

All Age Gathering Theme: Spring

Saturday 24th March 10.30am to 4pm
Swedenborg Open Learning Centre
25 Radcliffe New Road, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1LE

Details of the day

You are invited to an all age day, which is for anyone between 1 and 100. The morning will start with refreshments from 10.30 a.m., with an opening service starting at 11 a.m. This will be followed by separate sessions for the children and young people and a biblical reflection, aimed at adults. There will be a shared lunch; we ask that you bring some food for everyone to share. In the afternoon, there will be fun and games for all ages and the day will end with a concluding service.

There is no cost for the day, though we ask that you make a small donation to cover the craft materials and drinks.

Please contact **Jenny Jones** for more details by telephone: 0114 257 6015 or email: oban1@talktalk.net and please confirm your attendance with Jenny by March 17th.

Lifeline

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Editor: Alan Misson,
Tel: 020 8777 5098 Email: alanmisson@btinternet.com

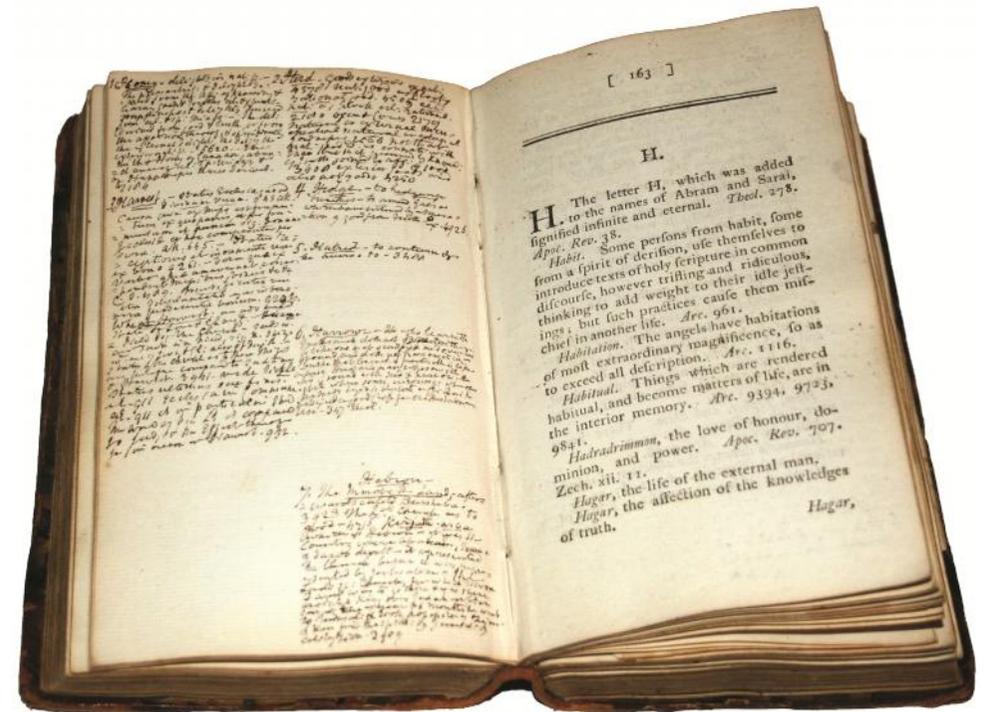
Distributor: Howard Turner,
Tel: 020 7229 9340
Email: howard.turner@generalconference.org.uk

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new church

Lifeline



A New Dictionary of Correspondences

(see page 11)

March 2012
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Our mission is to express, share and experience with others in life an inclusive, non-judgmental vision of God's kingdom.

“Rabbi, I want to see” Mark 1:51

I recently had one of those polite little notes my optician sends out when he hasn't seen me for a while, reminding me to have my eyes checked. Quite a few of us are only too well aware that we don't see too clearly and are very thankful for our specs. The world would be a very different place if someone hadn't discovered the amazing things you can do with lenses.

What we are not so often aware of in ourselves as we are in others is the way the eye of the mind can have a distorted view of things. Looking back into the past is often unknowingly done through 'rose tinted spectacles' so that the summers were better, the people friendlier, the prices more affordable! Perhaps the rose tint has to do with the good times being more memorable. The pessimist on the other hand tends to view things through dark glasses which filter out the fun and emphasise the problems.

