



New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 226

REFLECTIONS ON SWEDENBORG'S BIRTHDAY

By Rev. James P. Cooper

The New Christian Church is founded on the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and so it's interesting and useful to review the history of these documents from time to time.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born on January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. His father was a Bishop in the church of Sweden and often worked closely with the king. As a young man Emanuel was educated at Upsala University (he never went to Elementary School, or High School – such things hadn't been invented yet). The main subjects taught were languages, such as Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and philosophy. You needed those languages to read the great books in their original tongue, and you studied philosophy to learn how to think critically about what you read. In addition to the classical languages, it's likely that he also knew French, Dutch, German and English, as well as his native Swedish because he travelled widely and lived in both the Netherlands and England when he was publishing his theological works. It wasn't legal for him to publish them in Sweden.



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Why didn't he study science at university? Because the scientific fields, as we know them, didn't really exist at that time. They didn't have anything that operated by electricity or steam, and their knowledge of chemistry and biology were essentially extensions of the study of philosophy. Although there weren't formal courses, he spent most of his life prying into the secrets of nature (and later the spiritual world) using the scientific method.

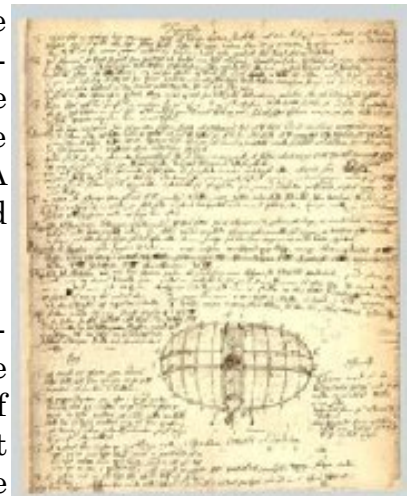


People who study philosophy are encouraged to think about all kinds of things, such as the nature (or existence) of the human soul, and if it existed at all, where it would reside in the body. It was at about this time that the microscope was invented, and it opened up a whole new world of exploration for people like Swedenborg. Perhaps, if you had a microscope powerful enough, you could look into human tissue and see the soul! (One of the many things they did discover was the system of capillaries which led to the realization that blood circulated in the body which was a huge leap forward for medical science.)

These kinds of discoveries led them to think that they could use the microscope to answer all the questions of life.

To further his education and learn from a wide variety of thinkers and experts, Swedenborg began to travel to places like Holland and France to try to find the answers to all the questions he had about science and philosophy. At the same time, he held some important positions in the Swedish government, so he had to go back to Sweden from time to time in between his visits overseas. All the while he was writing books about nature and biology to try to find the soul from the observations of experts.

He invented some things. He drew up plans for a flying machine that is considered to be one of the earliest examples of the principles of flight that are included in flying machines today: the curved shape of the wing to provide lift, and the oars which are precursors to the ailerons which are used to control bank. A model of this design was built and is on display in the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.



He helped the Swedish king with some military problems by inventing a way to move the Swedish navy overland to surprise and defeat the enemy fleet. There were several designs of winches that were quite useful, and a few other things that were never constructed but seemed likely to work: a submarine and a machine gun.

While he was busy with the government and work in the mining industry, he kept thinking more and more deeply about the soul, and began to realize that they weren't going to find it

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by looking with a microscope, so he turned to philosophy, studied more, wrote some more books, and finally came to the conclusion that philosophy wasn't the answer either, so eventually he turned to the study of the Word in its original languages (which he had studied at university).

Let's take a moment to think about how the Lord has used different people as prophets over thousands of years. In the early days of the Ancient Church, when all people were in open communication with spirits in the other world, the Lord spoke directly to the father in every home, and the father then told his family what he heard from the Lord.



Later, after writing had been invented, the Lord spoke to a few people who had been especially chosen to be prophets, and who could write down what they heard from the Lord so that anyone could read it for themselves at any time. Then the Lord came Himself as Jesus Christ to give new life and meaning to the things written in the Old Testament. Finally, when mankind was ready to hear about the spiritual world, the Lord called Emanuel Swedenborg to be a prophet. He spent 27 years visiting spirits and angels in the spiritual world and being taught the

internal sense of the Word so that he could put these experiences down in writing for others to benefit. Remember the question of the skeptics, "who has gone to heaven and come back to tell us about it?" Well, the answer is Emanuel Swedenborg.

