

# *SOUL FOOD*

*June 2017*



*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: Rev 12:1*

## ***The Woman Clothed with the Sun (Rev. James P. Cooper)***

*This woman seen by John in the spiritual world represents the New Church. The church is represented by a woman, because the church is the bride and wife of the Lord. As a bride is in the affection of the wisdom of her husband and loves him because of that wisdom, so the church looks to conjunction with the Lord, for, like a bride, it wants to be one with the Wisdom that is from the Lord.*

*The **Lord appears in the spiritual world as the Sun of Heaven** to represent the **power and life-giving nature of His Divine Love and Divine Wisdom.***

*The woman who represents the church is seen with that power and life from the Lord radiating to men through her as if from a sun. She is clothed with the sun for two reasons: Because the Lord's life flows into man through the church in the heavens, also, when men in the church know the truths from the Word and live according to them they are in love to the Lord, which love is signified by the light and heat of the sun. Thus, the radiant power of the woman comes from the reciprocal conjunction of men with the Lord. **Man receives good and truth from the Lord through the church,** and then as if of himself chooses to make it his own, thus returning that love to the Lord. This reciprocal conjunction is the life of heaven from which all delights and blessings flow.*

***The moon, representing the faith of the New Church,** was seen under her feet, because at the time of John's vision, and even at the time Swedenborg was visiting the spiritual world, the New church in the heavens had not yet been conjoined to the church on earth. The conjunction of the New Church in the heavens and the church on earth was the Lord's purpose, and the revelation of the internal sense of the Word through Swedenborg was the means to that goal.*

*However, that was not the end, but a beginning. The Lord has, **through His second coming,** given us the tools to establish the church on earth if we sincerely desire it and work for it. Our text warns us that **establishing the church on earth will not be easy: she travailed and pained to bring forth** (text). The Writings tell us that this means the church on earth will not be easily received at first, especially by those who are in faith alone (AR 531).*

*But what is the true reason for us to work for the growth of the church on earth? The true reason is that **"the church in the heavens cannot subsist, except***

**there be also a church on earth, which is in concordant love and wisdom" (AR 533).**

*This is the spiritual reason for working for the growth of the church, the fact that the church in the heavens and the church on earth are related as the spirit and body of a person.*

*Just as no person can come into the spiritual world without having first lived in the natural world, **the church in heaven cannot exist without the church in the world as its foundation.***

*This means that the growth of the church on earth, both in numbers of members and in the quality of spiritual life, greatly affects the growth and eventual development of the church in the heavens. The heavenly church cannot be built beyond the foundation laid for it upon the earth. **The church on earth and the church in the heavens are more intimately related that we can imagine, for they correspond to each other, and both are founded upon the reception of the Word by man and angel.** Thus, it is absolutely necessary that there be a church somewhere in the world, where the Word is, and where by it the Lord is known (AR 533).*

*The **purpose of creation is that there shall be a heaven from the human race.** The Lord has provided all the things needed to achieve that goal: the **Word, the church in the heavens, the church on earth, freedom of choice in spiritual things, and spiritual equilibrium.** All that remains is for each of us to exercise our freedom of choice, to allow the Lord's Divine Providence to lead us by means of the church on earth to the church in the heavens.*

*However, since each of us is truly free, **falsity and evil have a pull on our hearts and minds equal to that of good and truth.** Every one of us must **make hard choices and turn away from the pull of hereditary tendencies to evils.** To do this requires real power. The **power to turn away from evil and falsity** does not come from within ourselves, although it may at times seem this way. **It comes from the Lord through the church** and is represented by the "**male child which shall rule the nations with a rod of iron**" (REV 12:5). This child represents the doctrine of the church – not the words and ideas presented in the Word, but **the ideas after they have been received in the mind and confirmed by a life according to them** (See AR 148).*

**Truth must have power to remove falsity** from the natural mind of a person, to **turn him away from self-intelligence which leads toward hell.**

**Truth has the power to turn him back toward the Word of the Lord which leads toward heaven.** The doctrine rules with a rod of iron because iron represents truths in the natural degree (AE 176:4), and it is that degree which contains both truth and falsity mixed, acquired by the senses. The interior degrees of the mind cannot receive falsity for they are protected by the Lord for use by the truly spiritual person, an angel. So it is there, in the natural degree, that truth and falsity wage their battle. On the one hand are all the ideas that favour the loves of self and the world, and on the other hand are the ideas from the Word and preaching from it that a person has believed and lived.

The ideas from the Word that are of the person's life itself, because he has lived them and thus appropriated them, are represented by the male child, for they are the person's doctrine. It rules his mind with a rod of iron because that represents the power of doctrine to remove the falsity in the natural degree of the mind when a person chooses to remove it and asks for the Lord's help in doing so. The resulting battle is felt as suffering and conflict, and is called "temptation."

Our text calls to mind **the battle that the Lord waged against the hells** in order to complete the final judgment on the hells, and restore order to the spiritual world, thus establishing the New Church. We remember that its establishment was witnessed by Swedenborg in 1770 at the conclusion of the Last Judgment in the spiritual world. We might think about how far the church has come in its 213 years, and reflect on how far it has yet to go. We take pleasure in its successes and strengths, we hope and pray for its future growth among people in the world, wondering how we can best serve the Lord's goals in furthering the church on earth.

But, at the same time, we must remember that **the church must be in the mind and heart of each individual member** before it can really be said to be established. **Each of us is a little world, either a heaven or a hell.** There must be **a judgment in each of our minds, so that our own spiritual world can be reordered, and so that each of us may become a church, a true church, knowing the Lord as He is revealed in His Word, and living according to His commandments.** **When each individual strives to become a true church,** then the church on earth will surely grow in both

*numbers and quality, and the church in the heavens may then have a sure and excellent foundation to eternity.*

***And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God. (REV 12:7.8.10) AMEN.***

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### ***Calendar for June***

<i>4 June</i>	<i>Godly Play 10:30am</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road</i>
<i>11 June</i>	<i>10:30am Worship</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road</i>
<i>18 June</i>	<i>Godly Play 10:30am and <b>Special Picnic for June 19th</b></i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road</i>
<i>25 June</i>	<i>10:30am Worship Godly Play</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road</i>

***Birthday: 2 June Chelsea***

***We are all created to become angels of Heaven  
which is a kingdom of communities.***

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***Worship*** is held at 10:30am on the ***Second and Fourth*** Sundays

***Godly Play*** is held at 10.30am every Sunday

Venue: McDougall House, Clydesdale St, Como.

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