



**Young Adult's Weekend** See article on page 15

**Spiritual Wisdom**

There is a universal spirituality which can be expressed in many ways. This site uses the insights of the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg to help explain the meaning of our lives.

These words of wisdom add to the ancient wisdom of the world and are in harmony with many spiritual insights of the new age.

Click on any of the rainbow headings to discover more exciting spiritual wisdom to help make sense of your life and to support your personal spiritual growth.

Click to review the key Spiritual Principles underlying the content of this site: [Spiritual Principles](#)

Visit:  
[www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk](http://www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk)

## Lifeline

Contributions should be sent to the Editor, Alan Misson  
 27 Woodland Way, Shirley, Croydon, CR0 7UB Tel: 020 8777 5098  
 Email: [alanmisson@btinternet.com](mailto:alanmisson@btinternet.com)

Lifeline is published on the 2nd Sunday of the month by the General Conference of the New Church. Articles and notices should reach the editor by the end of the second week of the month prior to publication.

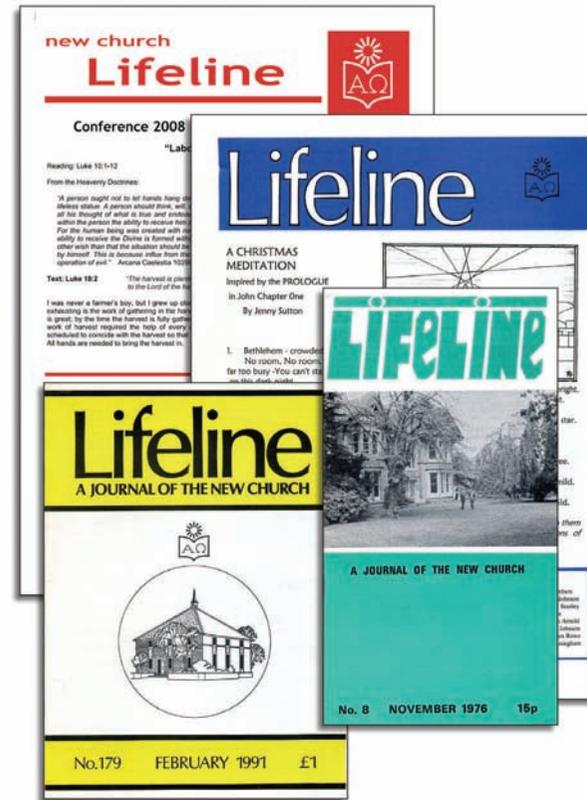
ISSN 0308-3624

new church

# Lifeline



## Welcome to your new style Lifeline



For the fifth time in its history, Lifeline has undergone a style revision and is now back in the A5 format it was between January 1980 and March 1992.

However due to massive technological changes it is now possible to produce Lifeline with full colour on the front and back of the magazine at a cost effective price. It has also been possible to plan to publish Lifeline 12 times a year.

I hope you enjoy this new format and if you want to see your photographs of events in full colour on the back or front please send them to me with your text.

**Editor**

**April 2009**  
 Number 372

**Our mission is to express, share and experience with others in life an inclusive, non-judgmental vision of God's kingdom.**

## Everything changes ...

I suspect that few of us have any idea how the date of Easter is fixed. It's certainly a complex formula, linked Biblically with the Jewish Passover festival. The Passover moves about the calendar because the Jews use lunar months for their calculations. These months are alternately 29 and 30 days long, so an additional 13<sup>th</sup> month has to be added at varying intervals (7 times in 19 years) to keep the solar year and the Hebrew calendar in line with each other. The Passover takes place on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first Hebrew month of Nisan, falling on any day of the week, and the idiosyncrasies of their calendar mean that Passover is celebrated at quite different times, often well away from Easter. In 2008 it fell on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

It was in AD 325 that the Council of Nicaea fixed Easter Day as a Sunday, the day that Jesus rose, the Sunday after the full moon on or after the vernal equinox on 21<sup>st</sup> March. The full moon after the equinox can be up to 29 days later, and the Sunday after that as much as a further 6 days later still. So Easter can fall as early as 22<sup>nd</sup>.

