



## News from the SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

### OffTheLeftEye Reaches 50,000-Subscriber Milestone

The offTheLeftEye YouTube channel, home to our weekly webcast *Swedenborg and Life*, hit a new milestone on April 22—50,000 channel subscribers.

In the six months since the channel reached the 40,000-subscriber mark, our videos have racked up more than 1.8 million views and 18 million minutes of watch time, and we're excited by the fact that the channel continues to grow.

In January, the *Swedenborg and Life* creative team launched a new show format that features shorter shows (an average of forty minutes rather than an hour) with topics geared toward tackling more focused topics like "Do We Reincarnate?" and "Why Doesn't God Prove That He Exists?" These episodes have gotten great feedback and

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### IT'S MEMBERSHIP SEASON!

If you enjoy Swedenborg's spiritually uplifting messages and want to help us share them with more people, you can become an annual member of the Swedenborg Foundation or renew your membership for only \$25. You'll get a free members-only book, discounts in the bookstore, and more! Go to [www.swedenborg.com/membership](http://www.swedenborg.com/membership), or call Brian Mann, membership and development coordinator, at 610-430-3222, ext. 102. •

# Annual Meeting Celebrates Year of Success

Members of the Swedenborg Foundation and invited guests met at Pendleton Hall on the campus of Bryn Athyn College, Bryn Athyn, PA, for the Foundation's annual meeting on April 28, 2017. Throughout 2016, all of our online ventures grew dramatically, we published new books, and we ended the year in excellent financial shape.

During the business meeting, members elected a slate of four board members to serve for the next term of four years (2017–2021). Three of them—Karen Feil, Jeremy Simons, and Kathy Tafel—are continuing their service. The fourth, W. Bergen Junge, is filling a vacant position. Junge is part of the business department faculty at Bryn Athyn College; prior to that, he spent thirty years as an information technology professional. He is also a lifelong Swedenborgian, having been active in many New Church societies across the United States.

Members also welcomed Soni Soneson Werner, a mid-term replacement for outgoing board member Sylvia Montgomery Shaw, who resigned for family reasons in early 2017. Werner is an associate professor emerita of psychology at Bryn Athyn College, with a long career of work in developmental psychology, human resource management, organizational psychology, forensic psychology, and conflict management.

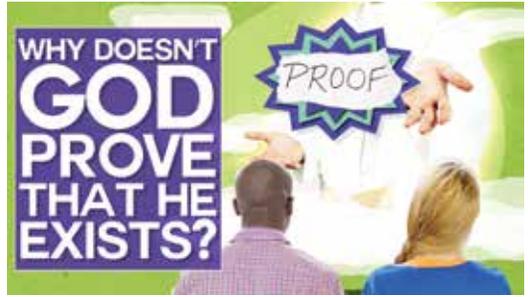
Following the meeting, the audience stayed to hear Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan, co-director of the Master of Arts in Religious Studies program at Bryn Athyn College and organizer of the upcoming Swedenborg and the Arts International Conference, talk about Swedenborg's under-appreciated influence on a wide range of arts. •



For a full rundown of what we did in 2016, including activities and accomplishments across all of our programs and a financial overview, please see our 2016 annual report. You can download a copy at [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com) (click on the "Featured Content" menu at the top and then "Catalogs, Newsletters, and Annual Reports") or request one by calling 610-430-3222, ext. 109, or e-mailing [info@swedenborg.com](mailto:info@swedenborg.com).

are continuing to build viewership as time goes on, and we're looking forward to growing even more over the coming months!

If you've never seen our weekly webcast before and want to find out what you're missing, visit the offTheLeftEye YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/offTheLeftEye](http://www.youtube.com/offTheLeftEye)) Monday nights at 8 p.m. Eastern to watch new shows live, or visit anytime to watch our archive of episodes on life, God, spiritual growth, the Bible, and much more! •



Above: Title screens for OTLE episodes: *Do We Reincarnate?* and *Why Doesn't God Prove That He Exists?*

## New Books Now on Audible

The New Century Edition translations of Emanuel Swedenborg's works *Divine Providence* and *Heaven and Hell* are now available on Audible, an online audiobook streaming service.

If you are an Audible subscriber, you can listen to *Divine Providence*, *Heaven and Hell*, and *Divine Love and Wisdom* (previously available) as part of your subscription; you can also purchase individual copies of these audiobooks through that site or through Amazon, its parent company. You can also purchase and download our audiobooks through our online bookstore at [www.swedenborg.com/bookstore](http://www.swedenborg.com/bookstore). •

### WE'RE HIRING!

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The Swedenborg Foundation is seeking a dynamic, outgoing individual to fill our newly-created position of Director of Development. For more information, go to [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com) or contact our executive director, Morgan Beard, at 610-430-3222 ext. 102 or [mbeard@swedenborg.com](mailto:mbeard@swedenborg.com).