Swedenborg speaks of this experience in the first pages of his book *Heaven and its wonders and Hell from things seen and heard*.

HH 1 The [secrets] revealed in the following pages relate to heaven and hell, and also to the life of man after death. The man of the church at this date knows scarcely anything about heaven and hell or about his life after death, although all these matters are set forth and described in the Word; and yet many of those born within the church refuse to believe in them, saying in their hearts, "Who has come from that world and told us?"

Lest, therefore, such a spirit of denial, which especially prevails with those who have much worldly wisdom, should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been granted me to associate with angels and to talk with them as man with man, also to see what is in the heavens and what is in the hells, and this for thirteen years; so now from what I have seen and heard it has been granted me to describe these, in the hope that ignorance may thus be enlightened and unbelief dissipated.

Such immediate revelation is granted at this day because this is what is meant by the Coming of the Lord.

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Who has come from that world and told us? The perfectly normal reaction when you hear something unusual or out of the ordinary is to question the source. If you were planning to travel to a far-off land and you wanted to prepare yourself for the trip, would you rather talk to a person who had just read a book about that place, or a person who had actually visited there himself? The Lord invited Swedenborg to visit heaven so that he could come back and tell us about it. The important part of the title of his book commonly called just “Heaven and Hell” is the last part: “from things seen and heard.”

Lots of people have dreams. Some of the dreams are very real to them. Some people even think that the Lord is speaking to them in dreams. But with Swedenborg it was different. He was awake and alive in his own spiritual body, traveling around, talking to angels, spirits, and devils just the way that we visit with and talk to each other.

Another amazing thing is his statement at the end of the first passage in Heaven and Hell. He writes, “Such immediate revelation is granted at this day because this is what is meant by the Coming of the Lord.”

The Second Coming of the Lord. Wow. That’s a big claim.

The disciples and the other people who were with the Lord when He was in the world misunderstood a lot of the things He taught. Once when He was teaching about His death and resurrection, He called His body a “temple.” Some people got confused and thought that He said that was going to knock down the temple in Jerusalem and build it again in three days! When He promised to come again, He never said anything about coming in another human body. He said He would come “in the clouds of heaven” but nevertheless, some people think He meant He would come again in a physical body to reign in His kingdom on earth. But He always said that His kingdom was “not of this world.”

We now know that those “clouds of heaven” are the letter of the Word. He meant that He would be with us again when the internal sense of the Word was opened and we could see Him, every day, in the pages of the Word. So, by taking Swedenborg into heaven and teaching him about the internal sense of the Word, the Lord was actually coming to the World again.

Not in a body, but in the Word.

He’s there for anyone to find, every day.



So at this time of year we stop to think about the Lord, and the Word, and how a humble, intelligent man who loved the Lord, helped the Lord teach us all about the wonder and beauty of the spiritual world, and opened up a world of new meaning in the letter of the Word.

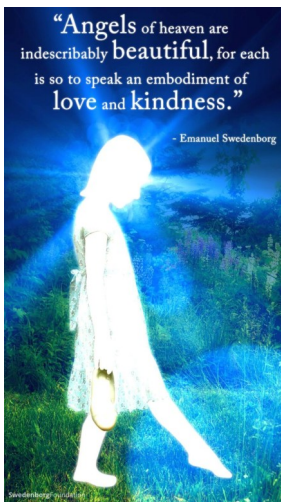
THE 3RD STATE OF THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Rev. James P. Cooper

Part 3 of a 3-part series

Heaven is our true home. Once we have completed our earthly life, our attachment to the world of nature ends. Our time on this earth, in relation to the time we will spend in the spiritual world, is a mere blink of an eye. Why then do we spend so much of our time laying up earthly treasure for ourselves? Would not our time be far better spent preparing for the eternity which is to follow in the spiritual world? This is the message that the Lord came on earth to bring to us: that we must not set our hearts on the things of this world, but instead set our sights on the spiritual world, and use our time in this world to prepare wisely for the life to come.

This is the last article in a series of three that describe the spiritual journey that takes place when the natural body dies and the spirit is set free. In this section, we will focus on how new spirits are given instruction and preparation for entering heaven, and how they find their eternal, spiritual home once their questions have been answered.