You might ask, what have all these complicated formulae got to do with the commemoration of Easter? Essentially, I would say, not a lot! There is something quaint and charming about a festival that falls at different times. And maybe there's something to be said for irregularity, and an unwillingness to yield to secular and commercial demands and requirements. But, in essence, the

## Contents

Welcome to your new style Lifeline	1	Centenary Appeal - Southern Africa	13
Everything changes ...	2	From the Writings ...	14
United Search for Divine Providence - 6	4	Notice - Council Recorder	14
The Resurrection	8	Young Adult's Weekend	15
The Upper Room - 14	12		

For the current issue of Lifeline, back issues and other resources visit:

[www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk](http://www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk)

## Young Adult's Weekend

At the end of January the Young Adult's Weekend met for a weekend of learning, sharing and discussion. The theme of our weekend was *The 10 Commandments; Divine Demands or God's Guidance?* How do we make the 10 Commandments relevant to our daily lives and how do we interpret them as positive actions to enrich our spiritual life?

The underlying thread of our exploration of the commandments was 'unpeeling the layers of an onion'; in addition to the commandment's literal meaning we explored how the New Church teachings also provide inner layers of meaning. We identified the things in our lives which can become 'false idols' that we inadvertently worship – things like material possessions, but also emotional insecurities and fear. We looked at how focussing instead on constructive and caring thoughts and actions is how we truly worship the Lord as our one God. We then tried to identify the positive instructions within the commandments not to murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness and covet. We explored how we could interpret them as invitations to act and think in a way which would ultimately lead us to a heavenly state.

After an evening of fun & games (involving tights, oranges, spinning plates, jelly babies & flour...) and a very late night for a good number of us (!) we reconvened on Sunday morning to look, rather appropriately, at the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, as well as the commandment to honour father & mother. We finished on Sunday with another of Anne's delicious meals - a standard we enjoyed throughout the weekend (the biscuits at break times were especially appreciated!) - and we left feeling that we had shared an enjoyable & thought provoking weekend.

Our thanks go to our leader, Clifford Curry, for the time & effort he put into preparing & leading our sessions (along with very good powerpoint slides!) and to Anne & David & team for their welcoming hospitality.

**Helen Curry**

### The Ten Commandments

The commandments of love to the Lord are the first three, and the commandments of love towards the neighbour are the last six; and the fourth commandment, which is "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the mediating commandment, for in it "father" means the Father in the heavens, and "mother" means the church, which is the neighbour. AE1026:3

## From the Writings ...

It should be remembered that with everyone there is that which is internal and that which is external, called his internal man and external man; that when a person is being regenerated he is being regenerated as to both the internal and the external; and that regeneration is the joining together of good and truth in both.

A similar process took place in the Lord's Human. Yet it cannot be said that His Human was regenerated, only that it was glorified, because what was inmost in Him, which in a person is called the soul from the father, was Divinity itself; for He was conceived from Jehovah. Divinity itself is the Divine Good of Divine Love. And since the Lord united His Human to this and thereby also made Divine His Human, it cannot be said that His Human was regenerated, only that it was glorified; for glorifying means making Divine, see immediately below in 10053. The glorification of His internal man, that is, of His internal Human, is what the representative signs associated with the burnt offerings of rams and of lambs serve to describe.

### **Arcana Caelestia 10052:2**

### Assistant to the Chief Executive Council Recorder

Invitations are invited for the voluntary role of Council Recorder to succeed Mrs Noreen Simpson who is retiring after several years' service. The duties include attending all meetings of the Council to take and subsequently circulate the minutes.

