in its sanctity and in its fullness. Something shall now be said to show that the Word in that sense is also in its power. The greatness of the power of Divine Truth, and its nature, in the heavens and also on the earths, may be evident from what has been said in the work on HEAVEN AND HELL concerning the power of the angels of heaven Nos. 228-233. The power of Divine Truth is directed especially against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. These must be combated by means of truths from the sense of the Letter of the Word. Moreover, by means of the truths that are with a man, the Lord has the power of saving him; for by means of truths from the sense of the Letter of the Word, a man is reformed and regenerated. He is then taken out of hell and introduced into heaven. This power the Lord assumed even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word even to its, ultimates. [2] Therefore, when He was about to fulfil what yet remained, by the passion of the cross, He said to the chief priest:

Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. Matt. xxvi 64; Mark xiv 62.

The Son of Man, is the Lord as to the Word; the clouds of heaven are the Word in the sense of the Letter; and sitting at the right hand of God means omnipotence through the Word;

## **SERMON**

Last time we looked at the idea that the actual texts of Divine revelation are the Word and as such are the Lord, being the very form the Divine Good and Divine Truth take on the material plane of creation. We saw that the statement in the Heavenly Doctrine that the Lord is the Word is not meant as a figure of speech but is to be taken as a fundamental truth describing the essential nature of reality itself. This is of course a somewhat abstract idea for the natural man, whose thought, being embedded in worldly notions of matter, person, place, time and space, can only think of the Lord's Divine Human in terms of a natural person in time and space. This limitation of the natural led to the Word accommodating itself to

the natural by becoming flesh so that the Lord was born onto the natural plane in accordance with the same laws that govern all natural human births.

This means that the life of the historical person Jesus Christ, as captured in the Word, and expounded so wonderfully in the Heavenly Doctrine serves in the salvation of human race by providing a concrete illustration of what the Word is and how, when read as to its spiritual meaning, it undertakes the regeneration of the human mind. Essentially all that is said of the life of the Lord God Jesus Christ in the Text is equally true of the Word, so that what is said of the Lord's activity as to His person in the world carries within it a deeper spiritual meaning that reveals the activity of the Word as goods and truths operating to reform and regenerate the human mind.

In Logopraxis our interest in the historical level of the Texts of Divine Revelation, including the Lord as a historical figure acting in a historical context of time and space, is to come into an understanding of the corresponding spiritual realities to which the natural content points as a representative sign. By spiritual content we don't mean something abstract and ethereal - we simply mean the phenomena of consciousness, this being the thoughts and affections that make up the activity of your mind, or your mental life. It is to the world of your mind that the spiritual teaching of the Word is directed to bring you into an awareness of the quality of the thoughts and affections that directly influence the quality and experience of your life. From a Logopraxis perspective to apply truths to life means to apply them to the life of your mind, which means to see your inner mental activity (i.e. its life) in the light of what truths teach.

Why is this important? It's important because what survives the body upon its death are the patterns of affection and thought that you made a permanent feature of your sense of self while in the body. The spiritual work we are given while in the material body is to cooperate with the Lord as the Word so that we can be created anew. This new creation is not of the material world but is a spiritual creation being a new form of mind that lives consciously from the Lord. To live from the Lord is to live from the Word and so we are given a Word in the form of the Texts of Divine revelation from which we can, if we choose to, begin to draw our mode of life. Every human being lives by means of its reception of life from the Lord into the deepest recesses of their being. We are not in direct contact with this level of our being, but that life that flows in is pure love and as such seeks only to do us good. But that life, as perfect as it is in itself, when entering the minds of finite human beings, is limited in its capacity to do good by the form and quality of the mental structures it has to work with.