## NCE Minute: Being in More Than One Place at a Time

We have all wished to be in more than one place at a time. It certainly seems as if it would be a handy power to have—to work late at the office, say, and yet also go home to have dinner with the family. Swedenborg, however, takes a different perspective. He suggests that in a sense we do have that ability—and that it’s not particularly desirable.

Two notable passages in this regard occur in the works Swedenborg published in 1758. The first is in *Last Judgment* §32. “I would like to add here,” he says,

a secret of heaven that I touched on in *Heaven and Hell* but have not yet fully described. After death, each of us is connected to a particular community, and this is done as soon as we arrive in the spiritual world (see *Heaven and Hell* §§427, 497). In our first state as spirits, though, we are unaware of this, because at that point we are still focused on what is external and not yet on what is internal.

So far, readers haven’t heard anything new. *Heaven and Hell* has explained that our first state when we arrive in the spiritual world can be one of confusion; there may be a strong disjunction between who we really are and the kind of person we think we are (or the kind of person we want others to think we are). But Swedenborg continues:

As long as we are in this state we go here and there, wherever we feel like going. In actuality, though, we are where our love is—that is, in the community of people who have the same kind of love we have.

When we as spirits are in this state, we appear in many different places, just as though we were physically present there. This is only the way it seems, though, because as soon as the Lord brings us into our dominant love, we immediately vanish from the sight of others and find ourselves with kindred spirits in the community to which we have been connected. This is a unique feature of the spiritual world and bewilders people who do not understand its underlying cause.

This remarkable passage finds a curious echo in *Other Planets* §162. Swedenborg is visiting a planet in the far reaches of the universe in the company of “a spirit who had been a church leader and preacher” when

on Earth. At one point, he says, a woman who lived on the planet appeared near them.

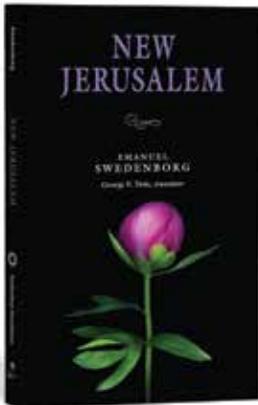
She had a very pretty face and was dressed in a simple garment with an outer layer draped becomingly across her back and over her arms; her beautiful head covering was in the form of a garland of flowers. The spirit was entranced at seeing this young woman, and spoke to her and even took hold of her hand; but since she noticed that he was a spirit and not someone from her own planet, she abruptly pulled herself away from him.

The excellent reason behind the woman's disgust at being accosted is given with Swedenborg's usual understatement: to her, the preacher is no more than a ghost from outer space. But the passage of particular interest to us occurs a paragraph later:

The spirit—who, as already noted, had been a preacher in the world—was then taken to the next location, but unwillingly, because he was still thinking intently about the woman he had found so delightful. This was obvious because there was still a kind of visible shadow of him in the place where he had been.

The question we are left with, then, is this: If we could see them, what shadows of ourselves would we observe, left behind in the places we tell ourselves we would rather be? The places we would rather be, that is, until we reach the spiritual world, and enter the second state there, when everything but our dominant love falls away, and we become who we truly are. •

The New Century Edition Deluxe version of *Swedenborg's Shorter Works of 1758* will roll off the press later this year. For more on the concept of our



dominant love, see *New Jerusalem* §§54–58, which will be only one of the short works included in that volume. *New Jerusalem* was also released as a translation-only paperback (without the annotations and other reference materials that appear in the Deluxe edition) in 2016.

# Swedenborg and Life Recap: Why Does the Bible Say, “The Dead Know Nothing”?

By Josh Cole, Swedenborg.com Contributor

The following is a recap of a recent episode of our weekly webcast *Swedenborg and Life*. To watch this episode (or any other!), go to [youtube.com/offthelefteye](https://youtube.com/offthelefteye). You can also read recaps of other recent episodes at [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com).

Ecclesiastes 9:5 tells us “the dead know nothing.” What does that mean? What can it mean when so many people have been through near-death experiences or have connected with the other side? And why do other Bible passages seem to disagree?

Emanuel Swedenborg’s concept of correspondences, which deals with hidden meanings in life and scripture, may help us understand.



## A HEADACHE FOR WEBSTER

If you are trying to define life and death using the Bible, you might have some trouble. Take, for example, the puzzling verse Ezekiel 18:32: “‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord God. ‘Therefore turn and

live!’” This verse seems to be saying that God doesn’t want us to die, ever. That sounds like good news—but how do we avoid dying?

