



OUR DAILY BREAD
Resources for Spiritual Questers

An Introduction to the Swedenborgian Way of Life

Rev. David Fekete



A Course Consisting of Weekly Reflections on Swedenborg's Theology

Course Outline

WEEK I: INTRODUCTION

WEEK II: GOD IMAGE:

WEEK III: HEAVEN AND HELL

WEEK IV: DOCTRINE OF LIVING I-- FAITH:

WEEK V: DOCTRINE OF LIVING II-CHARITY:

WEEK VI: DOCTRINE OF LIVING III-USE:

WEEK VII: THE DIVINE MARRIAGE

WEEK VIII: REGENERATION (REBIRTH)

WEEK IX: BIBLE

WEEK X: THE DEPTHS OF THE SELF

“All religion is of life; and a religious life is doing good”

-Doctrine of Life §1

For Swedenborg, religion comes down to thinking right and living right. All his 30 volumes of theology are about how to live a good and holy life. So instead of calling this course “An Introduction to Swedenborg,” I’m calling it “An Introduction to the Swedenborgian Way of Life.” My aim in this course is to emphasize spiritual living, not just ideas and theories.

Swedenborg’s theology is truly a “way,” a path. Like other Christian mystics such as St. John of the Cross, Swedenborg writes about a path of spiritual attainment. He describes stages of spiritual growth; he explains the feelings we will go through; he explains the processes in spiritual growth. This is much like St. John of the Cross’s *Dark Night of the Soul*, which describes the soul’s ascent to God and stages that we go through.

The Swedenborgian religion is Christian. But it is so different from traditional Christianity that many of Swedenborg’s ideas do not fit with traditional Christianity. What I will do in this course is present the theology of traditional Christianity alongside Swedenborg’s theology. This will serve three purposes. It will introduce students to the beliefs of traditional Christianity. It will show where Swedenborg differs from traditional Christianity. And it will give students material from which they can think for themselves about spirituality and differences between traditional Christianity and Swedenborg’s theology. Thus students will be able to make an informed decision about whether the Swedenborgian way of life makes sense to them, and whether they wish to follow it and/or add Swedenborgian theology to their own spiritual life.

Much of the reading material will be “lectures” by Rev. Dr. Fekete. But as this is to be an introduction to Swedenborg, readings from Swedenborg’s actual books will be presented at the end of each week’s lesson. The selections will pertain to the week’s subject. I hope that with the introductory comments I provide, students will find the Swedenborg selections understandable.

Swedenborg has been criticized for being hard to understand. Some of this is due to

bad translations, which the New Century Edition translations help to some degree. But Swedenborg writes about deep and complex subjects. One must think about what one reads in Swedenborg and digest it mentally. Furthermore, Swedenborg was one of the most brilliant persons ever to live and studied all the subjects of learning that were available in his time. He studied all the sciences, philosophy, poetry, literature, mathematics, and religion. He used his vast learning when in his theology. So do not be surprised if you encounter difficulty when you read the Swedenborg selections. But give it a try.

Creating this course has been a labor of love for me. I love religion in general. But I love Swedenborg's theology in particular. I've studied the history of and different sects of Christianity, as well as Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism. I use some of their teachings in my own spirituality, but for me, the Swedenborgian way of life is at the core of my own spirituality.