

INTRODUCING SWEDENBORG'S TRUE CHRISTIANITY

Introduction

If you have an interest in comparative religion then this work may well stimulate your thought. Published in 1771, it is the final work of his long career exploring the spiritual side of life during which he wrote some 30 volumes. True Christianity shows the power and penetration of the scholarly mind of Swedenborg which remained brilliant to the end of his life.

It is a detailed treatment of traditional Christian doctrine but examined in a new way. His purpose was to gather an entire corpus of teaching for a new Christianity which would demonstrate rationally the unity of God. It is this declaration of the oneness of God - seen in the visible form of the glorified Person of Jesus - which offends traditional teachings based on the tri-personal view of God. For orthodoxy this is the most revolutionary book of Christian doctrine ever published.

Yet its revolutionary character is not readily perceived because its tone is so calm, its thought so reasonable that it finds an immediate response in the common sense of the reader's mind. The ideas are so much in agreement with one's feelings that they are recognised as old friends rather than challenging teaching. This is because of the spiritual light shining into the mind of every person in this new age. It is because of this stronger inflowing of truth that all former ideas and traditions are being questioned and usually discarded.

In this respect it is a disturbing book because its implications are very radical. The New Jerusalem, described in the Apocalypse, is descending to displace the former age, not to subsidise it.

In the subject of every chapter a new trail is blazed to unify Christian teaching in the luminosity of rational truth and in harmony with the fundamental principle of a loving God. Faith alone is discarded and replaced with a faith based on love and use. The traditional theology appeals to dark mysteries and unpredictable omnipotence. These are weeds which have finally been uprooted.

It is now possible to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.

Paragraph 508

Content of Book and Reading Approach

The book looks at Christian teachings and practices in a new and more vibrant way, developing the essential teaching that our spiritual journey is about an ever-deepening relationship with God through keeping the commandments and turning away from self towards God and the neighbour.

The following paragraphs (not pages) give an excellent idea of the depth and beauty of Swedenborg's thought:

<i>Divine inflowing into a person's soul</i>	8
<i>The need for revelation</i>	11

<i>The essence of love</i>	43
<i>Correspondences</i>	201-207
<i>Swedenborg's testimony</i>	779

Between each chapter Swedenborg inserts the “Memorabilia”. These are descriptions of his experiences in the spiritual world in which he was fully conscious and talked with its inhabitants face-to-face. Swedenborg never acted as a medium. To him the Memorabilia were an integral part of his work. He was a revelator, not a philosopher writing his own ideas; yet the Divine inspiration flowed into his intellect and not into his hand.

Relevance Today

Resulting from spiritual experiences over many years, in True Christianity, Swedenborg reveals a comprehensive and cohesive expression of teaching intended to resolve dilemmas that have confused and divided Christians for centuries, e.g.

- *God's nature*
- *The trinity*
- *The Bible's inner meaning*
- *The Ten Commandments explained externally and internally*
- *Faith and neighbourly love (charity)*
- *Free Will*
- *Repentance, Reformation and Regeneration*
- *Christian sacraments*
- *End of the age and the Second Coming*

Swedenborg substantiates statements made with numerous biblical references.

Invitation

If you have a Christian background and have been alienated by traditional teaching then this may be the opportunity to re-capture your faith in a new but familiar way. The book certainly does provide an enduring and compelling case for a new Christianity.

Quotations

On the Trinity From paragraph 168

“When we say that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three essentials of a single God in the same way as soul, body and activity are together in a person, it may look to the human mind as if the three essentials are three persons. This is impossible. But when we understand that the Father's Divine which makes up the soul, and the Son's Divine which makes up the body, and the Holy Spirit's Divine which proceeds and makes up the activity, are the three essentials of a single God, then it becomes something that can be understood.”

On Love From paragraphs 416 & 45

“Love to the Lord is universal love and it pervades every part of spiritual life and every detail of natural life, for this love dwells at the highest level in a person and what is highest flows into what is lower, bringing it to life.”

“Self-centred love is called love but seen in itself it is hatred because it loves no one else than itself, and it has no wish to be linked with others for their happiness but only for its own.”

Availability of the Book

Paperback Vol 1, Vol 2 - translation only

Deluxe* paperback Vol 1, Vol 2

Deluxe* hardback Vol 1, Vol 2

*Deluxe versions include an introduction to key ideas, study notes and index

Brochures in this Series:

INTRODUCING SWEDENBORG’S

Divine Love and Wisdom

Divine Providence

Four Doctrines

Heaven and Hell

Marriage Love

True Christianity

Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc

4 Shirley Road, ROSEVILLE, NSW, 2069

Phone: 02 9416 2812

Email: saa@swedenborg.com.au

Web site: www.swedenborg.com.au