

Notes and Comments

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES PUBLISHED

Volume 4 of Emanuel Swedenborg's *Spiritual Experiences* has just been published. After one has read from the pages of this twenty-year journal of a respected scientist and statesman in which he recorded his spiritual experiences of seeing and speaking with those who have passed on to the other world, how could one doubt that there is a life after death?

These almost daily otherworldly experiences began in 1745 when the Creator and God of the universe, the Lord Himself, opened Swedenborg's spiritual senses so that he might communicate with those in the spiritual world and thus serve as a human instrument of a new Divine revelation to mankind.

Regarding this Swedenborg wrote on August 23, 1748:

All the things that I have written in this book have not been written in any other way than from actual experience, from conversation with spirits and angels, from thought as tacit speech, then, when I was writing, from things imparted by those who for the most part were together with me at the time while they were being experienced, and from their guidance of my thoughts, of the things written, of my hand. So everything written in these three books and elsewhere, though here and there disconnected, are nevertheless experiences, and everything in its own way came from spirits, or angels—this likewise having been guided by spirits next to my head. For I have in every case perceived their presence.

The experiences Swedenborg had and wrote down are rationally convincing evidence that the other world, the life after death that awaits us all, is very, very real. Swedenborg tells of meeting well-known acquaintances of his who had passed on—not a few of whom were amazed that they are still fully alive and fully human although they had left this earthly world! And he describes what living conditions are like in heaven and hell, and relates incidents that lucidly illustrate the consequences of faithless, evil behavior, such as adultery, and the peaceful happiness that follows a sincere pursuit of heavenly goodness. A particularly charming incident is

his lovely account of a romantic meeting and subsequent marriage in the spiritual world between a czarina from Russia and a Swedish gentleman. *Spiritual Experiences* is a daily journal, not a dissertation; it is a kind of spiritual photo album that can be opened and enjoyed at any page. Notwithstanding, frequently among his notes on what happened to him in the spiritual world, Swedenborg puts down profound theological and philosophical reflections on the deeper aspects of spiritual reality. For example, there is paragraph nr. 5792, headed, “Why those in the Christian world have not believed in resurrection immediately after death,” and 5934, “The Lord Alone does all things in the heavens and on the earths, about His omnipotence.”

This journal, *Spiritual Experiences*, which Swedenborg kept during twenty of his twenty-seven years of spiritual authorship consequently served as a source of material from which he drew when he was inspired by the Lord to formulate the heavenly doctrines that we call the Writings of the New Church. To facilitate his use of his entries Swedenborg even made an index to them (whose two volumes are now in process of being translated for the first time).

This Divine storehouse, written in Latin, was discovered after Swedenborg died, and after being published in Latin an English translation was made, the fourth and last volume of which (excluding the index) was published in 1889—a long 124 years ago. It had then been given the title, *Spiritual Diary*, but subsequent research indicates that Swedenborg himself referred to it as *Experientiae Spirituales*, which in English is *Spiritual Experiences*, and so this is now the title. The just published volume 4, translated by the Rev. Kurt P. Nemitz, completes the second English translation of *Experientiae Spirituales*, volumes 1–3 of which were the work of the late Rev. Dr. J. Durban Odhner.

It is a happy occasion that now, after 124 years, the spiritual truths the Lord has made known about the other world in *Spiritual Experiences* are accessible to the New Church and the world in a fresh English version. You will find in its pages hundreds, nay, thousands of fascinating new things about the spiritual world that you are going to come to—and that will help you to thoughtfully and prayerfully prepare to come into a place in heaven there.

Kurt P. Nemitz