Applications including a CV and covering letter should be sent to:

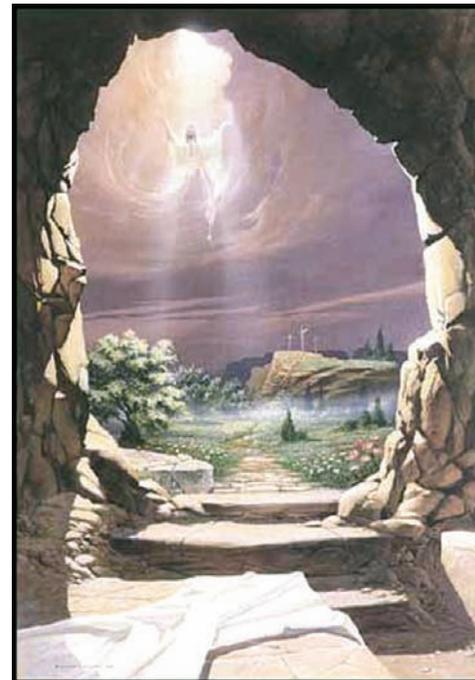
**Mr Michael Hindley**, Chief Executive, 59 Campernell Close, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0TB.

If you would like an informal chat before applying please telephone him on 01206 303800, or Mr David Sharrock on 01254 589674, or Mr Ernest Baxendale on 01590 643395.

meaning of Easter, and the days leading up to the Day of Resurrection, are above and beyond earthbound time.

Both Christmas and Easter pose precise questions for us, believers or unbelievers. If we are Christians we need to be secure in our minds about what we believe. For people who discount the possibility of a spiritual degree to life and the existence of a Deity, the festivals require them once again to affirm that life is essentially pointless, just the result of a random chemical reaction which led to animal life as we know it. Christians have to sort out in their own minds about the nature of Jesus Christ. Some would discount the virgin birth, leaving Jesus as a remarkable human being. But that conclusion leaves out the whole issue of redemption and likewise His resurrection, which some Christians apparently doubt. But take away the resurrection, and the underlying purpose of Jesus' life and work is lost.

These are times when I rejoice and give thanks for the teachings about the Lord revealed in the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church. This teaching is at the heart of everything. When we come to understand that it was the Divine Himself who took on our humanity as Jesus Christ in order that He might experience life at this ultimate, natural level; and when we grasp that it was through the frailties He inherited from Mary that He was able to bring the spiritual world back into a true order, then we are coming close a true perception of the nature of our Heavenly Father.



It was Love that came down at Christmas, it was Love that overcame every temptation and so redeemed the human race. And it is Love that is available to every human being now in our Saviour God

Everything does change around us but the Love of our Saviour remains constant and everlasting.

**Rev Bruce Jarvis**

# United Search for Divine Providence

## Session 6



**Every person must be free to choose, to believe and to do what his heart desires and his understanding sees.**

### **The 3rd Law of Divine Providence -**

**No one should be compelled by force to think, to will or believe and do the things of religion, but should persuade himself to do them and to love them. (DP 129-153)**

Let us begin this Session by reading Luke 4:16-22. Sit in silence for a few minutes and think about those 'gracious words': *To heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives.* These words sum up the whole purpose of the Lord's Providence, because we are often broken-hearted and captive in many ways when we are deprived of true freedom. We need to look to the Lord who truly is our Redeemer, yet in a strangely unobtrusive way.

Many religions feel the need to compel their followers to ritual actions, endless repetitions, and to uniformity. This gives the movement apparent strength - but is it the strength of free people? The Lord's relationship with each one of us is very different, and He increases our freedom of thought, love and action. The Lord never seeks to be our Dictator; on the contrary, from our childhood He has filled our minds with many dreams of hidden potentials which our heart longs to realise. Some of these (though we are unaware of it) are the dreams of heaven! But there is no uniformity in them - we all wish to develop our own inner self. In six subheadings we are warned against the practices we should recognize and avoid at all costs!

**1 We are not reformed by miracles and signs, because they compel!**  
(DP 130-133)

Can you just hear a howl of protest from those who see miracles as signs of

## Centenary Appeal - New Church of Southern Africa

The following letter was sent to Michael Hindley as Chief Executive of the General Conference of the New Church.

Dear Mr. Hindley

On behalf of the President and Council of the New Church of Southern Africa I am pleased to remind you that next year, 2009, is the centenary of our Church. It was in December 1909 that the late Rev David William Mooki found a copy of "True Christian Religion" in a second-hand bookshop in Krugersdorp and, after reading it, he informed the strong conclusion that the "New Church" type of Christianity was pre-eminently the one for African people. From that small beginning our Church has grown and spread throughout the whole of South Africa and into Basutoland and Swaziland, The General Conference in Britain giving mighty support, encouragement and guidance along the way until independence in 1970 when the late Rev Obed Mooki took over as, first General Superintendent and then President.

