

Breaking Bread

Newsletter – The Brisbane Society of The New Church,
Brisbane and South-East Queensland
Aug, Sept, Oct 2016



Art Work By Lenore Sandow

When a person's interior sight – the sight of his spirit – is opened, he then sees things in the next life, things that can never be manifested before his bodily eyes.

Secrets of Heaven. 1619 – Emanuel Swedenborg

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Where are we going? And The Church of the Future

Part one

FINDING OUR WAY IN DARK TIMES

Life at times can seem so clear and obvious and at other times the way forward is hard to find. When we have clearly defined goals, it gives us a focus much like the little red dot on a target board. When we miss the spot, it is easy for us to measure how far off we are and then we can readjust. What about the areas or times when we have no clear goals? Maybe we have a vague idea of what we want to achieve and are struggling to get beyond a foggy sense of our vision. Being a spiritual person is all about our personal goals. In some areas, what I need to do is so obvious and in other areas I am totally in the dark as to how to proceed. The Lord when referring to '*Going to Heaven*' made the following cryptic statement -

Matthew 7:13-16

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.

If we were to read this passage on its own, it is understandable that people would come to the conclusion that the Lord has made the way to heaven a difficult and hard path. Is this really what Our Lord is telling us here?

Like all things that Our Lord has said, it requires meditation, reflection, comparison and application if we are to enter into the spiritual or true meaning. The fact that the teachings of the Lord are sometimes called '*hard sayings*' is a good example. The Lord nearly always spoke in spiritual and cryptic language so that we could all stay in freedom. '*Freedom?*', you may say. What does being

cryptic have to do with freedom? We may read the Lord's words but the choice is still ours if we truly wish to explore the deeper meaning to the Lord's teachings.

HAVING A PASSION FOR TRUTH

If we have a desire to understand The Lord we need to apply a measure of spiritual effort if we are to receive a spiritual reward.

The problem is not that the Lord has made the way to heaven hard but that people are not always drawn to the heavenly life and therefore do not ask for assistance. Sometimes we can not 'see' the way because it is not what we are looking for. To put this another way, our hearts are drawing us away to selfish paths that lead to dark places. To reassure you of The Lord's love, in the same chapter where He stated that the way is narrow He also said the following -

*Matt 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, **how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?***

The Lord wants to give us Heaven and all its wonderful gifts and yet The Lord tells us the way to heaven is narrow?

What can we find in Swedenborg's revelations to help us understand this apparent contradiction?

Heaven and Hell 534

*[3] Paths in the other life picture the thoughts that flow from our aims or intentions. The paths that are presented to view there answer exactly to the thoughts of our aims, and our course follows the thoughts that flow from our aims. This is why you can tell the quality of spirits and of their thoughts from their paths. This also showed me the meaning of the Lord's words, "Enter through the narrow gate, for broad is the gate and open the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who walk along it; confined is the path and narrow the gate that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). **The way that leads to life is not narrow because it is difficult but because so few people find it, as stated.***

(See also Secrets of Heaven 2851 and True Christian Religion 69:3)

And here is another passage giving us even more insight -

Secrets of Heaven 3477

It has been said that there are continual representatives in the heavens, and indeed such as involve the deepest arcana[secrets] of wisdom. Those which are manifest to man from the literal sense of the Word are relatively as few as are the waters of a small pool as compared with those of the ocean. ...There were represented before certain spirits, as I myself saw, a broad way and a narrow way such as are described in the Word; a broad way which led to hell, and a narrow way which led to heaven. The broad way was planted with trees, flowers, and the like that in outward form appeared beautiful and delightful, but unseen snakes and serpents of various kinds were hidden there. The narrow way did not seem to be so much adorned with trees and flowers, but appeared sad and dark; and yet there were in it angel infants most beautifully adorned, in delightful paradises and flower-gardens, which the spirits did not see. They were then asked which way they wished to go. They said, The broad way; when suddenly their eyes were opened, and in the broad way they saw the serpents, but in the narrow way the angels. They were then again asked which way they wished to go, whereupon they remained silent; and so far as their sight was opened, they said that they wished to go the narrow way; and so far as their sight was closed, that they wished to go the broad way.