Whilst thinking we are seeing clearly we often wear mental spectacles that colour our view of things not only in the past, but in the present and the future also. Without our realising it our spiritual state of optical health has altered the world we experience from the 'real world'. This can extend from a distorted view to a blindness that is blind to the obvious. The Apostle Paul sums this up very succinctly when he says “*for now we see through a glass darkly*”.

The fact is, however good our eyesight or clear and correct our perception, we
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For the current issue of Lifeline, back issues and other resources visit:

www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

Mr Dicks undoubtedly valued the book and kept it safe until 1918, but he seemed to have considered it was really the property of the Birmingham Society. He knew Rev Eugene Schreck well and so sent it to him with a letter, which is attached to the back cover. In it he notes what he knows of its history and says:

‘The dictionary has helped me on many occasions, but I do not often preach now and having pleasant memories of your Society, I felt that I would do myself the pleasure of sending the book back home.’

So for nearly another century its home was Birmingham, in Wretham Road and Oaklands. It now sits in my study and will shortly be delivered to the Conference Archives in Swedenborg House, where it so happens it will join another book of James Hindmarsh's, an annotated copy of Volume five of the Arcana. The Dictionary is now back where it was first conceived - or was that Keighley - at least it was published in London? Whether or not it will be at home there remains to be seen. Its real value now is not what it tells us about correspondences, but rather what we can learn about our founding fathers. They obviously had a full and comprehensive knowledge of our teachings and seemed to have a considerable understanding of their concepts from early on. Our Church, or at least our ministry, appears to have reached a state of maturity quite soon after its inception.

Patrick Johnson

Calling all Worship Leaders A weekend investigating Spiritual Geography 9-11 March 2012 Purley Chase Centre

What is spiritual geography? It's the name given by the course leader, **Alan Bowie**, to the investigation of the spiritual meaning of the nations that are present in the Biblical Middle East. The programme includes:
 Day 1: What is spiritual geography? Introduction to Biblical nations.
 Day 2: The divided kingdom; Effect of Assyria and Babylon on the divided kingdom; The Amalekites – an example of the analysis of a nation; research.
 Day 3: Research / presentation / discussion

Interested? For further details and to book a place, see the Purley Chase website or phone Purley on 01827 712370. To assist with your research you will have access to the Purley library and the Internet, so bringing your own laptop/iPad/smartphone would facilitate this.

The Vision Team is alive and well - an update

***The Lord's kingdom is nothing else but a kingdom of uses
for the good of the human race
Arcana Coelestia 3796:4***

The Vision Team comprises Rev David Gaffney, Rev Jack Dunion and Kathie Brooks (Trustee)

We have reflected on the progress of the Vision to date. It has been delightful to discover that the green shoots are beginning to develop, thanks to the many volunteers who have stepped forward where they see a need.

It is vital that these individuals become aware of the support that is available in the wider church and that connections are made and reinforced.

To this end a new web presence is being professionally designed with resources available to train individuals or groups, to avail themselves of its benefits. It will also have links to existing sites.

Sadly it has come to our notice that the ministry is having a difficult time as it debates certain issues that are very relevant in a changing society. We look forward to receiving more information as the discussions continue.

In the meantime I would like to be informed of any new and developing shoots so that I can enable links to develop sharing expertise.

Kathie Brooks

The vision continues to be:

Of a caring, healing and teaching community.

Centred on Jesus Christ

Guided by the Bible and by the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg

Networking with other spiritual movements

To mutually enhance spiritual living

Following their presentation at the 2011 Annual Meeting of Conference the team are in the process of reviewing the strategy for the implementation of the Vision as outlined on that occasion.

The strategy

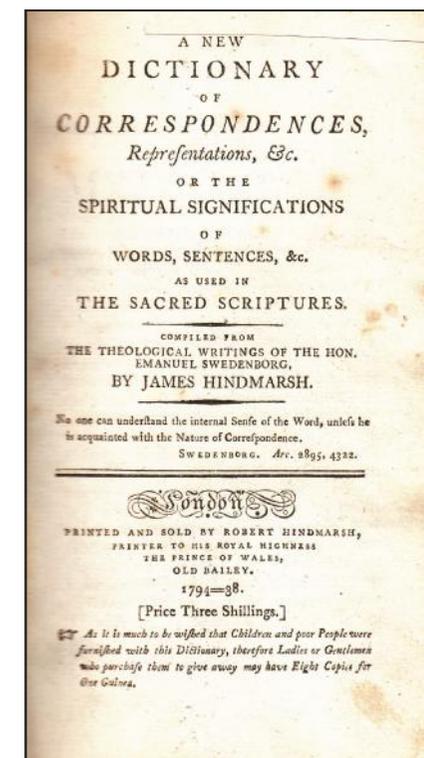
- 1. To continue to train and develop people such as experts/consultants and ordained ministers of the New Church doctrines.**