So it is, that our subjective experience of this inflowing life takes the form of the natural affections that rule in us and give form to the beliefs we hold about our experience of being alive. For every person comes to believe that the life force within them is their own, that this life force is intrinsic to themselves, and this is so much taken for granted that few are willing to reflect on what is actually going on within them, or call into question the beliefs they hold about "their" experience of this life force unfolding within them moment to moment. The Heavenly Doctrine

speaks of the fact of evil. That its origin is believing the appearance, or the deep set feeling, that this life force is somehow intrinsic to our being as its source and so arises from us. But this belief stands in direct contradiction to what the Word teaches is the case. And if the starting point of our sense of things is in something directly opposed to what the Word teaches then the only kind of life that can arise from a state opposed to what the Word teaches is evil and falsity. So what we believe matters, it matters because what we believe concerning what we experience as our life has eternal consequences; it has a direct bearing on whether we have formed within us a mind capable of receiving the Lord's inflowing life so that it is experienced as heaven or a mind formed around what is evil and false whereby, that inflowing life, having being removed from its true source, at least insofar as our beliefs about it are concerned, is claimed as our own giving rise to a state of hell.

AE 802.7 ...it is to be noted that it is one thing to believe a person and another thing to believe in him; as to believe that there is a God and to believe in Him. To believe in God or in His name signifies both to do and to have faith, as in John:

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, to them that believe in His name; who were born, not of bloods nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man (vir), but of God (1:12, 13).

Those born "not of bloods" are those who do not falsify the Word; those born "not of the will of the flesh" are those who are not in lusts from love of self; those born "not of the will of man" are those who are not in falsities from the pride of self-intelligence; those "born of God" are those who are regenerated by the Lord by means of truths from the Word and a life according to them; these are they who believe in the name of the Lord, and thence are called "sons of God."

We see then that heaven and hell are in essence states of mind first and foremost and that any experience of them as an external perceptible reality for those in the spiritual world is a representation that perfectly corresponds to how the mind's affections, as extended through the core beliefs a person holds, are ultimately organised. This very fact should give us pause for reflection on the state or quality of what we experience on an ongoing basis as our inner mental world. We are born natural, into natural loves that are opposed to what is spiritual. Around this disordered starting point we build a sense of self that is quite literally hell bent. Natural spiritualities promoted in the world begin in a psychological space that says we are essentially ok as we are. That we merely need to tap into the power within our "self" to realise our "divine" potential. This is not what the Word teaches, for that "self" inherited through birth and developed in the world is of the world and all efforts to build this self up and strengthen it is to invite disaster from an eternal perspective.

Make no mistake, the Heavenly Doctrine is clear, the only solution offered in dealing with this proprial self we have inherited and are so identified with is to work with the Word to have it stripped bare so that its true nature can be seen in the light of what truths teach thus allowing for a new sense of self to be established within us that is squarely grounded in higher heavenly loves.

AE 585 [2] In respect to man's self it is to be known that it is nothing but evil and falsity therefrom; the voluntary self [proprium voluntarium] is evil, and the intellectual self therefrom [proprium intellectuale] is falsity. This self man derives mainly from parents, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, in a long series back, so that at length the hereditary, which is his self, is nothing but evil gradually heaped up and condensed. For every man is born into two diabolical loves, the love of self and the love of the world, from which loves all evils and all falsities therefrom pour forth as from their own fountains; and as man is born into these loves he is also born into evils of every kind (respecting which more may be seen in the New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine, n. 65-83).

[3] Because man, in respect to his self is such, means have been given by the Divine mercy of the Lord, by which man can be withdrawn from his self; these means are given in the Word; and when man cooperates with these means, that is, when he thinks and speaks, wills and acts, from the Divine Word, he is kept by the Lord in things Divine, and is thus withheld from self; and when this continues there is formed with man by the Lord as it were a new self, both voluntary and intellectual, which is wholly separated from man's self; thus man becomes as it were created anew, and this is what is called his reformation and regeneration by truths from the Word, and by a life according to them.

