

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG—SERVANT OF THE LORD

Rev. B. David Holm

Emanuel Swedenborg was born on January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. That was two hundred and ninety years ago. Every year on January 29th, we who belong to the New Church, like to celebrate Emanuel Swedenborg's birthday. Do you know why we like to do this? Because Swedenborg was a faithful servant of the Lord. This means he did special work for the Lord. Do you know what this work was? He wrote many books for the Lord.

You see, the Lord had many new teachings to give to the world, but He needed a man who could write down the teachings. The Lord chose Emanuel Swedenborg to do this. First, the Lord had to get Swedenborg ready to do this great work. To do this, the Lord gave Swedenborg a mind that loved to learn many different things. All his life Swedenborg loved to learn. He studied science, the universe and the human body. He learned a great deal.

But Swedenborg especially loved to learn from the Lord's Word. When he was about 55 years old, the Lord appeared to him and told him to use all of his time to study the Word. As Swedenborg read and thought about the Word, some wonderful things happened. His spiritual eyes were opened and he could see into the spiritual world and talk to spirits and angels there. Another wonderful thing happened. As he read and studied the Word, the Lord showed him deeper meanings in the Word—the internal meaning of the Word.

The Lord commanded Swedenborg to write down all that he learned about the Word. You can picture Swedenborg sitting at his desk reading the Word, thinking hard about what he had read and then writing down all the new things that the Lord told him. This means the books Swedenborg wrote were really from the Lord.

Swedenborg wrote many of these books in his summerhouse, which was a little outdoor room at the end of his yard at the back of his house. In this little one—room house was a desk and a few chairs and a little organ that Swedenborg liked to play. You can think of Swedenborg sitting at his desk there reading the Word and writing the Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church.

Remember that these books that the Lord wrote through Swedenborg are what make the New Church truly NEW and make our church different from all other churches. For these wonderful books teach us many things about who the Lord is, the difference between what is right and what is wrong, and also many things about heaven and what kind of life we will live there.

This is why we honor Swedenborg on his birthday. Yes, we like to honor Emanuel Swedenborg—the servant of the Lord.