Verses like John 6:48 and Ezekiel 18:9 provide some clearer instructions—eat of the bread of life and follow God’s laws. But even the biblical figures who were most just and upright still died in the end. Across the whole of scripture, the only definition that seems clear is the simplest: good is life; evil is death.

Swedenborg says the same:

In the other world, “life” means heaven in general and eternal happiness in particular, while “death” means hell in general, and eternal unhappiness there in particular. Many scriptural passages make this plain. Heaven in general and eternal happiness in particular are called

life because the wisdom to see what is good and the insight to see what is true are found there, and these contain life from the Lord, the source of all life. Hell holds the opposite, though. It holds evil instead of good, and falsity instead of truth, and therefore spiritual life that has been snuffed out. As a consequence one finds comparative death there, because spiritual death is evil and falsity. In a human being, spiritual death is evil intent and the distorted thinking it leads to. (*Secrets of Heaven* §5407)

## THE BENEFITS OF DEATH

Why are we so afraid of physical death when it's something we must all go through? Maybe our fear of death actually corresponds to our fear of evil.

Why does spiritual death result when truth is lacking? Spiritual life consists in activity that follows the lead of truth and consequently in being useful. People dedicated to spiritual life hunger and long for truth for the sake of their life—that is, for the sake of living by it and so of being useful. The more they can absorb of the truth they need as a guide to usefulness, the more spiritual life they have, because the light of understanding and wisdom they enjoy increases with it. (*Secrets of Heaven* §6119:1)

So in Ezekiel, when we are told to “turn and live,” we’re actually being told to use the truths we’ve learned to make better choices—that in turn help us to be better people.

That seems pretty easy: life is choosing good; death is choosing evil. But is it really that straightforward? Every correspondence has a positive and negative meaning, and some biblical references to “death” represent a good thing. For instance, when John falls “as if dead” in the book of Revelation, it actually symbolizes the death of his selfishness.

Death symbolizes resurrection, and therefore the dead symbolize those who rise again into eternal life. This is because death symbolizes hell, and consequently evils and falsities, which must die in order for us to receive spiritual life. Not until they are dead and extinct can we possess spiritual life, which is the life meant in the Word by life, eternal life, and resurrection. (*Apocalypse Explained* §899:3)



## APPLICATION

With the understanding of what death means, we can now revisit the previous passages with a new lens. For instance, take Matthew 10:39: “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.” This isn’t about martyrdom; it’s about giving up your self-centered agenda for the sake of God, which leads to heaven.

What does all this tell us about Ecclesiastes 9:5, which tells us that “the dead know nothing”? It means that those who are committed to a self-centered life don’t know love, don’t know truth, and don’t know what they’re missing.

## VIEWER COMMENTS

My friend passed last night and this was the perfect topic I needed to hear today. And the people from the Swedenborg Foundation took the time to visit her in the hospital when she was sick, and comfort her family—this meant so much to her and her family . . . you have no idea how you have impacted all of us. So much hope here. Thank you for practicing what you preach ❤️❤️ will continue to watch and share. — Christina

When we discard our costume in a play, we don’t die, and discarding our physical bodies doesn’t affect our souls either. This metaphorical understanding of Scripture is explicit and basic in the Baha’i Faith. This also allows each unique human soul to understand with a unique viewpoint. Trying to understand the insights of others allows for us to grow spiritually. Unity in diversity is beautiful and enriching, and can work with communities of people. That’s why I enjoy these videos and gain insight from Swedenborg. — Harlan

I am happy to have found Swedenborg; thanks for the good work! I am sharing and it’s food for thought and good conversation!! — Gonda

Great work again Swedenborg Foundation, not only do you provide an in-depth, straightforward explanation about the interpretation of the Bible and Swedenborg, there is also a comedic level as well, in good taste of course. I am and feel blessed that I found you all. Warm hugs to all. :) — Emma

# From our Blog: Using Swedenborg to Understand the Quantum World

By Ian Thompson, PhD, Nuclear Physicist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

For the last hundred years, physicists have been using the quantum theory about the universe, but they still do not properly understand of what the quantum world is made.

The previous physics (referred to as “classical” and started by Isaac Newton) used ideas of “waves” and “particles” to picture what makes up the physical world. But now we find that every object in the quantum world sometimes behaves as a particle and sometimes behaves as a wave! Which is it? In quantum physics, objects behave most of the time like waves spreading out as they travel along, but sometimes measurements show objects to be particles with a definite location: not spread out at all. Why is that? It is as though their size and location suddenly change in measurement events. This is quite unlike classical physics, where particles exist continuously with the same fixed shape. In quantum physics, by contrast, objects have fixed locations only intermittently, such as when they are observed. So they only offer us a discrete series of events that can be measured, not a continuous trajectory. Quantum objects, then, are alternately continuous and discontinuous.