From all this we can deduce that the path to Heaven is narrow because our eyes are mostly closed as our desires are earthly and even hellish. While we long for evil, the path to heaven will seem dark and difficult. While our eyes remain open and we are desiring the heavenly life, the path to hell will appear foreboding, ominous and detestable.

So the answer to this riddle is **'Perception'** brought about by our loves.

There are three steps we can take to keep our eyes open and our hearts longing for Heaven.

1. Practice fighting against the evils we find in our own lives as the first steps to doing good so that our hearts are not craving the paths to darkness.
2. Pray regularly to the Lord for Spiritual Wisdom, Revelation and Godly desires.
3. Study the Word and other spiritual materials so that we feed our minds with the language of Wisdom.

Part Two

Let us keep in our minds this idea that everyone is at different levels of light and darkness as we now examine the future of the church.

WE ARE DESPERATELY IN NEED OF A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is a growing terrible need for spiritual enlightenment to flood our western cultures. We are in need of spiritual ambassadors, warriors and heroes who will take up the call to promote spiritual truths and offer new light to the blind and sleeping masses. It is overwhelmingly easy to be swept away with natural thinking and living when there are so many sources offering you a mental diet of worldly views and so few mainstream outlets for expressing spiritual illumination.

SPIRITUAL VASTATION

Do you feel a rumbling under your feet? Does it feel like there is a spiritual earthquake unfolding? If we look carefully around us we can see that many of the Christian values that have shape our western society are rapidly becoming the minority view. The secular view is popular even amongst those professing a 'faith' of kinds. We are being drowned in a flood of 'political correctness' and any attempts to query this through enlightened conversation with spiritual insight is viewed as 'backward' or naive.

THE EAST IS SUFFERING TOO

Eastern society is not in any better shape. Last year we heard reports from the Middle East of women and children being killed because they were Christians and public crucifixions were used many times as a deterrent to ISIS dissidents. In North Korea, people are publicly executed for owning Bibles while in China, Christian Churches are increasingly being targeted and individuals falsely accused of misconduct followed by imprisonment.

BACK TO THE WEST

The British Columbia government of Canada in 2014 denied its only Christian University the right to start a law school based on the University adhering to its Christ-centred beliefs. Elsewhere in a Catholic school, a religious teacher was removed for simply stating that homosexuals can't reproduce and that they are not married according to Catholic teaching. The teacher went on the record as saying *"Teaching religion, if you really want to teach it properly, it's risky. I'd rather teach maths because five times five is always going to be twenty five,"*.

And more recently a bloody killing spree at a gay nightclub in Orlando has seen a bizarre reaction from many in the public who want to blame the shooting on Christian teachings because such

teachings create an “anti-queer climate”.

Again that spiritual rumbling your feeling down in your soul, it might just be the fall of the Christian Churches as we know it. So where does that leave us in regards to the future?

GIVE LIGHT TO THE PATH

The pendulum can only swing so far before it must return. There is a craving deep inside each one of us to know the path of life, the purpose to creation and to commune with the Creator. Secular life to acquire the needs to survive and function can only satisfy for so long before the neglect of the soul begins to rumble and quake within. For us, the church holds the secrets to life and we must not lose sight of our purpose and goal – that is to promote the path to salvation. If we can give this path sufficient light and public attention then *'the narrow path'* will open up and become attractive to the many who seek a way forward. The 'Call' is going forth out from heaven – “Who will carry my light to a world that is spiritually bankrupt and has lost its moral compass”?