The publication date was 1794 suggesting that, relieved of preaching responsibilities, James had settled down to work on this volume, although he may have started work on it earlier. I had thought James was the first to attempt such a work, but in fact Robert had already had a go. He started his version as a serial in his early periodical The New Magazine of Knowledge but didn't get very far (only 'Aaron to am' in the first issue). So he probably welcomed his father's efforts, indeed as a printer he was able to publish James' book.

James' book has 360 pages with about 10 entries on each page (3,600 items?). I think it was the first completed attempt at such a dictionary and must have involved considerable, skilled and thoughtful work. A more extensive one was compiled by George Nicholson in 1800. This was later abridged and further revised and published by the Massachusetts New Church Union, which often revised version is still in current use and has 5,400 entries. There is little reason to think that Hindmarsh was necessarily less thorough than Nicholson. In 1794 Apocalypse Explained and The Spiritual Diary had not been translated and Hindmarsh does not include any references to them, which Nicholson does. Comparing the texts I did not feel Hindmarsh missed many important concepts and Nicholson acknowledges the value of Hindmarsh's work. So he was obviously more than a simple worship leader and his scholarship has been of permanent use. This would please him; as we read at the conclusion of his introduction:

May this little labour of love prove useful to the rising generation!- to adult persons of every description! – to ministers and congregations! – to all who read the holy scriptures, and desire to make them the rule of their life!

The book is a rarity, I only know of one other copy which is in the possession of the Swedenborg Society. If you should have a copy, hang on to it or place it in safe keeping – the Library and Archives Committee would not object to having two copies. It has been superseded by the later Dictionary, but is still of historical interest.



James did not at this point take over the leadership, the initiative for further moves such as forming a national General Conference remaining with Robert. James nevertheless took on ministerial duties, probably taking most of the services. He took on responsibility for conducting the sacraments and in the five years we worshipped at Great East Cheap conducted 251 baptisms of children and adults. As other men felt called to ministry he performed the ordination services, practically all regular New Church ministers in Britain, and its field of missionary work in Europe, Africa, and Australasia, can trace their ordination back to him; a possible exception being Robert of course. He also took part in the first and succeeding General Conferences.

As readers probably know, the Great East Cheap Society split up after five years. A minority led by Robert Hindmarsh wished to introduce distinctive and progressive elements into worship, stressing they were the 'New Church' and condemning the teachings of the 'Old Church'. The majority however felt this was going too far, at least at present, and so seceded appointing Manoah Sibly as their minister. The small minority left were no longer able to maintain worship and dropped the lease of the Great East Cheap chapel. They called the Fifth General Conference at which James was elected President, but it was overshadowed by the better attended rival conference held in Birmingham.

So in 1793 James Hindmarsh was now 63 or 64 and perhaps felt ready for retirement and, I assume, he was a widower. As it happened his daughter had married William Illingworth one of the founding members of the early New Church in Keighley and he decided to move to Yorkshire to be with her. So he moved away from the centre of gravity of the growing New Church. He did serve as Keighley's minister for two years, but was superseded by the Yorkshireman Joseph Wright, who he had ordained at the second General Conference in 1790. It seems he lived for nineteen years in Keighley but, as far as I was aware, nothing more of him was noted in our records. [James Hindmarsh was living at Cabbage Croft, Keighley, when he died on 18th August 1812. He was buried two days later - Editor]. Although our senior minister, the short part he played in our history seemed to have been limited to a largely formal role. Or so I thought until recently, when a little leather bound octavo book came into my hands.

Readers may know that the Birmingham New Church had recently to close and as a result its library was dispersed. Norman Ryder was asked to sort through the books and set aside any of particular value. They were brought to the Historical Society's Get Together at Purley Chase in October and the members of the Conference Library and Archives Committee present chose a number for safe keeping. It fell to my lot to transport them to London. There were several rare, but not unique volumes, but Norman had marked one as being of outstanding interest. This book, the title page said, was:

A New Dictionary of CORRESPONDENCES
... compiled by James Hindmarsh

SOLCe continues to have the responsibility for the training of ministers and is developing links with CAM in order to share expertise, experience and resources. A member of the Vision Team (Kathie Brooks) attends CAM meetings and is confident that the liaison is working cooperatively.