Let me briefly review the definitions of several important terms used in this series. The "spiritual world" means the whole spiritual universe, including heaven, hell, and the world of spirits. The "world of spirits" always refers to that part of the spiritual world which lies between heaven and hell, and which is the place where all people go first when their natural bodies die. The word "spirit" means anyone living anywhere in the spiritual world, although it is most frequently used to refer to someone who is still living in the world of spirits. Finally, an "angel" is a particular kind of spirit, specifically a spirit who has been through all the states of introduction and has chosen heaven.

We know from the Lord's many parables that the Lord wanted people to know that there was life after death where the good would be rewarded and the evil suffer. He used simple, comforting ideas for simple times and simple people.

In the first article of this series, we learned that the first state, or state of exteriors, is one of introduction and welcome. It is provided so that each person who enters the spiritual world will have a chance to become accustomed to the fact of the death of the natural body and the eternal life of the spirit. Eventually every spirit feels a desire to find his true spiritual home, and when this happens, he is ready to enter into the second state, the state of his interiors. But since his true spiritual home will be a reflection of his true spiritual state, that internal state must be revealed.

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In the second article of this series, we saw how all the external habits and defenses are removed layer by layer until nothing remains but the spirit's true internal loves, the essential character. The spirits no longer care what anyone thinks of them, and they do exactly as they please. For evil spirits, the second state is their last. Once evil has taken over the heart and mind, there can be no further instruction or preparation because they are unwilling to hear it.

However, the good spirits rejoice because their good intentions now instantly become acts of kindness. As they find themselves no longer limited by not having enough time, or not having enough money to do the kind and helpful things that they always wanted to do but were prevented by natural circumstances, they become more and more interested in understanding what is happening to them. The evils that do not agree with their ruling love drop away – but not without some effort and pain. As the falsities of life in the world are taken away, new truths are given to take their place, and the heaven-bound spirit enters into the state of preparation, the state where he is led from the world of spirits to his eternal, spiritual home. This final part of the journey is the topic of this article.

The 3rd state begins when those who are headed for heaven are taken to special places set aside for this use. We are told that the places of instruction are oriented east and west, with the best and the most innocent spirits in the east, for that is nearest to where the Lord dwells.

Children who die as infants are first placed with angel mothers who care tenderly for them. Once they have grown enough to begin schooling, they are brought to these heavens of instruction near the Lord where they begin their formal education. As they get older, they move westward and join others who entered the spiritual world as older children and youths and receive instruction appropriate to their age – even including field trips to various parts of the world of spirits! Behind them in the western parts are the places where those who died in adult age and who were in the affection of truth from the good of life are instructed.



Behind these, tending toward the north, are places of instruction for various peoples from the world who have lived a good life according to their own religion and thereby formed some kind of conscience.

All these people who have tried their best to live a good life in the world, no matter what their civilization or culture, are easily led to acknowledge the Lord because they have lived according to the heartfelt belief that God is not invisible, but that He is in the Human form. We are told that the greater part of heaven is made up of such people who hold a simple, honest faith in God-Man. (HH 514:e).

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The Lord is the perfect teacher, and He accommodates all lessons to the particular needs of each of the good spirits. Each spirit is taught by those who are best able to communicate with him.

Children who have grown up in heaven are instructed by angels from the interior heavens. Those who died as adults, and who are in a sphere of simple obedience, are instructed by angels of the lowest heaven. Those who belonged to various religious denominations in the world are instructed by angels who at one time belonged to those denominations. Even the heathen are taught by others of their own kind who have accepted Christianity in heaven.

During the state of preparation, the good spirits are instructed in all kinds of spiritual truths. The wonderful thing is that these truths no longer need to be couched in appearances as they are in the letter of the Word, no longer limited by natural comprehension. They are taught by the angels themselves in such a way as to be perfectly accommodated to the state of the good spirits, and the good spirits in turn learn them with delight and without any effort whatsoever. The truths that the spirits hear are no longer abstractions of limited interest to their life. They hear only things that speak directly to their particular loves and affections in such a way that they enter directly into their life.



Naturally, we are all curious as to what those truths may be. What wondrous secrets are being told! Do we have any hint at all as to the nature of this heavenly wisdom? We are told that all the knowledges about heaven are derived from and can be learned from the Word and from the doctrine of the Church that is drawn from the Word. However, while we are still in the world, we cannot receive truth on this level unless the interiors of our mind are open to heaven. We are in heaven as to our interiors when we both acknowledge the Divine and act justly and honestly

for the reason that we ought to act so because it is commanded in the Word by the Lord.