Our Church has not been without its challenges and difficulties but as of now we are united and purposeful under the leadership of our President, elected in 2006, Rev Henry Kalo.

Our material resources, however, are very limited. There is much we would like to do and could do but shortage of funds remains and ongoing problem for us. Of major concern for us is that we are able to resume the building programme of our college at Orlando, only Stage 1 of which has so far been erected. My Council is resolved, as its major Centenary project, that the Stage 2 is built, consisting of a library, lecture room, Principal's Office and additional toilets.

To achieve this goal we are launching a CENTENARY APPEAL, for 500,000 Rand and we would be deeply appreciative both for your support of this Appeal and, as well, your willingness to publicize it as widely as possible.

We greet you all warmly and humbly request your assistance and encouragement in this matter.

**Rev Eddie Gologolo** General Secretary

# The Upper Room

From 11th May 1974 to 1st February 1975 the Herald, the forerunner of Lifeline, published a series of fifteen Meditations by Rev Brian Kingslake using the title - The Upper Room.



Rev Brian Kingslake  
1907 - 1995

His meditations and the accompanying prayers seem as relevant today as they did over thirty years ago and are now re-published in Lifeline in the same series.

The term 'Upper Room' can be seen as representing the higher levels of our minds into which enlightenment from the Lord can flow when we seek to know the truth and wish to apply it in a life of usefulness to others. Such enlightenment involves our coming closer to the Lord just as the disciples came close to Him at the Last Supper.

---

## 14. Guardian Angels

READ Numbers 22:21-35

After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, "*angels came and ministered unto Him*" (Matthew 4: 11). So it is with us after temptation: the pendulum swings towards heaven, and equilibrium is preserved. The Scriptures contain many references to 'Guardian Angels'; e.g., Psalm 34:7 - "*The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them*". Many of us know from experience that we are so protected, the angels acting for and on behalf of the Divine Providence. (Can I pin-point some instance in my own life?) Apart from this, we can deliberately bring ourselves into association with various angelic societies, by cherishing heavenly thoughts and feelings, meditating on "*whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and commendable,*" (Phil. 4:8), and serving God and the neighbour with a loving heart. In this way we co-operate with our Guardian Angels in their work on our behalf; and in the end, if we become established in an angelic society, we shall ourselves become angels when we leave this world at death.

PRAYER Dear Lord, help me to shun all negative states of mind that attract evil spirits from hell, and so to live that my Guardian Angels can protect and guide me in all the details of my daily life. And in the end, establish me, I pray, in the holy companionship of the angels, so that I can enjoy for ever the inflow of heavenly love and wisdom, and join with them in worshipping You the heavenly Father of us all.

God's favour? But the fact remains that miracles compel us to believe without understanding. They cause confusion and even fear, since we do not know what might happen next! So it is an imposition on our mind and remains on the surface and eventually loses its hold on us. Do not place your faith in them! Indeed, the Jewish people who saw so many miracles never remained faithful to them for very long.

### 2 We are not reformed by visions or by talking to the departed! (134-135)

But why not? What could be more reassuring? The problem is that we do not know what spirits are in contact with us. They could be evil spirits, who may be able to tune into our memory and reassure us that they are relatives or friends and so begin to invade our mind and control it. In fact, their contact is not so different from miracles. Read carefully the story in Luke 16:19-31 in which parable the Lord very clearly states that even if spirits of our own kindred were to appear to us it would not really convince us: frighten us for a while, perhaps, but not deep down. The truth must come from the mouth of the Lord in His Word. And He never rushes us. He made us to be free!

### 3 We are never reformed by threats and punishments: they compel! (136-137)

Don't we know it! We resent doing anything under compulsion, and even if we convince ourselves that this is the 'right' thing to do, because the 'Church' says so, such behaviour or ritual remains on the surface and when the pressure is lifted, it is discarded. The world is full of examples of such imposed behaviour and I am sure you can think of many; but let us look at ourselves. There may be many things in our lives which are rituals or customs which we do because that is what is expected, not because they come from the heart. Let us not become slaves to such demands which can become meaningless and repetitive if our heart is not in them. But read Mark 7:1-8 or up to verse 23.