In the book Heaven and Hell, Swedenborg describes again another experience where he is shown the way to Heaven and the way to hell. The path to hell is representatively broad and many spirits seemed to be travelling this path. There was only one road that led to both the narrow and broad path and it ended at a large boulder. Upon arriving at the boulder, the one path broke into two with a narrow path leading to heaven off to the left while a broad path descended into hell off to the right. Everyone travelled along the same road until they arrived at the boulder at which point the righteous went to the left and the unrighteous stumbled over the large boulder and were hurt. Once those who had stumbled arose to their feet, they then rushed down the broad road to hell. Later, Swedenborg had this experienced explained to him -

Heaven and Hell 534:2 The first path, the broad one where so many good and evil people were travelling together, chatting with each other like friends with no visible difference between them, pictured people who live similarly honest and fair outward lives, with no visible difference between them. The stone at the fork or corner where the evil people stumbled, from which they rushed along the path to hell, pictured divine truth, which is denied by people who are focusing on hell. In the highest sense this stone meant the Lord's divine human nature. However, people who acknowledge divine truth and the divine nature of the Lord as well were taken along the path that led to heaven. This showed me again that both evil and good people live the same life outwardly, or travel the same path, one as readily as the other. Yet the ones who at heart acknowledge the Divine, especially those within the church who acknowledge the Lord's divine nature, are led to heaven; while those who do not acknowledge it are led to hell.

THERE IS A NEW EXPRESSION OF CHURCH COMING

In Swedenborg's Heavenly revelations he was shown that a new form of Church was coming. A church that would embody the very teachings of heaven and the spiritual sense of the Scriptures. It was also revealed to him that the old church would have to be 'vastated' first as it would fight against this new expression of Church and would even destroy it if possible (Apocalypse Revealed 707). We are clearly seeing the signs of this vastation going on all around us in every culture in every nation. It is important that we keep our eyes on the goal which is a new expression of spiritual Christianity; a new expression that will meet the spiritual and even natural needs of the seekers of the near future. We must find a way to make the heavenly teachings relevant to this generation.

DO HARD THINGS FIRST

We encourage our children to get the hard work out of the way first and then they can enjoy whatever else they are involved in. This principle is certainly true for the path of salvation. Work on shunning evil first so that the Lord may be free to lift our hearts and minds into Heaven's light. In this way, Heavenly light will flood our souls and minds so that we can know the path to life. We also need to apply this concept in reaching out to this generation. Let us be willing to do the hard things first so

that others may come. My sense of the Holy is important and yet if it stands in the way of others coming to the Lord then I need to be willing to put my need to the side for the sake of the other. If I fail to do this then there will be no future generation of believers flowing out of my life. In a sense, I become spiritually barren.

WE COME ONE WAY AND DEPART ANOTHER

We all may come to the Lord from different directions and carrying different burdens and yet we all come away changed. None can approach the Lord in faith and come away the same person.

We read in Matthew chapter two about the wise men who came looking for the one born King of the Jews, that when it came time for them to depart, they left via another way. We see a similar mystery in the vision of the third temple given to Ezekiel. In chapter Forty Six and verse nine of the book of Ezekiel, we read that those who approach the temple from the South must depart from the North and those coming from the North must depart from the South. The reason for this is that we cannot approach the Lord and stay the same.

Whenever we approach the Divine, He is the 'Valley of decision' (Joel 3:14). Transformation is the only possible outcome. Divine Truth has this effect on us all and for this reason the worldly avoid contact with the truth. However, in the end, an encounter with Truth can only be put off for so long. The longer we leave it, the more dramatic is the encounter. The World may not want an encounter with the Divine and yet the Lord's Love and desire to save the human race is so strong that He will continue to offer them the light. It is up to us to be loving non judgemental carriers of that Light even if the World rejects us in the worst possible ways.

WE CAN NOT STOP THE LORD'S COMING

The Lord's second coming is provoking an encounter between the darkness and the light. This process cannot be stopped. If we are faithful to take up the call to shine His light, then the Lord will send us those who long to know the Truth and be free from the coercion of evil forces. And we will be witnesses of a new generation of believers in a world that is speedily rejecting truth and light. All we need to do is approach the Lord afresh each day from one direction and through that divine encounter leave in a new and more heavenly direction – Love for the Lord and for our fellow mankind. The Lord's mercy is also in this in that I come with my sense of the Holy from one direction and I leave with a new and fresh sense of the Holy.