For a new sense of self to be built, for new creation to come into being, you must be born again, or born from above. In more familiar terms your understanding has to be re-formed and your will re-generated, or you need to come into a state where you can think from truths and love from what is good. To have the understanding re-formed new ideas are needed to replace the old, and if the will is to be regenerated then these ideas have to be able to provide a mental environment that supports the development of affections for higher things. To this end the Lord provides us with the Word and through these Texts of Divine revelation we are provided with the primary and sole means by which a new mind can be created within us. John in the opening of his Gospel declares of the Word that...

All things were made through Him; and without Him nothing was made that was made... (Jn 1:3)

While the natural mind is inclined to focus on the creation of the external world of "things" when reading this more standard translation of the Greek the mention in the very next verse that...

...in Him was life; and that life was the light of men (Jn 1:4)

...shows that it is spiritual or mental realities that are actually being spoken about here. For the spiritual mind, not being limited by ideas of space, time, person, place, and matter as the natural mind is, thinks not in terms of material things but in terms of mental states, and so sees a deeper more internal application and meaning in this life that enlightens human beings. Such light is not the natural light of the

world but is the spiritual light of Divine truth which is clearly evident in the statement found in v12 that speaks of our spiritual rebirth...

12 But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

This becomes even more clear when we remove ideas belonging to time and space from verse 3, for then the statement that...

"All things were made through Him" - becomes -

*All come into being through the Word.*

Note that the word "things" has been removed, so rather than "All things" we simply have All. This is because a word for things is not strictly found in the original Greek text, but has been added by the translators as it is implied in the term for All. The effect of including the word "things" impresses an unhelpful material idea upon the mind of the reader that only serves to draw the thought away from the non-material or spiritual realities being unfolded here in the Text. So by removing "things" we have - *All were made through Him*. This brings us to the temporally loaded phrase, "were made" which describes something coming into being in the past, in time. The Heavenly Doctrine says of creation that it is a constant coming into being, which describes a dynamic process of life that is neither past nor future but eternally present. This idea is better captured through the removal of the past tense inference. The actual single Greek word that is translated into the two English words, "were made" is the word *ginomai*\* which means *to become* or *come into being*. So rather than "All things were made through Him" we now have, *All come into being through Him*. And it is clear from the opening two verses that read...

1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

...that by the pronoun *Him* is meant the Word, giving us, *All come into being through the Word*. We see then that a deeper spiritual meaning that deals with states of consciousness is not beyond the apprehension of even the natural mind if it is open to having the Text translated in the light of what the Heavenly Doctrine teaches. Spiritually speaking to *come into being* is to be born again from above, for prior to their spiritual rebirth a person has not yet truly even begun to live. Thus using the same approach to the verses we have just examined the final part of verse 3 which reads...

"and without Him nothing was made that was made"

can be read as *...and without the Word no one coming into being comes into being*.

The English word "nothing" found in the more traditional rendering, "and without Him nothing was made that was made" is a translation of two Greek words, one meaning "not" and the other meaning "one" hence its rendering as *no(t) one* and, as

previously, the words "was made" is a translation of *ginomai* which us better rendered as, *to become* or *come into being*. This Greek word also carries the meaning to generate. The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that the subject of creation in the Word has to do with the regeneration of the human mind. This being the case we can transpose this idea into verse 3 which gives us...

*All are regenerated through the Word and without the Word no one is regenerated who is regenerated.*

DSS 49 The power of Divine Truth is directed especially against falsities and evils, thus against the hells. These must be combated by means of truths from the sense of the Letter of the Word. Moreover, by means of the truths that are with a man, the Lord has the power of saving him; for by means of truths from the sense of the Letter of the Word, a man is reformed and regenerated. He is then taken out of hell and introduced into heaven. This power the Lord assumed even as to His Divine Human, after He had fulfilled all things of the Word even to its, ultimates.

Now having established the importance of the letter of the Word in the processes of regeneration we shall consider in general the question of how the Word does this when we return next time.

Amen

\*<http://lexiconcordance.com/greek/1096.html>