The danger of having traditions imposed on us, and then becoming a slave to them, is an ever-present threat. All great leaders seek to regiment their people and make them blindly obedient to their rule. 137 warns us about worship which can also be forced and so become gloomy and lifeless. But genuine worship comes from the heart and is felt as delightful. This is a challenge for all of us - whatever form our worship may take!

We may also add to the list the hell-fire preaching which has been very effective in the past, and still is now. If it leads to 'conversion', it is not a true conversion of the inner self, but just a person frightened for his immortal soul. One day that person will learn that this is not what God does to us!

**4 We cannot be reformed unless we are rational and are at liberty.**  
(138-144)

This is a very merciful and lovingly human section. In our life we pass through difficult periods which are outlined in this section: states of fear or misfortune, mental disorder, bodily disease, ignorance and blindness of understanding (which can be blindness through false religious teaching). How just and merciful the Lord is in treating us with such kindness or love! Far from trying to pin some terrible sin on us, He takes in every extenuating circumstance to excuse our behaviour. A very different view of God from the one which is generally held!

**5 It is not contrary to rationality and liberty to compel oneself.**  
(145-149)

This in fact is the supreme mark of our humanity. We can compel ourselves to do what is right and good, in which case it is genuine goodness because it comes from the heart and our spirit. It is the divine invitation to each one of us to be like our Creator and to do everything from love and to reach out to all. The change in us may be quite gradual as the inner self is trying to control the outer self. In all temptations this is the real battle going on.

**6 The external person must be reformed by the inner, and not the reverse.** (150-153)

This may take a little while to take in. We are not used to identifying the inner and the outer self: we just feel we are the same person throughout; but the reality is very different, and since childhood we have often had a battle between the two. It is normal to get used to the fact that the outer desires rule – unless they might bring us into trouble! But avoiding getting caught is no temptation, just a protection of the outward self. It is when the inner voice of truth points out that “This is wrong and against the 10 commandments!” that the real battles begin! The good angels against evil spirits engage in a confrontation and these are real temptations!

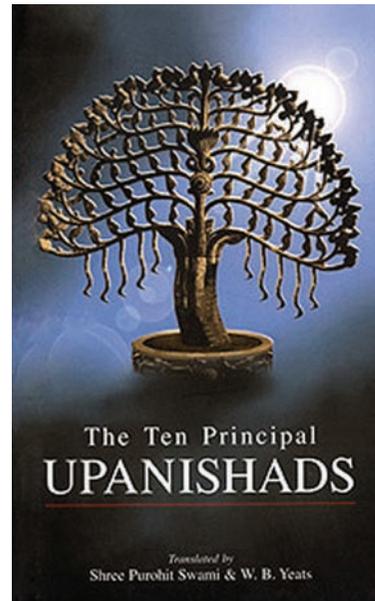
**Prayer and Reflections**

Consider in quietness how often you experience real temptations in which the Lord's Word reminds you of certain spiritual responsibilities which your outer self is trying to avoid. But how the difficulty and fear can suddenly change and you are filled with love and in the end the thing you feared, or felt you could never do, is done and you feel (literally) a new person who is full of joy. Now read two or three sections from Psalm 119:17-24, 25-32, 33-39 or any other section you chose. This Psalm in the spiritual sense describes how:

Margaret's life had been changed completely. She is now at peace. She still misses Bridget, of course, but she has come to accept her physical death, knowing that her daughter lives still, as the Lord lives. She had been through her Gethsemane and her Good Friday and had now experienced the Resurrection. Although she did not quote them, the words of the medieval mystic Mother Julian of Norwich brought to us in TS Eliot's poem 'Little Gidding', come to mind: '*And all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well...*'

It is not everyone who has had, or who will have, a mystical experience of this kind, but there is ample evidence that very many people in all walks of life have had and continue to have them. Such experiences should not be sought, but it seems to me that there is no doubt that they do occur, and more frequently than the sceptic might imagine. But for most of us there is only belief. We have the Word and, as we read again the familiar story of how the risen Lord first appeared to Mary, we can 'internalise' it, so that we too can say, '*I have seen the Lord*'.