Why would we ever expect such a fickle world? Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) has some ideas that might help us. He describes how all physical processes are produced by something mental, or spiritual, and this can be confirmed by reason of the similarity in patterns between the physical processes and their mental causes. In Swedenborg’s words, there are *correspondences* between the physical and the mental—they have similar structures and functions, even though mind and matter are quite distinct.

Although these ideas are not part of present-day science, I still hope to show below that they may have some implications for how science could usefully develop.

Swedenborg’s theory of mind is easy to begin to understand. He talks about how all mental processes have three common elements: desire, thought, and action. The desire is what persists and motivates what will happen. The thought is the exploration of possibilities for actions and the

making of an intention. The action is the determined intention, the product of desire and thought that results in an actual physical event (see *Divine Providence* §108).

All of the three spiritual elements are essential. Without desire (love), or ends, nothing would be motivated to occur. Without thought, that love would be blind and mostly fail to cause what it wants. Without determined intention, both the love and thought would be frustrated and fruitless, with no effect achieved at all. In everyday life, this intention is commonly called will, but it is always produced by some desire driving everything that happens. Here is the pattern:

### SPIRITUAL

### NATURAL

Desire + Thought → Mental Action (Intention) → Physical Action, or Event, in the World

Swedenborg summarizes the relationship between these elements as follows:

All activities in the universe proceed from ends through causes into effects. These three elements are in themselves indivisible, although they appear as distinct in idea and thought. Still, even then, unless the effect that is intended is seen at the same time, the end is not anything; nor is either of these anything without a cause to sustain, foster and conjoin them. Such a sequence is engraved on every person, in general and in every particular, just as will, intellect, and action is. Every end there has to do with the will, every cause with the intellect, and every effect with action. (*Conjugal Love* §400:1–2)

Now consider Swedenborg's theory of correspondences mentioned above. He says that there is a similar pattern between the details of the effects and the details of the causes. "As above, so below," others have said. So if mental action produces some effect in the physical world, then, by correspondence, we would expect a similar pattern between that physical effect and each of the three elements common to all mental processes. We would expect something physical *like* desire, then something physical *like* thought, and finally something physical *like* mental action. Do we recognize these patterns in physics? And if so, do we recognize them better in classical physics or in quantum physics?

I claim we do recognize them in physics:

- We recognize the “something physical *like* desire” as energy or propensity. These are what persist physically and produce the result, just like desire does in the mind. They are in both **classical and quantum physics**.
- We recognize the “something physical *like* thought” as the wave function in **quantum physics**. This describes all the possibilities, propensities, and probabilities for physical events, just like thought does in the mind.
- We recognize the “something physical *like* mental action” as the actual specific physical outcome, a selection of just one of the possibilities to be made actual. This is a measurement event in **quantum physics**, the product of energy or propensity and the wave function, just like the product of desire and thought is the mental action.

According to Swedenborg’s ideas, the structure of mental processes and the structure of physical events should be similar. So, too, the function of mental processes and the function of physical events should be similar. Can we tell from this whether we should expect a classical world or a quantum world?

One feature of thought and mental action with which we should be familiar is time. That is, we always need time to think! Without any time gap between desiring and intending, we would be acting instinctively and impulsively. Sometimes that works but not always (at least in my experience!). Most often, there has to be some delay, even some procrastination, between having a desire and fulfilling it. That delay gives us time to deliberate and decide on the best action to select. And, most importantly, if it is we who decide when to act, we feel that we act in some freedom. It feels better.

If the physical world corresponds to those mental processes, according to Swedenborg, what hypothesis do we reach about physics? It is that there will be corresponding time gaps between the persisting energy or propensity and the selection of physical outcome. Remember that quantum objects are selected and definite only intermittently—when measured, or observed—while classical objects are continuously definite with no gaps. All this leads us to expect that physical events should not be continuous; that is, we should expect a quantum world rather than a classical world. •

*This article was the first in a series of three about Swedenborg and the quantum world. To read the rest of the series, go to [www.swedenborg.com/scholars-on-swedenborg](http://www.swedenborg.com/scholars-on-swedenborg).*

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*As a nonprofit, independent educational organization, we use donation funds to inform and inspire the world about Swedenborg's spiritually uplifting perspectives on this life and the life hereafter.*

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