

# ONCE IN SWEDENBORG'S GARDEN

A Play by Eva S. Henderson

Parts: Swedenborg  
2 Angels (First Angel, Second Angel)  
2 Evil Spirits (First Spirit, Second Spirit)  
Gardener  
Gardener's Wife

## PART I

(Swedenborg sits outside his summerhouse meditating.  
Two angels appear. Swedenborg, looking up, rises and bows.)

**First Angel:**

What news from the earth?

**Swedenborg:**

The news is that the Lord has revealed mysteries, which in excellence surpass all the mysteries revealed from the beginning of the church even to the present time.

**Second Angel:**

What are they?

**Swedenborg:**

They are the following: That in each and in all things in the Word, there is a spiritual sense corresponding to the natural sense.

**Second Angel:**

Did not the inhabitants of the earth know about correspondence before this?

**Swedenborg:**

Nothing whatever—not since the time of Job. But now it is disclosed by the Lord in order that a conjunction of the men of the church with the Lord and then affiliation with angels may be affected, and this is done by means of the Word.

**First Angel:**

We rejoice exceedingly that it has pleased the Lord to reveal this great mystery, so deeply hidden for thousands of years.

**Swedenborg:**

It has also pleased the Lord at this time to make a revelation

**Second Angel:**

What about the life after death? Does not everyone know that man lives after death?

**Swedenborg:**

They know it and they do not know it. They think that man's spirit is like wind or ether, and that man does not live as a man until after the day of the Last Judgment.

**First Angel:**

How is this? Does not everyone know that man lives a man after death, with the sole difference that he then lives a substantial man and not a material man as before, and that men know no difference except that they are in a more perfect state?

**Second Angel:**

We would like to converse further with you on this subject, but we perceive that as the purpose for which we were permitted by the Lord to come to you has been fulfilled, we must now return to our society.

**The Angels:** (Raising their heads)

Peace.

**Swedenborg:** (Bowling)

Peace.

(The Angels depart.)

## PART II

(Two evil spirits ascend from the lower regions.)

**First Spirit:** (Rushing on to the stage, shakes his fist and shouts angrily)

Are you the man who wishes to seduce the world by establishing a New Church, which you understand by the 'New Jerusalem' which is to come down out of heaven from God? And by teaching that the Lord will grant to those who embrace the doctrinals of that church, love truly conjugal, the delights and felicity of which you exalt even to heaven? But tell me in brief what are the doctrinals of the New Church? and I will see whether they agree or disagree.

**Swedenborg:**

The doctrinals of the church which is meant by the 'New Jerusalem' are these:

- 1) That there is one God in whom is the Divine Trinity, and that He is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) That saving faith is to believe in Him.
- 3) That evils are to be shunned because they are of the devil and from the devil.
- 4) That good actions are to be done because they are of God and from God.
- 5) That these are to be done by man as of himself, but that it is to be believed that they are from the Lord with him, and through him.

**Second Spirit:**

How is it that your Lord revealed these mysteries you have just been talking about: to you who are a layman, and not to some one of the clergy?

**Swedenborg:**

Such is the good pleasure of the Lord who prepared me for this office from my early youth. Nevertheless, I will ask you a question in return. Why did the Lord, when in the world, choose fishermen for his disciples, instead of some of the lawyers, scribes, priests, or rabbis?

(The spirits murmur among themselves, and then becoming silent they draw away.)

## PART III

(Swedenborg walks slowly into his summerhouse, sits down by his table and starts writing.)

(The gardener and his wife appear.)

**Wife:** (Talking in low tone)

The assessor is working again, I wonder if he has had another vision.

**Gardener:**

Are you sure he is really seeing angels and spirits and talks with them. Don't you think he just imagines it?

**Wife:**

No, indeed no, I know the Lord opens his eyes, the assessor told me so himself once. He told me that we live in the life after this just as we do here.

**Gardener:**

Yes, I know, he told me that too, but I think it is hard to believe. We have never heard of anything like this before.

**Wife:**

No that's it. It's all so new, but it is so wonderful. I really believe it must be true. The assessor would never tell us anything that wasn't right.

**Gardener:**

Yes, yes, that's so. We must thank the Lord who has let this man learn and tell us so many wonderful things

**Wife:**

But come; let's not disturb him now. Perhaps he is writing something else Wonderful about heaven.

(They walk away as the curtain closes.)