**Richard Lines**



Whatever lives is full of the Lord.  
Claim nothing.

**Isha Upanishad \***

To enable us to accept him, he makes us feel as though this life belongs to us; but to prevent us from claiming life as our own possession and thereby undermining our ability to accept him, the Lord teaches us that every element of love that we call good and every element of wisdom that we call true comes from him.

**Divine Love and Wisdom 394**

\* The Isha Upanishad (Hindu sacred writing) is considered one of the principle Upanishads. The quotation given above, which differs quite a lot from other English translations, can be found in 'The Ten Principal Upanishads' translated by Shree Purohit Swami and W B Yeats.

Our modern scientific world finds it hard to accept the Resurrection. It is not a naturally occurring event: dead people do not simply emerge from the grave, and so the event is often described as a 'myth', but a myth so powerful that millions of men and women have believed in it for almost two thousand years. What Mary and the other followers of Jesus must have experienced was totally overwhelming, something that was completely real to them and something that got recorded in what we now know as the Gospels, as well as in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Trying to explain the Resurrection, Dr David Jenkins, who was Bishop of Durham from the early 1980s, said that it was '*an event that occurred in the minds of the disciples*'. This remark caused uproar and consternation among some traditionally minded Christians and brought Dr Jenkins a degree of notoriety as a controversial cleric that he never entirely managed to shake off. He may have expressed himself a little clumsily, but it ought to be borne in mind, as philosophers of the Idealist school (of whom the most famous was Swedenborg's contemporary the Anglican bishop George Berkeley) have long pointed out, that all our experiences of the world depend on our mental apprehension of them.

In the centuries that have followed, many Christian men and women have recorded visions of Jesus. Swedenborg tells us in his *Dream Diary* of how the Lord appeared to him while he was staying in the Dutch town of Delft in 1744. In Swedenborg's case, this experience was a forerunner of the revelation he was later to receive, the opening of his senses to the spiritual world beyond death and the commission to expound the spiritual or inner sense of the Scriptures. But I want to mention a contemporary Resurrection appearance. Until 2008 I had never heard of the distinguished social historian Professor Margaret Spufford, but I happened to be listening to a Radio 4 programme about science and religion on Maundy Thursday evening that year in which Margaret Spufford was one of the participants. She and her husband Peter had a daughter Bridget who suffered from a serious genetic disorder. They knew that she would not live long, but when she died in 1989 at the age of twenty-two Margaret Spufford says that she literally 'went to pieces'. For a period of six months from May to November that year she was in a terrible state. A committed Christian, her religion gave her no consolation. In November of that year she went on a retreat. While at the retreat she had the most dreadful nightmare. She seemed to be searching the universe for Bridget, galaxy after galaxy, and her daughter was no where. She was completely gone and, as Margaret Spufford put it, 'God was not'. Although she did not use this phrase, she may have been experiencing what the 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish mystic St John of the Cross called 'the dark night of the soul', or what Swedenborg calls a 'vastation', although the latter expression is hardly known outside the New Church. The following day she attended Eucharist in the chapel and, at the moment of the consecration of the host, she saw Bridget before her and behind Bridget the Lord holding her in his arms. She was not frightened; it was not a 'spooky' experience, she said. But it was a *real* and utterly convincing experience. Then the Eucharist proceeded as normal. But

*The Lord fulfilled the law, or the Word, from its firsts to its lasts, and therefore He was hated, and suffered temptations, and thus made the Human one with the Divine.*

Now read Luke 4:1-15. These verses describe the 3 temptations in the wilderness. Link them with the fourth section (138-144) and consider how the Lord, in His weak human, also experienced states of fear, misfortune, bodily disease and injury, possibly also of ignorance when He was not sure in His weak human if He would overcome the hells. The Psalms often speak of great darkness in which we are blind and unsure.

Christopher Hasler

This session is part of a complete course being published in Lifeline for use by individuals and groups. It is also available online as a leaflet which can be downloaded and easily printed.

