

INTRODUCING SWEDENBORG'S FOUR DOCTRINES

Introduction

In building a house you have to first put down the foundations on which it will stand. In this book, the *Four Doctrines*, first published in 1763, Emanuel Swedenborg provides the basis for all the theology and teaching that are to be found and developed elsewhere throughout his spiritual writings. It is a summary.

The four foundation teachings concern:

The Lord

The Word or Sacred Scripture

Life, and

Faith.

They are set down and worked through systematically, providing an outline of what each teaching needs to cover.

A significant feature of the *Four Doctrines* is the extent of biblical references and quotations that are used to illustrate and support each teaching. These can sometimes run to several pages. Their purpose is to show that the text of the Bible itself, on the surface and without interpretation, presents and contains true teachings about God, revelation and life. Swedenborg says that the Word is in its completeness, holiness and power in the way in which it is written. The examples that are used strongly support this teaching, often surprisingly so.

Content of Book and Reading Approach

Here is a summary of the contents of each of the four doctrines:

Teaching about the Lord

- The Lord, the Word and the fulfilment of the Law
- The purpose of the Incarnation or the Lord coming into the world
- The result and outcome of the Incarnation
- The Lord's remission of sins through repentance
- The meaning of the Lord's names - Son of God, Son of Man
- The union between the Lord's Human and His Divine (glorification)
- The Lord's temptations and overcoming of His human state
- The Lord is God
- The Holy Spirit

Teaching about the Word (Sacred Scriptures)

- The Lord, the Word and how we are to keep their teaching

- The whole Word has a spiritual meaning
- The Word's text contains all higher levels of meaning
- The Word's text is truth in its completeness, holiness and power
- We must form our beliefs from the Word's text and confirm and have it confirmed by that
- The Word's text joins us with the Lord and with angels
- The Word is in heaven and is the source of all heaven's wisdom
- The church, or our spiritual state, is in accord with how we understand the Word
- The marriage of good with truth can be seen all through the Word
- Heresies can be formed from the Word's text
- The Lord came to fulfil the Word and become Divine Truth
- There was a written Word before the Word we have today
- The Word provides light for people who do not have the Word
- We would not know about God or life after death without the Word

Teaching about Life

- Everything to do with religion is about life and doing good
- We cannot do good on our own
- Doing good from the Lord means refusing to do evil
- The Ten Commandments show us what is evil
- We become spiritually good as we refuse to do evil
- Refusing evil involves struggling against wanting to do it
- We must refuse evil as if we do that by ourselves
- If there is any other reason, we are not refusing evil, only not showing it

Teaching about Faith

- Faith is our inner acknowledgment of what is true
- We can only have this faith if we also have charity or spiritual love for other people
- Knowledge and faith are not linked before there is charity
- If we only have faith and no charity our spiritual life doesn't exist

Relevance Today

Many people long for clear teachings concerning the nature of God, the work of Jesus Christ, the meaning of the Bible and what goes to make a satisfying spiritual life. Swedenborg's *Four Doctrines* addresses the essential issues involved in these areas of Christian belief and draws together conclusions, using numerous biblical quotes, presenting a connected whole.

Invitation

If you have found Christian teachings about God and life to be unhelpful or confusing, this book will provide a new and completely Bible-based approach.

Quotations

From *The Lord* paragraph 2

These passages show that the Lord is the eternal God; and that this God is the Lord who came into the world.

From *The Word* paragraph 57

Enlightenment only comes from the Lord and we have it when we love the truth because it is true and when we use it in our life.

From *Life* paragraph 13

The essence of good can only come from God who is Good Itself, and from nowhere else.

From *Faith* paragraph 3

We can understand spiritual truths just as much as we can understand natural truths.

Availability of the Book

Paperback

Hardback

Brochures in this Series:

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Divine Love and Wisdom

Divine Providence

Four Doctrines

Heaven and Hell

Marriage Love

True Christianity

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