



E-Read



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Revisiting The White Horse

Revd Bruce Jarvis writes:

There are huge white horses carved out of chalk hillsides scattered around our countryside. I always look out for the horse on the southern edge of the North Yorks Moors as we drive northwards on the A19. But this is not the white horse I'm thinking about. Nor is it directly about the white horse that figures so prominently in the Book of Revelation; well, not directly.

Recently I completed another read-through of Revelation, the last of the inspired scriptures, and as I did so my “journey” was accompanied by Swedenborg’s *Apocalypse Revealed*, which opens up the inner significance and meaning of the wonderful and yet mysterious 22 chapters of Revelation. What next? I thought.

My gaze fell upon a slender volume of just 42 pages, made up of 17 short chapters. Yes, *The White Horse*! First published in London in 1758, this version was published, again in London, in 2007 by the Swedenborg Society. The translator is Kenneth Ryder, and his consultant the Revd John Elliott. I recall reading this version the year it was published while I was in Mauritius for a few months, serving the New Church community there.



Rider on a White Horse - G. Roland Smith

In many respects *The White Horse* is quite different from most of Swedenborg’s other theological books. Of the published works, it is among the, if not *the*, shortest. (I’ll leave the scholars to correct me!) Also, it is strikingly different in style. That’s to say, it is not a verse-by-verse explanation of scripture that we see in various volumes. Nor is it a description of, for example, Heaven and Hell, or of any particular doctrine or teaching. In his Preface the translator quotes his consultant: *No explicit reasons were provided by Swedenborg himself for the publication of this slender volume. Yet it may be assumed that it was intended to be a kind of brochure serving as an introduction to Arcana Caelestia.*

The first five paragraphs do indeed speak about the White Horse of Revelation 19, and about the correspondence of horses in the Word. The remaining chapters are essentially a quick way of finding key teachings in the *Arcana Caelestia*, which Swedenborg had completed in 1756. So, for example, chapter 6 is headed *The Word and its Spiritual or Internal sense from the Arcana Caelestia*. Then come a series of pithy statements followed by the references to the relevant paragraphs. Let’s quote the first one: *In the dim light of the natural order of things nothing may be known about the Lord, or about heaven and hell, or about the life of a person after death, or about the divine truths through which a person has spiritual and eternal life: see §§8944, 10318-10320.* The reader can then quickly refer to those AC paragraphs, either in the printed volumes or by finding the *Arcana* on-line. (The *New Christian Bible Study* is a wonderful tool for this purpose.)

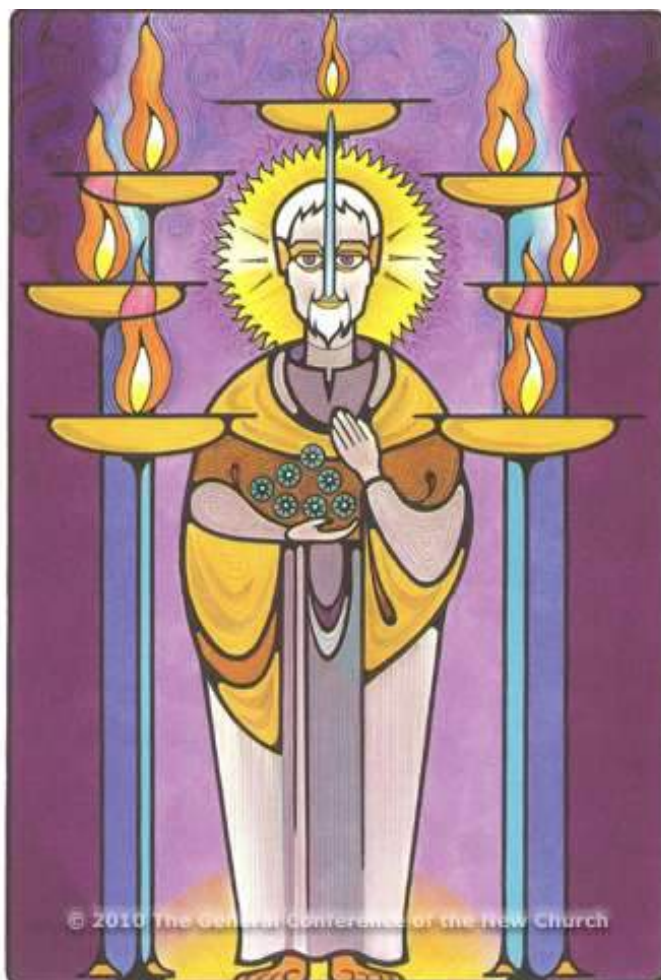


Christ Manifesting - G. Roland Smith

Among the other chapter headings are: *7. The Word is not understood except through doctrine from the Word; 10. The internal sense of the Word is primarily for the angels, but it is also for men.* (Note: Ryder comments in his Preface that where the Latin has “man”, he chose to use “humans”.)

Have I whetted your appetite? I hope so! A phone call to the Swedenborg Society (020 7405 7986) will have a copy winging its way to your home in no time at all!

Bruce Jarvis (Revd)



The Son of Man - G. Roland Smith