To find out more go to: **[www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk](http://www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk)**

Click on Resources and then United Search for Divine Providence. You will find an Introduction and Invitation to the course and the Session notes as they become available.

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

**Luke 17:20,21**

It is evident that the Lord's Church is not in this particular location or in that, but that it resides wherever people lead lives in keeping with the commandments.

**Arcana Caelestia 8152**

## The Resurrection

The death of Jesus on the Cross has been described recently as '*one of the most certain facts of history*'. It occurred in historical time, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, in a real place, the ancient city of Jerusalem in what was then the Roman protectorate of Judaea. Psychologically too, we find it all too easy to believe. The show trial on trumped-up charges, the cowardly and cynical sentencing for political convenience of an innocent man, the cruel torturing of him and his terrible execution, are all things for which there are too many parallels in our own world. But the story of Jesus does not end with the Crucifixion. There would have been no Christian religion without the Resurrection, but it is the Resurrection that our modern world finds much harder to accept. What do we mean when we say that Jesus rose from the dead? What we do not mean is that Jesus walked out of the tomb and went on living and teaching in Jerusalem and Galilee as before until, as two of the four Gospel writers tell us, he ascended into heaven. But it seems to me to be quite clear that the disciples, the early followers of Jesus, were convinced that they had seen Jesus after his death and the four Gospels record a number of different and perhaps conflicting accounts of some of these sightings.

According to John's account, the first person to see the risen Lord was Mary of Magdala, or Mary Magdalene, as she is more familiarly known to us. All four Gospels tell us that Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb early on the Sunday morning. In Matthew Mary goes with the other Mary to look at the tomb, but in Mark and Luke she goes with other women to anoint the body with spices. In John there is no mention of other women going with Mary and it is said that, finding the tomb empty, she runs to Simon Peter and the disciple Jesus loved, presumably John, to tell them. Having investigated the matter for themselves (they noticed the grave clothes neatly folded with the burial cloth separate from the rest and John even went into the cave to satisfy himself it was empty), the two disciples went home, leaving Mary to weep alone outside the tomb. It is here that she has what we would call a vision of two angels. Then almost immediately she sees Jesus, who addresses her, but she does not recognize him until he utters her name. Mary is convinced that she has seen the Lord and, doing what he has told her, she returns to the disciples and says '*I have seen the Lord*'. Later, of course, he appears to the disciples, apparently materialising through a locked door. Then there are the other Resurrection appearances, the appearance by the Sea of Galilee mentioned in John and the appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus recorded in Luke.

Now there is something 'special' about all these appearances, although I want to concentrate on the appearance to Mary in the garden. Jesus speaks to her, but she does not immediately realise that it is Jesus and she thinks he is the

gardener. Perhaps his face was hooded, or he was bending down as a gardener does, although the Gospel writer mentions neither of these facts. Something prevents her from recognizing him at once. It is only when he calls her by her name that she recognizes him. Who was Mary Magdalene, the first person to whom the risen Lord appeared? According to the passage at the end of Mark's Gospel that may be a later interpolation, she was the woman out of whom Jesus had driven seven devils. Tradition has it that she had been a prostitute. There is nothing in any of the Gospels to support that view, although she has sometimes been identified with the (unnamed) sinful woman in chapter 7 of Luke who washes Jesus' feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair. In John's Gospel it is Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus, who pours expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair. There may be something symbolic in the fact that it was a woman to whom Jesus first appeared when he rose from the dead. Women represent love and men truth and our doctrines tell us that love comes before truth.

Jesus tells Mary not to touch her, '*Noli me tangere*' in the Latin, '*for I have not returned to the Father*'. There was clearly something 'special' about the Lord's resurrection body, but Mary is not afraid, as she might have been if she had seen a ghost, and she goes back to the disciples to tell them ecstatically '*I have seen the Lord!*'. There were many other Resurrection appearances. In chapter 15 of the First Letter to the Corinthians Paul does not mention Mary Magdalene, but he tells us that Christ appeared to Peter and then to the twelve disciples. Afterwards he appeared to '*more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time*', then to James and to all the apostles. Finally, he appeared to Paul himself in the vision he experienced on the road to Damascus.



The Appearance  
of Christ to Mary

Alexander Ivanov

1835