2. To continue to train lay people to teach and to minister to each other and to share their faith.

The CAM team includes two representatives of the ministry (Rev David Lomax and Rev Christine Bank) and Kathie Brooks who are able to collaborate in the continued development of this strategy.

3. To empower people to discover and respond to their call to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. To help to give people meaning in life and a sense of the Divine. To help people to develop their full potential by being the person the Lord intends them to be.

Our ordained ministry has evolved to include a variety of styles and strengths within its body. The church community benefits from the variety and also from the workshops held at Purley Chase led by a variety of spiritual leaders.

4. To enable an ethos to develop where:-

People are empowered to withdraw from aspects of church life that are draining their spirit and joy, and to help them to move on to other ways of experiencing God.

Where church communities have indicated that certain areas of church life have become a burden, CAM is supporting them to let go of these areas, overcome feelings of guilt and move forwards.

The Worship Leaders' Weekends have included informal discussions on opportunities for worshipping in small congregations. Following this CAM is providing training for working with groups. SOLCe is willing to support such training.

People are empowered to develop their enthusiasm for the Lord's Word in non-traditional ways.

There seems to be emerging new growth area springing up from within our church, driven mainly by Jenny and Steve Jones and Chris Chambers, but also others who are now becoming more involved. This growth area is particularly centred on family activities and seems to have the greater potential to bring in younger people. This area can only grow at a pace in which resources and willing contributors will allow. The energy being created around this area may be having a knock on effect regarding activities such as Summer Camps and the Easter Rally; hopefully this will become more evident over time.

Another development comes through an initiative from Andrew Leather who encourages young people, after they become too old for Summer Camp, to return as helpers to one of the schools. This has produced one helper so far

with another about to make the transition. Others are also voicing their interest. There are more “All age days” planned and the idea is working its way south, with one being held at Kensington at Christmas. Bournemouth is the venue for the next one.

Another couple of the grandparent generation has agreed to help with the Young Families’ event in June. It is hoped that the new web presence will create the opportunity for each group to forge closer ties and begin communicating on various issues

The Vision Team would like to be informed of any more developments.

5. To facilitate the work of new needs-led developments by fostering connections through a new web presence.

Rev Jack Dunion consulted with Tom Evans and with Cathy Mahmood regarding a design brief for the new web presence.

The Council had agreed to support the venture and the work progressed. Cathy is working alongside the design company and the progress is being reviewed by the team. Skype meetings are held with Cathy and the Vision Team as the work progresses. Jack is managing the process and Dave Gaffney maintains an interest. Rev Jack Dunion has asked that any comments on this should be sent to him. He would also like a list of people willing to contribute to the site.

A progress report was approved by the Council at their November meeting.

6. The central organisation will facilitate this new “needs-led” ethos and will comprise a group of elected volunteers who will support the strategy whilst ensuring that the growth of the church is in line with New Church teachings, with consideration for the appropriate legislation.

The Vision Team would like some feedback from the volunteers as they perform their new roles. Their views could impact on the composition of any new central body.

Links have been created between the volunteers and the Council. It is essential that the team receives feedback on the success of these links.

The Company Secretary is in the process of leading the council in its aim to reduce the number of rules that are no longer relevant to the 21st century church community.

7. The strategy will be monitored and reviewed and a report made annually at Conference.

This paper is being communicated to the ministry, the volunteers, the Council and worship leaders.

Please let us know of any successes that are supporting our strategy.

Are the volunteers finding their roles workable? Are the links working effectively? Can you offer any help or support to our strategy?

We have shrunk to a team of 3 and would be grateful for any advice/ help.

The First New Church Minister

Who was the first New Church Minister ?

The name that everyone knows and currently stands at the head of the list of Ordained Ministers is Robert Hindmarsh. He is undoubtedly worthy of such a position, but his name only came to be placed at the head of the role in 1818, some thirty years after the formation of our Church. Robert Hindmarsh can be said to have launched the idea of a New Church denomination, but he did so as a layman and did not take up a ministerial role until about 1812 and did not receive formal ordination until 1818. Technically his father James Hindmarsh, who first officiated as a priest at Great East Cheap, our first place of worship, also has an equal claim to be our first minister.

