



### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Easter, in Australia, falls during autumn, when the life seems to go out of all living things. Leaves turn from green to yellow to red. Then the energy is sapped out of them and they quickly brown, dry up and fall to the ground. Every autumn the process is repeated and we come to anticipate the end of that cycle and the beginning of a new cycle.

*How did Christ know His teaching cycle was completed? What was the sign that His work was done?* It is said that Christ taught for three years and confined His wanderings between Galilee and Judea, not a particularly great area. Assuming "three", as in three years, corresponds to what is full from beginning to end, the actual teaching period may have been longer but it nevertheless suggests that all the Lord had wanted to achieve was complete and him remaining for a longer period was fruitless. The sign that Christ's teaching was fulfilled was heralded by the "coming of the Greeks" ( Jn. 12.20) and Swedenborg shows us the correspondence meant by the 'Greeks' and the 'Greek Isles'.

However it is also worthy of note that the New Testament was written in Greek and is an appeal to an Hellenistic, not a Jewish, Gentile people. Many of the "miracles" are able to be illustrated with beautiful geometries which no doubt were used as a means of re-remembering (putting back together) the stories both for the story-teller and the audience. These geometries use the knowledges of Pythagoras and others of early Greek esoteric wisdom. The use of the science of gematria, where meanings are indicated by numbers, permeates the teaching and had a particularly strong appeal to the Greek intellect. The "coming of the Greeks" therefore indicated, as Swedenborg says, that the teachings of Christ had penetrated to the far reaches of the Mediterranean area even though Christ had confined His physical presence to the Dead Sea areas. The Greeks readily recognised the Divine Messenger and embraced the Lord as a personal God in contrast to their hitherto 'civic gods'.

Jesus, on being told that the Greeks had come, spoke those beautiful words of which autumn may remind us:

*"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified  
Verily, verily I say unto you,  
Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die,  
it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.  
He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life  
shall keep it unto life eternal."*

John 12:24

Have a happy Easter,

Agape,

*John Brogan*

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*Two copies of this Newsletter are being sent to members as usual, the second*

# A MEDITATION ON EASTER

Prior Recommended Reading: John's Gospel 20: 1 - 22

The resurrection of the Lord corresponds to the beginning of our regeneration as a spiritual person. For us this is not a single incident in time but reflects the rising of the Lord's love and wisdom in our mind and life every day - even every moment. It describes our continuing rebirth as a spiritual person.

The resurrection also portrays the glorification of the Lord: the process by which His human nature, derived from His mother Mary, became fully united with His Divine nature which is called the Father. It was truly a miraculous event.

*Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw the stone already taken away from the door. And so she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."*

**Place yourself in this scene.** Imagine yourself being there to witness the events.

It is the first day of the week, just three days after the upsetting emotional turmoil of the passion of the cross. During the night you have come into the garden where the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb. As you sit amid the flowers and olive trees, the fragrant smell of spring blossoms permeates the air and fills your senses. You relax as you breathe it in; your mind quiets and drifts off to pleasant moments you recall having spent with the Lord.

Just before dawn, with the faintest hint of light peeking from the east, you notice a woman quietly approaching. It is Mary Magdalene. You feel a welling up in your chest of the loving, nurturing part of you that seeks union with the Lord. She walks toward the tomb. As you look in that direction you are surprised to see that the stone has been rolled away from the entrance. You see the opening in the rock and feel your thoughts opening toward the divine truth, helping you understand what is happening. Mary seems upset. She kneels before the tomb and bows her head in prayer. She then gets up and departs to find the disciples and tell them the Lord has disappeared. Your natural mind seeks understanding from the natural things with which it is familiar.

John - representing those who are in the good of love - arrives first. He goes to the door of the tomb and looks in, but he does not enter. Peter - the good of truth - rushes up behind him and enters the tomb, only to find it empty except for a cloth and some linen wrappings. He confirms that the body of Jesus is gone. They back away sadly into the garden and then turn and slowly go back to their homes. Those who are in the good of love and the good of faith realize that they can do nothing without the Lord. When they feel the Lord has left them or been taken from them they are at a loss and can think of doing nothing but returning to the security of their homes and waiting for the Lord to become present once again in their lives. You retreat into the goodness of past experience where you feel safe and know there is comfort.

Mary, however, stays. She is saddened and grieves so to have lost her beloved Jesus. As you visualize her kneeling before the tomb with her head bowed in prayer, you too feel a strong need to be close to the Lord - to experience his presence again in your life as you have previously felt him, guiding and supporting you through your daily activities. Mary enters the tomb; there she sees two angels. One is sitting at the head and one at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain. Your entering into this state expresses your desire to be with the Lord always - to have his will become your will, and to act according to his will. The angels ask Mary why she is weeping. The question seems absurd coming from those who are so sensitive to human feelings. But it shows that they themselves are not sad because they know he is alive and the world has not lost him. There is a part in you that also understands and feels the vital life of God within. The angel at the head is the influence of Divine truth at the highest level of your comprehension, and the angel at the foot is the influence of Divine truth in your understanding of the most basic things of nature and your daily life.

