

Some quotations from the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg:

The fact that the ideas constituting a person's thought contain countless details, and that the details they contain are held in order from interior sources, has also been evident to me when morning and evening I have recited the Lord's Prayer. As often as I recited it the ideas constituting my thought were opened towards heaven and countless concepts flowed in. This happened so that I might discern clearly that the ideas belonging to my thought which I had gained from the contents of that Prayer were filled out with details from heaven. I was also able to tell that concepts poured in such as I cannot express in words, as well as ones that I was unable to understand. I did no more than feel the overall affection resulting from them. And what has been amazing, the things flowing in have varied every day. From all this I have been allowed to know that the contents of that Prayer hold more within them than the whole of heaven is capable of understanding; also that a person finds more in it, the more his thought is opened towards heaven, and conversely he finds less in it, the more his thought is closed. For with people whose thought is closed nothing more is seen in the Prayer than the literal meaning or that nearest the actual words.

*Arcana Coelestia #6619*

Prayer, regarded in itself, is speech with God, and some internal view at the time of the matters of the prayer, to which there answers something like an influx into the perception or thought of the mind, so that there is a certain opening of the man's interiors toward God; but this with a difference according to the man's state, and according to the essence of the subject of the prayer. [Cf. Unspoken prayers in *Arcana Coelestia* #9202]

*Arcana Coelestia #2535*

'Which are the prayers of the saints' signifies the thoughts that are of faith derived from the affections that are of charity, with those who worship the Lord out of spiritual goods and truths. By 'prayers' are understood the things that are of faith, and at the same time the things that are of charity, with those who pour forth prayers, since prayers without those things are not prayers but empty sounds.

*Apocalypse Revealed #278 (Cf. Apocalypse Explained #325)*

It was also shown how tender [the understanding of children] is. When I was praying the Lord's Prayer, and from their understanding they flowed into the ideas of my thought, their influx was perceived to be so tender and soft as to be almost solely a matter of affection; and at the same time it was then observed that their understanding was open even from the Lord, for what flowed forth from them was as if it simply flowed through them. Moreover, the Lord flows into the ideas of little children chiefly from inmosts, for there is nothing, as with adults, to close up their ideas, no principles of falsity to close the way to the understanding of truth, nor any life of evil to close the way to the reception of good, and thereby the way to wisdom. From these things it can be confirmed that little children do not come at once after death into an angelic state, but are gradually brought into it successively by means of cognitions of good and truth, and this in harmony with all heavenly order; for the least particulars of their disposition are known to the Lord, and thus they are led, in accord with each and every movement of their inclination, to receive the truths of good and the goods of truth. [Cf. Angels, use of the Lord's Prayer & children in heaven, *Arcana Coelestia* #2290, 2291.]

*Heaven and Hell #336*

SUNDAY MORNING FORUM  
BIBLE STUDY & SWEDENBORGIAN IDEAS  
**PENTECOST 9: The Disciples Ask Jesus How to Pray**

Jesus taught his disciples to pray what we now call “The Lord’s Prayer.” This is sometimes called the perfect prayer in that it is universal in scope. God hears every prayer according to the sincere state of the person praying and the content of it. This also applies, sometimes especially, to the inarticulated, silent prayer of our hearts, as well as our specific petitions.

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And the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great..., I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it....” Then the men turned away ... and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it...?” So the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous ..., then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” Then Abraham answered and said, “Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty...?” So He said, “If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.” And he spoke ... again and said, “Suppose there should be forty found there?” So He said, “I will not do it for the sake of forty.” Then he said, “Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?” So He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” And he said, “Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?” So He said, “I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.” Then he said, “Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.”

Genesis 18:20-31

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.” And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Luke 11:1-13