Robert Hindmarsh first came across Swedenborg’s writings in 1782 and the following year formed the ‘Theosophical Society’ in London to study, translate and publish the writings. This was a considerable success, but Hindmarsh felt they should go further and form a church, a separate denomination. Several of the Theosophical Society members shared his belief and in 1787 the first public worship took place. This was in a private home and such services continued while a search took place for a place of worship to hire.

A chapel in Great East Cheap became available for hire in 1788 and the group then decided they needed a regular minister to take services there. It so happened that Robert’s father James had been ‘commissioned’ as a local and/or itinerant preacher by John Wesley, to serve in the blossoming Methodist organisation. (Wesley did not actually ‘ordain’ his preachers until 1784 causing a serious rift with the Anglican Church). James Hindmarsh had been persuaded to accept Swedenborg’s teachings and had become a regular and accepted member of the group, so it seemed convenient and orderly to appoint him to the post.

Robert was the moving spirit behind the group and one may wonder why he was not chosen, but he was only twenty nine at the time and may have felt unsuitable, or have been considered so. On the other hand James was fifty nine, and had several years of ministerial experience.

So James Hindmarsh became our first minister. He was ordained by a ceremony in which twelve members, chosen by lot to represent the Church, placed their hands on his head. Interestingly Robert was one of the twelve and was appointed to conduct the service, which factor was later, in 1818, reckoned as being the equivalent of ordination.

Prayer

Dear Lord

Thank you for my body which allows me to see the beauty around me, to hear and speak your truth, to touch and be touched with love and to be of service with you in creating a better world.

Thank you for my thoughts and feelings which help me to understand and feel what is real and true in my life.

Thank you for my spirit, my direct connection with you, where I experience heavenly joy, compassion and peace. Keep my heart and mind open to your love in all that I think, say and do.

Five Essentials - Aspects of Loving - a focus for the Church
4th Essential: Part 2: Loving ourselves - caring for ourselves
Published by The General Conference of the New Church.
Downloadable from www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

The laws which the Lord delivered to the children of Israel and commanded them to keep were divided into commandments, judgements, and statutes. The term 'commandments' was given to those which were laws of life, 'judgements' to those which were laws of the civic state, and 'statutes' to those which were laws of worship. As regards judgements specifically, they are the kinds of laws that are contained in the present chapter and also some that follow. They served as laws in a Church in which inner realities, those of heaven and of the Church, were represented by outward things; but they do not serve as laws in a Church in which inner realities are no longer represented by outward things, as in the Christian Church. The reason for this is that inner realities have been revealed to people of this Church, and therefore inner realities are the channel through which contact is made with heaven, not outward things, as had been the situation before the Christian Church. Here is the reason why members of the Christian Church are not bound to adhere to the outward requirements of the laws called judgements and statutes, only to the inward ones. Holiness still remains within them because they hold holy truths within them, as also does every single command in the Word regarding the sacrifices. Although these are no longer prescriptive laws they remain holy constituents of the Word because of the Divine realities which they hold within themselves and which they represented. For when they are read by a Christian the Divine realities which are held within them and which were represented by them are discerned in heaven. They fill the angels with holiness, and at the same time the reader too through influx from the angels, especially if the reader himself is thinking at the same time about the Divine realities within them. From this it is evident that even the Old Testament Word is extremely holy.

Arcana Caelestia 8972:2 [referring to Exodus 21]

4th Essential: Part 2 - Loving ourselves - caring for ourselves

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-39

Beryl is a stalwart of her local church and well known by her neighbours as someone who is always busy caring for others. She has her own family commitments and she is the church secretary and on all the church rotas. She is an important part of the pastoral team and visits the sick and elderly several times a week. At the end of each day Beryl collapses into bed exhausted and finds that her mind is so busy with all she must do that she cannot fall asleep.

Do you recognise Beryl? Our faith exhorts us to serve others and we valiantly push ourselves to keep giving of our time and effort. Our Lord tells us to love our neighbour as our self. What does this mean to you? It is possible to serve others at the expense of our own needs so that our body and inner spirit becomes depleted. How do we know when we have the balance right? Sometimes it is helpful to stop and reflect upon our motivations for what we are doing; are these heavenly ones, bringing us closer to the Lord? Another approach is to ask ourselves how we feel about what we do? If we are doing something from a willing heart and a wise mind then we will take delight in it because our spirit, mind and body are all aligned and at one. So how do we care for ourselves physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually?

