

The Spiritual Journey Series

Swedenborg's Life & Teachings



SWEDENBORG CENTRE

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A Mystic for the 21st Century

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 - 1772) was both a great scientist and a visionary having direct experience of spiritual realms. He was led to see universal truths hidden within the literal text of Christian Scriptures which he then revealed to the world in his spiritual writings.

His descriptions and explanations are entirely appropriate for the 21st Century because they provide us with hope, love and tolerance. Importantly, they encourage the freedom to participate in the quest for spiritual truth as an individual, for truth is a living experience and not a set of facts. He did not deny the value of organised religion when its practice is based on true goodness. However, he was careful of it, preferring to 'worship' in private, and through carrying out his duties faithfully and well.

Spiritual Journey Series

Because his spiritual writings provide a clear, logical and consistent view of spiritual life, a progressive approach to understanding what he presents is necessary. To this end, the Swedenborg Centre has prepared a six-part series examining a range of topics related to the spiritual dimension of our lives drawing on explanations provided by this great seer.

The intention of the series is for it to be particularly applicable to personal daily life in today's world - this New Age into which we are moving. The ancient universal truths are always the Truth, no matter what form they have taken, because they are Divinely given, pertaining to any age or time. It is no different now.

We need the Truth to be available to us, to understand a greater purpose for our lives, but in a framework which relates to this time, and the particulars of the world in which we live.

Some of the topics covered in the series:

The Divine

Through the direct revelation which he received, Swedenborg is able to show us the supreme love that the Divine Creator has for humanity and the endless help provided to every one of us. This knowledge helps us live more joyfully despite the pain we experience and see around us. The loving Creator is very different to the punishing God so often portrayed by religious faiths. God is totally forgiving which must encourage us to likewise forgive our fellow men and women and therefore provide a more harmonious environment in which to exist. Yet, this does not absolve us from pursuing individual justice and better outcomes for the lives of people everywhere.

Spiritual Life

Swedenborg outlines in great detail the continuous spiritual life experienced by us all. In this world, the companionship of angels provide enlightenment and well-being, whilst the influence of negative spiritual beings bring darker states into our lives. After the death of the body, we will become fully aware of a spiritual environment which commences the next stage of our spiritual journey. Having this knowledge now helps to reduce our fear or uncertainty about the stage to come and also how to orientate our lives in the present because that is what determines the type of person we will become to eternity.

Freewill and Suffering

The place of free-will and true freedom to choose our spiritual destiny, are also very important issues which Swedenborg covers. He shows it to be a vital and central part of the spiritual process with which we are all engaged, and importantly, why it can never be removed or tampered with. This helps us understand why there is so much suffering in the many different forms we see all around, why bad things happen to good people and why we cannot blame all this on God. But the infinite love of God will providentially bring good from it all, for the eternal welfare of everyone involved.

Divine Revealing

The dual expression of God's nature - Love and Wisdom - is reflected in many ways at this level of existence. For humankind, one very special example is with men and women themselves. Swedenborg shows that sexual differences are not just skin deep; they are present in the very core of existence - our mind and the soul. These differences do not divide the sexes but make their roles complementary. He concludes that marriage between a man and a woman is the highest form of relationship which can, under the right circumstances, bring the greatest happiness.

This dual nature of God is also expressed in everything to be found in the natural world. From his knowledge of the workings of nature (the quality and the use which each part plays) Swedenborg was able to compare the structures and processes to those which operate in the human mind. He came to see that there is an ecology within us as intricate as the one outside of us, the two reflecting each other.

He presented a new language - which he called 'correspondences' - enabling us to relate the things of this natural world specifically to their spiritual counterparts. This provides us with another way of feeling the sense of connectedness with the other levels of life in the spiritual universe. He took this use of correspondences further through the presentation of spiritual meanings within the literal text of Scriptures, dreams and visions, the outer being a reflection or mirror of the inner.

Jesus Christ

As a Christian, it is not surprising that Swedenborg gives Jesus Christ a unique place and role in the history of humankind but not in any sectarian or narrow way. Acknowledging Christ should not primarily be in terms of the person but the commitment to the values he stood for. Swedenborg also strips away many conundrums arising during those early centuries after Christ's death which created a trinity of three persons in a Godhead - essentially moving away from the belief in one God - and the false doctrine that the death of Christ was a requisite to appease an angry God (a contradiction in terms).

As well as much valuable and coherent teaching which Swedenborg presents regarding the first coming of Christ, he also offers unique insights to the meaning of the second coming. It is not to be a literal reappearance into this world but an unfolding of truth enabling men and women everywhere to clearly understand spiritual life and the choices which need to be considered and made now.

Participating in this Series

This leaflet provides a very brief overview of some of the areas included in ***The Spiritual Journey*** series. We suggest you read and ponder one booklet at a time in this Series each month over six months. At the conclusion of the six months, feel free to reach out using the contact info below if you wish to find out more about Swedenborg's spiritual writings.

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