Becoming aware of the source of all your understanding is the first step in your reunion with the Lord. Mary turns and sees Jesus, whom she at first takes to be the gardener. But He speaks her name and she knows it is the Lord, her beloved teacher and friend. She answers back. "Rabboni." You now know for sure within your heart and soul that the Lord exists - that he is real and you can relate to Him and live within the sphere of His loving influence.

This recognition of the Lord from within is a huge step forward in your regeneration - for now you can be sure and comfortable within yourself that He lives and is there for you. From now on it will not be difficult to open yourself to His presence and to feel him operating in your life. Some natural parts of you may still doubt and need convincing, but inwardly you are sure. You have grown spiritually and your life has gained new meaning.

On the evening of the first day of the week Jesus appears to the disciples. He is beginning to influence the part of your life that has heard His Word but still lacks the certainty and confidence to go out and share your joy and understanding with others. The disciples require proof that it is really the Lord who is there in their presence. And so He must show them the holes in His hands and the wound in His side. Once you believe both inwardly and outwardly in the existence of God, you are ready to share this with others and to lead the kind of life that leads to heaven and eternal life.

The Lord appears to the disciples many times as they experience him daily in their lives. Being so open to his presence, they are ready to receive the Holy Spirit - and the Lord breathes this spirit into them. Your regeneration will proceed rapidly now. As the story describes the Lord's glorification, and as He becomes one with the Father in every sense, you feel yourself becoming a part of God. The love and truth in your life comes from him. As you acknowledge it and share it with others, you are returning it to Him - and He then gives you even more. As with the disciples in Galilee, you can walk with Him and dine with Him. Your regeneration is leading you to union and oneness with your God.

*Lord, thank you for your divine gift of love. Thank you for the spiritual and emotional growth in my life. Renew my life. Lord, so I may live in you and you in me forever.*



Written by **Rev. David Sonmor** of the Swedenborg Church in Western Canada



*Instead of a grave, the angels perceive nothing else than the continuation of life, and so resurrection. For a person rises again as to the spirit and is buried as to the body. Now because 'burial' means resurrection, it also means regeneration, since regeneration is the primary resurrection of men and women, for when regenerated they die as regards their former self and rise again as regards the new. It is through regeneration that from being a dead person we become a living one, and it is from this that the meaning of 'a grave' is derived in the internal sense.*

**Swedenborg: Arcana Coelestia**  
from paragraph 2916.



## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### New Members

We welcome Denise Barsoum (Bondi Junction), Janet Fairlie-Cunninghame (Pymble), and Ken Slater (Port Macquarie) to the Swedenborg Association of Australia.

### Swedenborg Quotation from the Secretary.

*The essence of every love consists of uniting. This applies to its life, which we call pleasure, charm, delight, sweetness, blessedness, prosperity, and happiness. Love consists of having what belongs to oneself belong to someone else; feeling another person's joy in oneself - that is loving.*

Divine Love and Wisdom 47

Michael Chester, Secretary.



### GROUP'S NEWS

#### North Ryde:

An interesting talk by **Dr Jane Williams-Hogan** on *Swedenborg's Writings as Charismatic Texts*, was given on Friday 2nd February. In her talk she recounted how people in the past were deeply influenced by the Writings. She also presented her findings from interviewing a number of people of how they were influenced by the Writings after being introduced to them. These examples showed that the Writings met a deep need in their lives which helped them to appreciate the meaning of life and the nature of the Divine and His Creation.

On Friday 1st March, 14 people gathered together to study Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom* Julian Duckworth guided us in introducing the study program which will continue to Friday 2nd November, meeting on the first Friday of the month. On the first night we focused on particular selections from Paragraphs 1-51 which deals with the nature of the Divine. Julian with his usual enthusiasm drew out the richness of meaning so that we could appreciate the insights that Swedenborg has recorded. There was a sense that people appreciated the excellent introduction to this work and were looking forward to preparing for the next meeting.

Michael Chester.



### Melbourne:

For the October meeting **John Brogan** spoke on the subject of *Sacred Architecture*. By the use of slides and other visual aids John gave a very stimulating talk on the way Architecture is linked to Geometry and Astronomy and indeed to the development of ancient wisdom including the science of correspondences. The talk was very much appreciated by the 17 people present.

For the final meeting of the year **Ian Arnold** took the subject of *The uniqueness of the individual* and linked this to God's overall plan for mankind and the Grand Man of Heaven. This was a joint meeting between members of both the Swedenborg Group and Church and a shared tea followed the talk. The talk was very much enjoyed by the 15 people who attended.

Chris Skinner

### NEW BOOK



### Swedenborg and New Paradigm Science

by Ursula Groll, M.A.

Swedenborg Foundation  
120 pages, paperback.

Members \$20; Non-members \$25  
(Plus postage \$3)

This book, written by a German Swedenborgian Academic, relates the metaphysical thought of Swedenborg to the new interface of science and spirituality. It is especially directed towards introducing Swedenborg's works to those interested in holistic science and spirituality in a relatively non-technical way.