Secrets of Heaven 9528

For from pure love, and thus from pure mercy, the Lord assumed the Human, and endured the most grievous temptations, and finally the passion of the cross, that He might save the human race; whereby merit and righteousness became His. From this it is clear that the good of merit is mercy. Mercy is the Divine love toward those who are set fast in a state of misery. (That the Lord underwent the most grievous temptations, and thereby reduced heaven and hell into order, and that He fought from Divine love to save those who receive Him with love and faith...

AMEN

The Months Ahead Unpacked

An explanation of the upcoming events from August to October.

The Lord's Prayer

We are currently up to the Sixth Key '*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil*' and will explore its meaning and application to our spiritual walk during the family service of August. The Lord willing, we will have completed this series of seven keys before the next Breaking Bread in November.

North-side Swedenborg Reading Group

Aug - Thursday 11th

Sept - Thursday 8th

Oct - Thursday 13th

On the second Thursday evening of the month from 6pm to 7pm at Bracken Ridge Library, the North-side Swedenborg Reading Group meets together to discuss '*Divine Providence*'. To all our north-side community (or our south-side folks if you don't mind the travel), if you would like an additional spiritual boost to the month come join the stimulating discussion.

NOTE: The library have successfully booked our reading group in until the end of the year on the Second Thursday evening of the Month.

Annual General Meeting – Fourth Sunday of October – 23/10/2016

There will be no meeting on the third Sunday of October. Instead, we will be meeting on the fourth Sunday for a short service and then an AGM to follow immediately after.

Spring time picnic in the park

When New Church Day came around last month, we were all looking forward to celebrating the event as a picnic in the park. Unfortunately, the rainy cold weather prevented us from doing so. Our hope is now that we can still have a picnic day at Daisy Hill Conservation Park during the spring time when the days are warmer. Once we have worked out which weekend would be best, we will notify everyone via email or phone. If you would like to contact me to discuss any suggestions as to which day etc. please call me on 04 2131 9252 – thank you, Darren Brunne.

Life's Contrasts by Ian Arnold

Like a good number of Queenslanders (as was obvious from widespread comments) this year I came to long for the conclusion of what had seemed to be an endless Summer. It's easy to forget that we had no Autumn and that through April, May and even unto June temperatures were relentlessly in the high 20's, even low 30's. It caught my attention, agreeing with her, when in early June an ABC Saturday morning radio presenter said how much she looked forward to even a short Winter, for the sake of the contrast.

Well, of course, Winter did come, rain ruling out any prospect of us having a "New Church Day" picnic. And what with the westerly winds, there have been some biting cold days since!

What would the weather be – we have probably all asked ourselves – if it were not for contrasts? Unending sunshine, or endless Winters....we would quickly tire of them, just as we all began to tire of Summer by mid June this year.

And here's another question: what would life itself be without its contrasts? For example, work and recreation; times to switch on and times to switch off; times of seriousness and times of playfulness; easy going times and challenging times; times of joy and times of disappointment; and, as can be the case, times of frugality and times of plenty.

We can go further, of course. The night sky under a new moon and the night sky under a full moon; a glowering sky and a beautifully sunny one; mountains and valleys; and, at a personal level, acceptance and rejection; honesty and deception; and friendship as contrasted with hostility.

None of us, I feel sure, has any difficulty with the value of contrasts. How very much we appreciate the one as contrasted with the other!

As I think about life's contrasts two teachings, in particular, from the Writings spring to mind for me.

The first is that we do, indeed, come to appreciate the nature of good when contrasted with its opposite, evil. Just check "Secrets of Heaven, 7812, for example. "One learns from evil what good is, indeed one knows the nature of good from its opposite, to be exact. Every perception of something is arrived at by relating to it, and reflecting on its differences from, things that are contrary to it in varying ways and degrees." And, as we grow in the Lord's goodness so, correspondingly, our horror at the nature of evil grows.

