

IF ANYONE HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR...

by Rev. Philip B. Schnarr

“Having an ear to hear” means to perceive and obey, and also to attend.”

(Apocalypse Revealed 590)

To have “an ear to hear” is a phrase used repeatedly in the Word. It speaks of a desire to become first intelligent and then wise from listening and hearkening to the teachings of the Lord’s Word. But this kind of hearing requires much more than merely listening to words. How easy it is to practice “selective listening” so that we, in essence, only hear what we want to hear. But the hearing that leads to wisdom is quite different. It entails careful concentration, reflection and some degree of affectional response to what has been heard. That is why “hearing” in a more interior sense is said to be “faith in the will” (*Arcana Coelestia* 3869:4).

This leads us to the very reason that the Lord has given us ears to hear. When He calls to us from His Word, He is asking us to respond. He is asking for a *willing obedience* to act in accordance with those principles that He knows will lead to our eternal happiness. Only then can we say we are hearkening to His Word.

Throughout the Word there are many examples of people who the Lord called to obedience with a specific task in mind. Moses was called by God from the midst of a burning bush to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. In the middle of the night, the young boy Samuel received his call to serve the Lord as a prophet. In the call of His disciples the Lord simply said “follow me” and they came. And the Lord appeared to Swedenborg when he was fifty-seven years old, and from that moment Swedenborg was called to spend the remainder of his life in humble service to the Lord as a revelator.

Do we hear the Lord calling to us? His voice resounds throughout His Word. He says: “[I]ncline your ear, and come unto Me; hear that your soul may live” (Isaiah 55:2-3). Our soul lives when we desire to know the truth, to discover the truth in the Word, to love the truth because it is true and, above all, when we enjoy living according to the truth (see *Apocalypse Explained* 249:2).