



The other parable is even closer to home, in which a man is in need of bread for a visiting friend, and at midnight he goes to another friend's house and finds it shut with everyone in bed. He knocks, and his friend tells him he can't now get up and give help. But the man persists and eventually the friend gives him the three loaves for his impudence. (Luke 11.5-13)

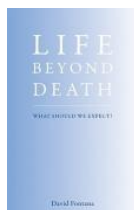
Notice the human need in both of these parables: one person is a widow with no husband; the other is a man needing to give food to another person which he doesn't have himself. They picture our sense of lacking understanding very well, and they bring out the point that God wants us to understand the life we are in by being insistent and then being provided for.

There is another area which Swedenborg is forever reminding us, which is that we come into further understanding and in fact we keep it in place by being involved in life, by being useful and by living what we know and believe. That is to bring our understanding to bear on our will, to give it light, to give it the support in the pas de deux, so that we stay mindful of God and live from him.

BOOK REVIEW

LIFE BEYOND DEATH: WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT?

By David Fontana
ISBN: 1906787085



This book, written by a British transpersonal psychologist with 40 years' experience in exploring the topic, has been commended by the UK Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies. It contains a printed recommendation by David Lorimer, formerly President of the UK Swedenborg Society, and Programme Director of the UK Scientific and Medical Network. I also received from him a personal email commending the book.

The book contains about 175 references to recent and current survival research, and allied matters. It covers such topics as near death and actual death, in particular near-death experiences; sudden death, and states

of mind. It classifies and describes seven post-mortem stages, viz: earth-bound spirits; Hades conditions (note: Hades does not mean Hell here); the plane of illusion; the plane of colour, or Summerland; then the three Formless Realms. There is only one brief reference to Swedenborg, and the only work of Swedenborg listed in the references is "Heaven and Hell".

However, the author's studies agree with Swedenborg's teachings that there are varieties of heavens and hells, depending on "ruling loves", and that God sends no-one to Hell. Rather, individuals just gravitate to their appropriate spheres because of their ruling inner natures. There is also ample confirmation of Swedenborg's emphatic repudiation of a simplistic "by faith alone". Our deeds (and their motivation) do matter.

There is also a balanced discussion on Reincarnation (with arguments pro and con clearly set forth).

Notwithstanding its omission of Swedenborg's colossal contribution to the topic, the book is a valuable coverage of this vitally important but widely overlooked subject, and I wholeheartedly commend and endorse David Lorimer's enthusiastic assessment.

Geoff Forster

Belief in God comes into man by the front door, that is, from the soul into the higher regions of the understanding. But knowledge about God comes in by the back door, because it is absorbed by the understanding from the revelation of the Word by means of the bodily senses. The two parts leading in meet in the midst of the understanding; there, natural belief, which is merely a strongly held opinion, becomes spiritual, that is to say, a real acknowledgement. So the human understanding is like an exchange where currencies are changed.

True Christian Religion (Chadwick) 11:3

1) wheat 2) short 3) M 4) your age