*"By providing extensive excerpts from Swedenborg's works and drawing parallels between his visionary insights and the works of philosophers and physicists such as David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, Rupert Sheldrake, and Albert Einstein, Ursula Groll shows how Swedenborg's voyage of discovery led him increasingly from the great to the small, from the outer to the inner, until he discovered the mirror of the universe, the seat of the Divine as the source of truth."*

**Order through The Swedenborg Centre,  
1 Avon Road, North Ryde 2113 (02 98881066)**

*Some Thoughts on Providence  
from Swedenborg's Spiritual Writings*

The means by which people are led by God are called the Laws of Divine Providence  
*Divine Providence*  
*para. 221*

The Divine Providence does not regard that which soon passes away, and ends with the life of the person in the world, but regards that which remains to eternity - that which has no end.  
*Heavenly Doctrine*  
*para. 269*

The Lord's Divine Providence has for its purpose a heaven from the human race.  
*Divine Providence*  
*para. 27*

The Divine Providence regards eternal things and not temporal things except as far as they are in accord with eternal things.  
*Divine Providence*  
*para. 214*

Unless the Lord's Providence was in the most specific details, it would be impossible for people to be saved, or indeed to live, for life is from the Lord, and all the moments of life have a series of consequences to eternity.

*Arcana Caelestia*  
*para. 6490*

The Lord loves and desires to save the universal human race.  
*Arcana Caelestia*  
*para. 6495*

The working of Divine Providence to save each person begins from birth and lasts to the end of life and afterwards to eternity.  
*Divine Providence*  
*para. 332*

Nothing is permitted unless some good may come of it.  
*Arcana Caelestia*  
*para. 6490*

The Divine Providence works invisibly and incomprehensibly in order that people may be in freedom to ascribe an event either to chance or Providence.  
*Arcana Caelestia*  
*para. 5508*

To say that God permits something does not mean that He wills it, but that He cannot avert it in view of the purpose, which is salvation.  
*Arcana Caelestia*  
*para. 6480*

God's love goes forth not only to the good but to the evil . . . . for God is everywhere.  
*True Christian Religion*  
*para. 43*

From the permission to do evil granted to the internal of everyone, it is clearly evident that people have free will in spiritual things.  
*True Christian Religion*  
*para. 479*

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Sydney region (Michael Chester on (02) 9913 2421);

- Melbourne (Chris Skinner on (03) 9435 8599);

It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help contact Michael Chester.

## Continuing Group Activities

**Melbourne:** Last Friday of the month (usually) at The New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley commencing 8pm. For Programme details, contact Chris Skinner (9435 8599)

**Sydney:** Reading of Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom (Gold Coins Donation)*  
Each evening includes a short presentation, group participation in reading selected texts, time for shared discussion, closing with a brief meditation. *Divine Love and Wisdom* is a foundation book, centering on the Divine, on creation, on causes, and throughout, on universal spiritual principles that operate in our life. It is a book that has cemented many peoples' appreciation of Swedenborg.

3<sup>rd</sup> May paras 83 to 128 *Divine Love & Wisdom and the Spiritual Sun*

4<sup>th</sup> June paras 129 to 172 *Divine Love & Wisdom and Angels*

5<sup>th</sup> July paras 173 to 247 *Divine Love & Wisdom and the Human Mind*

## Swedenborg Meetings in Perth

### Restaurant Book Club

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm. Caffè Martino, 550 Beaufort Street, Mt. Lawley. *Journal of Dreams*

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 6pm. 176 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth (Chinese meal). *Angels in Action*

Contact the Swedenborg Library Officer, Mary Boyd, on 9242 3395

## Swedenborg Meetings in Canberra

*Arcana Coelestia* Course over 8 weeks examining Swedenborg's commentary on the Biblical Books of Genesis and Exodus, and including the spiritual experiences and principles he investigates in the process.

Thursday evenings from 8.30pm to 9.30pm commencing on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Fireside Room (East), Gorman House, Ainslie Avenue, Braddon. Cost \$25 (Friends of Canberra Group \$15). More details from David Moffat on 26286 6082

*Prayer is truth coming from the heart,  
and we are continually at prayer  
when we live according to that truth.*



When we pray from the heart, there comes an answer in the form of a gentle perception of some truth. When we live by that truth, our lives become a living prayer.

Apocalypse Explained para 493

## Why a Swedenborg Association?

To promote Emanuel Swedenborg, the man and his message, throughout Australia by personal contact, meetings, etc.

Having functioning Branches for considering subjects of common interest.

Providing information on topical subjects drawing on Swedenborg's own contributions to stimulate wider interest.

Doing anything else possible to keep Swedenborg's writings before the community.

### Why Join?

*To share with others what has been of help to you in your quest for truth.*

*Pursuing areas of interest in Swedenborg through ready access of books and possibly events.*

*A Free Newsletter every 4 months*

*20% discount on books, etc.*

*Free Swedenborgian-based book each year enabling you to introduce others.*

**For membership details, contact the Hon. Secretary - details on first page**