Body

With those in whom celestial and spiritual love reigns, good from the Lord flows in by way of the soul into the body, as a consequence of which the body becomes full of light.

Arcana Caelestia 2973:5

The Lord's life flows into our soul and if we are open to his love and wisdom, it flows into our physical body. This enables us to serve others in so many wonderful ways. How easy it is for us to take our bodies for granted though. Often it is only when we get ill or age starts to take its toll that we appreciate just what an amazing body we have been gifted with. We can show our gratitude and recognition of our body as this vital gift from the Lord by eating healthily, resting and exercising it appropriately.

Our body is not a separate entity but closely connected to our thoughts, feelings and spirit. If we learn to pay attention to it, then it can become a teacher of our deeper psychological states within, which may be calling out for our attention. For example, when we are tense and stressed this will often transfer itself to stiff shoulder and neck muscles. Our physical body may be signalling to us that inner reflection and healing needs to take place. For some, activities such as circle dancing, yoga, Tai Chi etc. help to rebalance us and connect body, mind and spirit. Others may prefer more traditional physical activities such as gardening, walking in the countryside, being creative with our hands or just allowing our bodies to soak up the sunshine and feeling the Lord's loving life energising all the cells of our body. And of course, any form of physical activity done in service and from a loving intention is connecting and enlivening as the quote from AC2973:5 above so beautifully describes.

Psychologically

We need to provide food and clothing for our bodies. This is a first and primary goal. But we do this so that we may have sound minds in sound bodies. We need to provide food for the mind as well, such things as relate to intelligence and wisdom, so that our minds may be in a state to serve God. If we do these things, we provide for our own good to eternity. We must provide for ourselves, yet not for ourselves. AC 6936-7

We are told again and again in the Word how much the Lord loves us. How easy is it for you to tell yourself you are loveable? We may have been brought up to think that this will make us proud, or self-centred or that it goes against the church's teaching about our hereditary evils. We are loveable, we have been created to be a channel for the Lord's love to eternity and when we are able to recognise this angelic self and love it for the goodness it brings to the world, then we are better able to love others. It may be that some of our ideas and judgements about ourselves are now ready to be replaced by a more accepting approach to who we are, a mix of human weaknesses and Divinely inspired goodness and truth. It can be a real challenge to accept the whole of ourselves with love but who are we not to when the Lord does?

Our mind also needs to rest. If we allow it, our brain never switches off, we have a constant 'cocktail party chatter' going on inside our head which is tiring and does not allow the Lord to speak to us. Contemplative prayer and meditation are spiritual practices which enable our minds to be quiet so that we can hear the Lord's voice. What other activities help your mind to relax? Swedenborg describes how angels in heaven have relaxation time, to enjoy in a delightful way their heavenly companions, to laugh and to relax from their 'work'. How much more do we need this in our human state?

Emotionally

We know that the repression of strong emotions like anger can lead to illness such as depression. Our emotions can sweep us up in feelings of anger, loathing, loneliness or on the contrary, feelings of deep joy, excitement and thankfulness. Sometimes the power of our emotions is frightening to us and we try to repress these feelings in the hopes that they will go away. Rather than always being swept up by our feelings or repressing them, we can learn to get in touch with them by observing them in a more detached way. This can be the start of caring for our emotional self. By acknowledging our feelings in a non-judgmental way, recognising the source of them as either the hells latching on to our ego's sense of separateness or from our connection to the Lord and the heavens, then we are in a healthier place to acknowledge in true humility, the Lord working in our lives. We are able to let go and allow the Lord to heal us of emotional pain.



Spiritually

Our love for ourselves and our love for the world are, by creation, heavenly loves. They are loves of the natural part of us, which serves spiritual loves as a foundation serves a house.

Divine Love and Wisdom 396

The Lord created us and loves us, so it is important that we accept and love ourselves too. The more we love ourselves as 'a child of God', the more love we have to offer others. Hildegard of Bingen, a Christian mystic, talks about us being 'co-creators with God in making a better world'. What a beautiful thought to rejoice in. This may help us to give thanks to the Lord for who we are, in all our angelic potential. Loving our angelic selves is so important that the whole of next month's session will be devoted to this.

Going within

It is really beneficial to body, mind and spirit to give ourselves some quiet time alone every day to connect with the Lord's love and wisdom. You will know what works best for you. It may be when you are out walking the dog, or reading and meditating on a few verses from the Word before you get going in the morning; anything that allows the Lord to come close.