

Some quotations from the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg:

When one's mind is in a state of humility (acknowledgment that any good and truth that seems to be one's own is really the Lord's) the Lord's Divine love and wisdom can flow in because the loves of self and the world are quieted. One can then also perceive in the understanding that humility is needed not for the sake of the Lord's love of glory, but for the sake of Lord's Divine love and in order that the Lord can thereby inflow with good and truth making one blessed and happy. The faculty of being able to understand what is good and true although one does not will it has been given to people in order that they may have the capacity of being reformed and regenerated.

Arcana Celestia #3539.5

One is not born into any knowledge still less into any intelligence or wisdom, but only into a capability for receiving and becoming imbued therewith. This is effected in a two-fold way, namely, an internal way, and an external way, By the internal way the Divine flows in. These meet in one's mind within, and then so far as one suffers oneself to be enlightened by the Divine, one enters into wisdom. The things which enter by the external way flow in through the senses of the body. They do not, however, flow in of themselves, but are elicited by the internal mind that they may serve as a plane for the heavenly and spiritual things which flow in by an internal way from the Divine.

Arcana Celestia #5081

All who would be saved must confess their sins, and do the work of repentance. Confession of sins is recognizing evils, seeing them within oneself, acknowledging them, making oneself guilty and condemning oneself on account of them. When this is done before God it is confession of sins. And when one has thus confessed sins and from an humble heart has prayed that they may be forgiven, repentance consists in refraining from them and living a new life in accordance with the precepts of faith.

Arcana Celestia #8387-9

...Whatever a person carries out from oneself cannot be good since it has come from self, an impure and most unclean origin. From that impure and most unclean origin no good can possibly emerge, for the individual is thinking all the time about one's own merit and righteousness. Some go even further, and look down on everybody else, as the Lord teaches [in Luke 18:9-14]. And others' s look good while the inside is filthy. The good therefore that a person does in this state is not the good of faith. And the same applies to the truth one thinks. What one thinks may be the perfect truth; but as long as the proprium is the source of it, though it is in itself the truth of faith, one does not have the good of faith within him. To be the truth of faith all truth must include from the Lord the good of faith.

Arcana Celestia #874

... Without humiliation the Lord cannot be worshiped and adored, for the reason that the Divine of the Lord cannot flow into a proud heart, that is, into a heart full of the love of self, for such a heart is hard; and is called in the Word a "heart of stone." But the Divine of the Lord can Sow into a humble heart, because this is soft, and is called in the Word a "heart of flesh." Such a heart is receptive of the influx of good from the Lord, that is, of the Lord.

Arcana Celestia #9377

SUNDAY MORNING FORUM
BIBLE STUDY & SWEDENBORGIAN IDEAS
PENTECOST 22: The Pharisee and the Publican

Jesus' parables are designed to invite us to reflect on our spiritual progress. We rightly shrink from being so crass as the Pharisee in his public derision of others he saw as sinners. The temptation is ever present to overlook our need for growth in heavenly living compared with others.

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The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts. "Judah mourns, And her gates languish; They mourn for the land, And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. Their nobles have sent their lads for water; They went to the cisterns and found no water. They returned with their vessels empty; They were ashamed and confounded And covered their heads. Because the ground is parched, For there was no rain in the land, The plowmen were ashamed; They covered their heads. Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field, But left because there was no grass. And the wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights; They sniffed at the wind like jackals; Their eyes failed because there was no grass."

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble, Why should You be like a stranger in the land, And like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night? Why should You be like a man astonished, Like a mighty one who cannot save? Yet You, O Lord, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us! Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins."

Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.

Jeremiah 14:(1-6) 7-10, 19-22

Also Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:9-14