

Some quotations from the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg:

...As the land of Canaan signifies the Lord's kingdom, the parts which were more remote from its ultimate boundaries signified things interior, and therefore the expression to go up is here used. In like manner from all the surrounding parts to Jerusalem; and in Jerusalem to the house of God.... For Jerusalem was the inmost of the land, because by it was signified the Lord's spiritual kingdom; and the house of God was the inmost of Jerusalem, because by it was signified the Lord's celestial kingdom, and in the supreme sense the Lord Himself. Hence men spoke of going up to them.

Arcana Celestia #4539.3

In order that He may make us blessed and happy, the Lord wills a total submission, that is, that one be not partly one's own and partly the Lord's, for then there are two lords, which no one can serve at the same time (*Matt. 6:24*). Total submission is also meant by the Lord's words in Matthew:—Whoever loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and whoever loveth son and daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me (*Matthew 10:37*); where by father and mother are signified in general those things which are one's own from inheritance, and by son and daughter those things which are one's own from actual life. What is our own is also signified by soul in John:—Whoever loveth his soul shall lose it; but he that hateth his soul in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If anyone will minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be (*John 12:25, 26*). Total submission is also signified by the Lord's words – Another disciple said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said to him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead (*Luke 9:59-60*).

That submission must be total is very evident from the first commandment of the church: –Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from all thy heart, and from all thy soul, and from all thy mind, and from all thy forces; this is the first commandment (*Mark 12:30*). Thus because love to the Lord does not come from oneself, but from the Lord Himself, therefore all the heart, all the soul, all the mind, and all the forces, which are recipients, must be the Lord's, consequently submission must be total. Such is the submission which is here signified by the words we shall live, and our ground, servants to Pharaoh, for by Pharaoh is represented the natural in general which is under the auspices of the internal celestial, in the supreme sense under the auspices of the Lord, who in this sense is Joseph.

Arcana Celestia #6138.1, .3

Plowing signifies preparation by good for receiving truths; and harvest truths from good – for harvest is the already ripe crop when it is being gathered.... Before this truth comes into existence, truths indeed appear, but they are truths through which is good, and not truths from good. One who acts from truth is in truths through which is good, but one who acts from good is in truths which are from good. That plowing is said to denote good, is because a field which is plowed signifies the church as to good (n. 2971), thus good which is of the church (n. 3310, 3317, 4982). Thus plowing is preparation by good for receiving truths; moreover the oxen which were used in plowing signify goods in the natural (n. 2180, 2566, 2781). In Luke: Jesus said, No man putting his hand to the plough, but looking backward, is fit for the kingdom of God (*Luke 9:62*).

Arcana Celestia #5895.1, .5

SUNDAY MORNING FORUM
BIBLE STUDY & SWEDENBORGIAN IDEAS
PENTECOST 5: The Cost of Discipleship

To follow the Lord, means to share his journey. As He “steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” so must we. That is, we need to keep our eyes on heavenly living, represented by Jerusalem. To do so requires resoluteness and to understand the purpose of life; namely, to prepare ourselves to receive a heavenly will and understanding.

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...When the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind..., Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

2 Kings 2:1, 6-14

Now ... when the time had come for Jesus to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.” And they went to another village. Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:51-62