Secondly, there are few things more certain than that as we engage with the Lord to become more spiritual people there are going to be countless contrasting, or alternating, states along the way. It was the case – very much so – with the ancient people of Israel after they escaped from slavery in Egypt and made their way, at times torturously, to the Promised Land. They had their times of closeness to God and times of remoteness; times of humility and times of arrogance; times of acceptance of His laws and guidance and times of rebellion; times of progress and times of backsliding.

So, too, it is with us, that's for sure. But it can't be any other way. Even the angels, we are told, have contrasting states, albeit much, much, milder than ours here in this world. The contrasts are critically important for us. We are engaged and uplifted by the positive ones; and arising out of these positive states comes the hope and determination to hold on in the negative and proprium dominated ones, now recognised increasingly sharply for what they really are.

Right at the end of the Old Testament story of Noah and the Flood is a promise that over the years has become burned into my memory. It reads-

"While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
And cold and heat,
And winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."

Genesis 8:22

This is all about the journey we also know as our regeneration. And it helps me enormously to cope with the contrasts I experience along the way. I hope it does the same for you.

Ian Arnold

Hot Food & Birthday Cake Roster for First Sunday Lunches

Feb	Anna
March	Fran
April	Vivian
May	Bev
June	Ruth
July	Bev
Aug	Renee
Sept	Anna
Oct	Fran
Nov	Gaye
Dec	We all pitch in for Christmas luncheon

Birthdays

To all our friends celebrating birthdays throughout these months we wish you birthday greetings and blessings.

August

2nd Julie Barns, 3rd Elijah Brunne, 6th Jenny Lee, 23rd Frances Fitzgerald, 24th Sam Field, 28th Josiah Brunne

September

3rd Harrison Glenn, 5th Diane Thompson, 16th Kimberly Tatters, 18th Ian Arnold, 21st Grace Brunne, 23rd Isabella Lee

October

5th Vivian Lawler, 11th Annabel Duff, 17th Mrs Evelyn Williams, 18th Sophia Barns, Mrs Muriel Barrett, 21st Alex Lee, 23rd Matthew Heldon, 28th Ken Thompson, 30th Daniel Harry

CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

Our services are currently being held at the chapel in Trinity Uniting Church Theological College, entrance via 47 Cadell Street, Auchenflower. Always check the last page in the Calendar for services.

Pastor: Rev. Darren Brunne, contactable on 0421 319 252

Treasurer: Mr Matt Heldon, contactable on 0403 384 438

Secretary: Mrs Frances Fitzgerald, contactable on 07-3356 7119 or markfitz@optusnet.com.au
Address: 49 Vale St, Wilston, Qld 4051

For activities on the Gold Coast and Mt Tamborine meetings contact Mrs Gaye Heldon on 07-5577 8772

Sunday School Co-ordinators:

Darren & Renee Brunne, contactable on 07-33 1414 85 or reneebrunne@gmail.com

CALENDARS

Aug 2016

Sun 7th

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER** led by Rev. Brunne at 10.30 a.m. *'The Lord's Prayer- Sixth Key'*

Sun 14th

Sacred Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Fri 19th

***Mt Tamborine Discussion Group
Gaye and Brian's House at 2pm***

Sun 21st

Abiding in the Vine led by Rev. Brunne.

Sun 28th

Free for Home Church Visitation

Sept
Sun 4th

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER** led by Rev. Brunne at 10:30am - The Seventh Key from the Lord's Prayer

Sun 11th

Sacred Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Fri 16th

***Mt Tamborine Discussion Group
Kaye's place – Hope Island Resort – 2pm***

Sun 18th

Abiding in the Vine led by Rev. Brunne.

Sun 25th

Free for Home Church Visitation

Oct
Sun 2nd

1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE including **HOLY SUPPER** led by Rev. Brunne at 10.30 a.m.

Sun 9th

Sacred Circle, 10.30 a.m.

Sun 16rd

Free for Home Church Visitation

Sun 23rd

Abiding in the Vine led by Rev. Brunne.
Followed by the AGM at 11:30am

Fri 28th

***Mt Tamborine Discussion Group
Gaye and Brian's House at 2pm***

Sun 30th

Free for Home Church Visitation