If a casual acquaintance comes up at a party and tries to initiate a discussion about the various schools of thought within the development of quantum mechanics, most of us would literally not know what to think. We do not have the tools, the knowledge, to hold up our end of the conversation. Without a knowledge of the principles of quantum mechanics, we cannot think about it or form valid opinions. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Heavenly Doctrines should teach that, “without a knowledge of spiritual things, man cannot think spiritually” (HH 512:3). And since angels must think spiritually, it is essential that they be given the tools, the knowledges, to think about their new life in heaven, and to take a useful part in it. That also means that we’re going to have to wait to get there before we have the tools and thus the ability to understand what the angels are teaching.

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If we were allowed to listen to one of these angelic classes, we would hear words, but comprehend nothing because of the limitations imposed on our thinking by the natural body and the need to be connected to the natural world by means of the senses and the sensual degree of the mind.

As we age, most of us suffer from some degree of memory loss. This may cause some concern when we hear about all the learning about high spiritual stuff that's ahead of us. But remember, the problem we have with our memory is related to the aging of the cells in the brain. In the spiritual world, we'll be in a spiritual body which will not suffer from these limitations. We take our complete memory with us into the spiritual world, not the natural organ of memory.

All instruction in heaven is from doctrine drawn from the Word. Knowledges are not committed to memory, but to life. This is because the memory of spirits is in their life, for they receive and gather everything that is in accord with their life. And everything that is gathered into their living memory is taken for the sake of the use which it may perform.

Since the good spirits are no longer hampered by earthly restraints and they love what they are learning, the instruction goes very quickly. The students are interested in every subject because it relates directly to their future use in the spiritual world. The angel teachers have a perception of the states and needs of their students and so are able to adapt their teaching to the needs of the spirits perfectly. The students never tire or get bored, and because the truths are taken directly into the life, there is no need for them to study. We must also remember that they are not being taught in any language of the world, but in the angelic tongue, a language of pure ideas that connects one mind directly to another, and so yet another barrier to understanding is removed.

The subject of when married couples come together in this process is complex and lengthy, better suited to a separate study. But speaking generally we can say that husbands and wives are first reunited in the First State while in the world of spirits. If they find that they can continue together, they then go through the various states together. If they cannot continue together because of a difference in their internal states, they separate (the Writings are silent about what the proportion is between those who separate and those who stay together). At some point (which will vary according to the spiritual state of each individual) as they proceed through the various states they discover a partner with whom they can live to eternity in heaven. They then complete their preparation through the third state together.



It is not long until they know enough to enter a heavenly society and begin their life of use. As a sign of their readiness, they are given angelic garments. These are described as being

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“glowing white as if made of fine linen” (HH 519). Thereafter they are taken to angelic guides who start them on their way to their own home society. The Heavenly Doctrines tell us that there are many paths in the spiritual world, but that the conjugal pair on way to their own society easily find their way, no matter how winding the path, or how many forks, because they are led by their own heart and guided by the Lord.



During their journey, they may pass many beautiful societies, but they know in their heart that they are not their true home. Eventually, they come to a place which they recognize as their own, for every aspect the place corresponds with their own affections. The couple hears singing, a song that touches them deeply, and draws them near. As they approach, they begin to sing along and it feels right. They draw nearer, and the song becomes more familiar. Soon they find themselves in the midst of a heavenly choir, sharing in their song, in perfect harmony with their new society, singing a song of welcome, and they know that they have found their true home.

In summary, we can say that only good spirits enter the state of instruction to be prepared for heaven. All instruction in this state is provided by angels and is perfectly accommodated to the states of the spirit. They are able to learn quickly because they are not limited by an earthly body or by an earthly language but are able to communicate in the spiritual language of ideas. Further, everything that is taught pertains to their own ruling love and the uses that they will perform, and therefore is received with delight.

The death of the natural body is something every one of us must face sooner or later. The purpose of the Lord’s first and second comings has been to give us the information we need to face death without fear. The Lord had tried to show, in many different ways, that everything that happens to spirits after death is guided by concern and love for them. Everything possible is done to make them comfortable and lead them to a special place in heaven. The Lord Himself came on earth, suffered the temptation of the cross, raised Himself with His own power, and has come again in the spiritual sense of the Word to take away the fear of the grave, and to give us ample warning of what we face and what we must do to prepare ourselves while we live in the natural world. The Lord has offered the gift of eternal life in heaven. Now it is up to us to receive His gift and use it well.

***Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
In My Father's house are many mansions;
If it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and receive you to Myself;
that where I am, there you may be also.
And where I go you know, and the way you know (John 14:1-4).***

NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR

by Rev. James Cooper

From the Regional Pastor:

- * First and foremost, I'd like to welcome Rev. Todd Beiswenger, his wife Jennifer, and son Zack to Toronto. Todd spent the last twelve years as the pastor of our congregation in Sydney, Australia and has now taken over duties as the head pastor of Olivet Church in Toronto.
- * The Rev. Michael Cowley has been invited to visit our congregation in Johannesburg, South Africa again. He'll be there for about 8 weeks, Bishop Heinrichs, Candidate Thomas Jackson, and I will be covering his visits to Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie while he's away.
- * This is a good time to remind folks that there is scholarship help available for *bona fide* residents of Canada who wish to attend the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools or the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Please contact me at rev.james.cooper@gmail.com to find out more.

CANADIAN CALENDAR



Scheduled Services:

Worship services every Sunday at **Carmel Church** at 11:00 am. Search "Carmel New Church" on Youtube.com for livestreaming or previously recorded services.

Worship services every Sunday at **Olivet Church** at 10:30 am. Search "Olivet New Church" on either Youtube.com or Facebook.com for livestreaming or previously recorded services.

Vancouver will have a live service at the home of Marvin and Joan Friesen on January 19th.

Dawson Creek and **Grande Prairie** will be having visits on Jan. 19, Feb. 2 & 16, March 2, 16, and 30. The services on Feb. 16 and March 30 will be conducted by Bishop Heinrichs.

Rev. James Cooper

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Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario

Theme: SEASONS

*"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
Psalm 1:3 NKJ*



SAVE THE DATES!

We look forward to welcoming campers!

July 5 – July 11, 2025



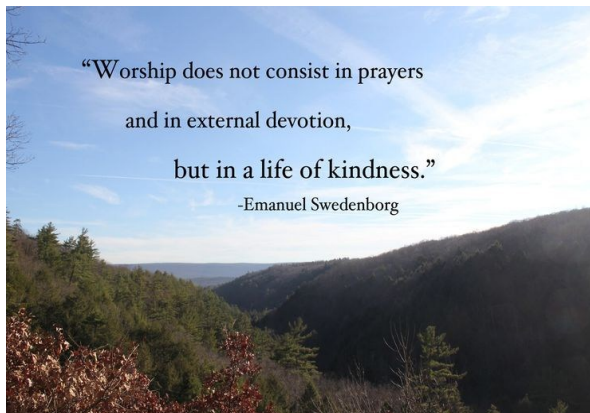
11th ANNUAL LIVING WATERS FAMILY CAMP

The camp is located near Paisley, Ontario on the Saugeen River and is called Hidden Valley Christian Camp. You can explore it on the web at hvccamp.ca.

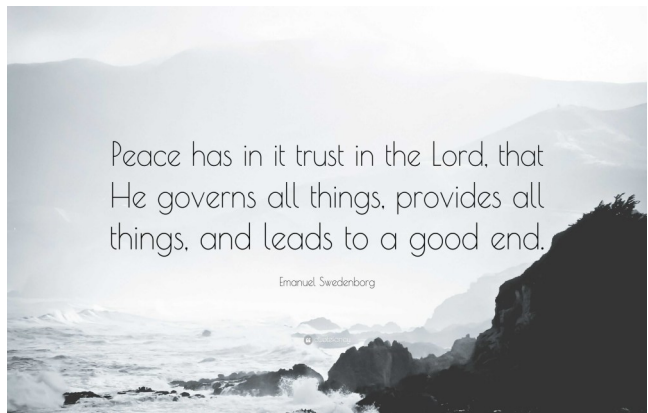


SAVE THE DATES!

July 17 – July 20, 2025



*"Worship does not consist in prayers
and in external devotion,
but in a life of kindness."
-Emanuel Swedenborg*



*Peace has in it trust in the Lord, that
He governs all things, provides all
things, and leads to a good end.
Emanuel Swedenborg*



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General Church in Canada Worship Services

Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON



11:00am
In Person
and
Online

Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC



Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am
In Person and Online




Editorial Deadline for the
MARCH — APRIL ISSUE is FEBRUARY 28, 2025
We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!
Please send submissions to Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC
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