

WIPING AWAY TEARS

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Lessons: Isaiah 25:6-9, Revelation 7

You all know what this is, don't you? It's a Band-Aid. Probably everybody in this room has used a Band-Aid. You have probably used one many times. Young children, especially, use Band-Aids. They spend a lot of time playing, a lot of time running around outside. And it is a lot of fun to run around outside. When they do this, though, sometimes they trip. They fall down. And often when somebody falls down, he scrapes his skin, and it begins to bleed. That is when a Band-Aid is used. The child's mother will clean away the dirt where he hurt himself. She might also put some antibiotic ointment on the scrape—ointment which keeps germs from growing. And then she puts a Band-Aid over the place where the skin is scraped. The Band-Aid helps keep it clean, and helps protect it, until the Lord makes new skin grow.

Now when a child hurts his knee this way, sometimes it hurts so much that he starts to cry. Tears begin to appear in his eyes, and sometimes these tears begin to run down his face. And this is why, his mother may not only go and get some Band-Aids, but she might also get something else as well—a Kleenex. After she puts the Band-Aid on, she may then use a Kleenex to wipe the tears away from her child's eyes and from his face.

Now in what we read from the Word this morning, it is said that the Lord also wipes away tears from people's eyes, and from their faces. Our first reading was from the *Book of Isaiah*, and there it is said that "the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces" (25:8). We also read in the *Book of Revelation* that "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (7:17). The Lord is talking about His New Church. He said that when He began the New Church we would wipe the tears from people's eyes.

Why is it said that the Lord will wipe tears away from people's eyes, and away from their faces? It doesn't mean that the Lord is going to wipe away tears from the outside of people's faces . . . that is something that they can do for themselves. What it means is that the Lord is going to wipe away the sadness which makes people cry. When people cry it is usually because they are sad. If someone cries when he falls and scrapes his skin, it is because the pain—the hurt—is making him sad.

One of the wonderful things that the Lord does is wipe away—take away—sadness from people's minds. There are a lot of things which can make people sad. They might be sad because they are injured or hurt. They might be sad because somebody is mean to them and has hurt their feelings. Sometimes people are sad because they don't get something they want. One thing, though, that made a lot of people sad at one time, before the New Church began, is that they really didn't know and understand the Lord. They didn't know who to worship. They didn't know who to believe in. They didn't know who to pray to.

And that is why, 230 years ago this month, the Lord began the New Church. People were unhappy—many people—because they did not know much about the Lord. And so, the Lord had Swedenborg write down the Writings for the New Church. And the Writings teach lots and lots and lots about the Lord. And in the spiritual world, the Lord sent out His disciples, to teach everybody there more about the Lord.

And now people can know about the Lord. The Lord has given the New Church so that people can learn about Him, understand Him, and love Him. Anybody who wants to, and is ready, can pick up the Writings of the New Church and learn many wonderful things about the Lord. And when people know about the Lord, then they can be happy.

Now if you know about the Lord, you may still be sad sometimes. Things may happen that make you feel unhappy. Things may happen that make you cry. But when you know about the Lord, when you know that He loves you, and takes care of you, and leads you towards heaven, then deep down inside, you can be happy and feel at peace—because you know that if you follow the Lord, and worship Him and do what He says in His Word, then He will be able to bring you happiness. When people know the Lord and love Him, then in the end He wipes away all sadness from their minds. He wipes away all tears from their eyes. *Amen.*

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