

What Some People Have Said about Emanuel Swedenborg

Calvin Coolidge, American President

“I desire to express my deep interest in the work and life of this advanced scientist and thinker Swedenborg, who was a pioneer two hundred years ago in much of the progress and advancement in mechanical, biological, and medical science of the present day, and whose great learning and deep understanding of the mysteries of life was supplemented by the strong religious faith which has had devout followers many generations after the founder's death.”

Helen Keller, Author

“I acknowledge my profound indebtedness to Emanuel Swedenborg for a richer interpretation of the Bible, a deeper understanding of Christianity, and a precious sense of the divine presence in the world. His message has meant so much to me. It has given color and reality and unity to my thought of the life to come; it has exalted my ideas of love, truth, and usefulness; it has been my strongest incitement to overcome limitations. Swedenborg's Divine Love and Wisdom is a fountain of life I am always happy to be near.”

Dr. Carl Gustav Jung, Psychologist

“I admire Swedenborg as a great scientist and a great mystic at the same time. His life and work have always been of great interest to me, and I read about seven fat volumes of his writings when I was a medical student.”

Henry James Sr., Author

“Emanuel Swedenborg had the sanest and most far-reaching intellect this age has ever known.”

William Butler Yeats, Poet

“It was indeed Swedenborg who affirmed for the modern world, as against the abstract reasoning of the learned, the doctrine and practice of the desolate places, of shepherds and midwives, and discovered a world of spirits where there was a scenery like that of the earth, human forms, grotesque or beautiful, senses that knew pleasure and pain, marriage and war, all that could be painted upon canvas or put into stories.”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Author

“The great Swedish seer Emanuel Swedenborg has some claim to be the father of our new knowledge of supernal matters. When the first rays of the rising sun of spiritual knowledge fell upon the earth, they illuminated the greatest and highest human mind before they shed their light on lesser men. That mountain peak of mentality was this great religious reformer and clairvoyant medium....”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Poet

“Of the too limited time which my ill-health and the exigencies of the today leave in my power, I have given the larger portion to the works of Swedenborg. I remember nothing in Lord Bacon superior, few passages equal, either in depth of thought, or in richness, dignity and felicity of diction, or in the weightiness of the truths contained in these articles. I can venture to assert that as a moralist Swedenborg is above all praise; and that as a naturalist, psychologist, and theologian, he has strong and varied claims on the gratitude and admiration of the professional and philosophical world.”

Jorge Luis Borges, Author

“Of another famous Scandinavian, Charles XII, Voltaire was able to write that he was the most extraordinary person on earth. The superlative mode is an imprudence in that it implies less conviction than mere polemic; but I would apply Voltaire's characterization, not to Charles XII but to that most mysterious of his subjects, Emanuel Swedenborg.”

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), Author

“Do you know, I have come back to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions, and after reading all the works published within the last sixty years? Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomizes all the religions—or rather the one religion—of humanity.

“Men no less distinguished by their learning than by their worldly rank have publicly adopted Swedenborg's beliefs, which are indeed more consolatory than those of any other Christian communion.

“Swedenborg's creed is the only acceptable one to superior souls.”

Elizabeth Barret Browning, Poet

“To my mind the only light that has been cast on the other life is found in Swedenborg's philosophy. It explains much that was incomprehensible.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Poet (1803-1882)

“The most remarkable step in the religious history of recent ages is that made by the genius of Swedenborg.

“One of the mastodons of literature, he is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars. His stalwart presence would flutter the gowns of a university. Our books are false by being fragmentary...but Swedenborg is systematic and respectful of the world in every sentence. All the means are orderly given; his faculties work with astronomic punctuality, and this admirable writing is pure from all pertness or egotism. “His writings would be a sufficient library to a lonely and athletic student....”

Thomas Carlyle, Clergyman

“Swedenborg was a man of great and indisputable cultivation, strong mathematical intellect, and the most pious, seraphic turn of mind; a man beautiful, lovable and tragical to me. More truths are confessed in his writings than in those of any other man. One of the loftiest minds in the realm of mind. One of the spiritual suns that will shine brighter as the years go on.”

Walter M. Horton, Professor of Philosophy of Christianity (Oberlin College)

“In the age of 'one-eyed' reason, as it has been called, Swedenborg was among the very few who kept both eyes open, the eye of the soul and the eye of the senses. By sheer devotion to scientific research, he discovered the limitations of science two centuries before Einstein and Eddington; but unlike many prophets of the soul, he never disparaged reason in the name of faith, or nature in the name of grace. For him, the material and spiritual universes were joined together by multiple correspondences, and an unbroken chain of discrete degrees.”

Hiram Powers, American Sculptor

“Swedenborg is my author. All other writers (in comparison) seem moving in the dark with tapers in hand, groping their way, while he moves in the broad daylight of the sun.”