



Candela

Newsletter of the
Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd.

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Issue 11

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we come to the end of 1996 we can reflect that it has been a mixed year for the SAA. The regular meetings at North Ryde, Melbourne and Perth have continued with good attendances, excellent speakers and appropriate growth in the spiritual understanding of our members.

On the reverse side, our membership numbers have remained stagnant and we have not succeeded in starting up any more local groups to meet regularly and discuss the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Each of our members perhaps needs to reflect on the benefits they have gained from their own understanding of the writings and how they can influence others by their example and by suggesting the application of the Swedenborg philosophy in their lives. In particular with the Christmas season upon us, you can make your Christmas shopping a little easier by giving a Gift Certificate of SAA membership to your friends or family members. The value of this membership gift could well exceed the monetary value in terms of their future understanding of their spiritual growth.

The programmes for 1997 are well on the way to being finalised and so we would love to see your support of these programmes in the New Year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I wish you all a most Joyful Christmas and a spiritually uplifting New Year.

With Love and Light,

Kevin B. Attwater



THINKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

"And the Word was made flesh"

That which is celebrated at Christmas - the Incarnation of Almighty God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ - is central to the spiritual teachings revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. At the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem it was proclaimed that His Name should be Emmanuel or "God with us". It is also affirmed that "in Jesus Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily". And in the magnificent prologue to John's Gospel it is written that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory". The acknowledgment of this is the only valid reason for the observance and celebration of Christmas.

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THE EAGLE AND THE OAK TREE

Talk given at the 1996 Celebration of Spring held at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde

I considered giving this talk the title *Swedenborg from a Celtic Perspective* - a bit of an "in" joke as we often tend to look at areas and issues from a Swedenborgian perspective. However, Swedenborg does not seem to refer at all in his writings and letters to Celts except to occasionally mention the Irish and Scots. We do not know whether he was even aware of Celtic traditions and mythologies. He was certainly well and widely read and knew something of Greek, Roman and Egyptian pre-Christian religious rituals and spiritual backgrounds. Having spent some of his childhood in the Swedish countryside with his parents and grandparents, and having a love for his native country and its traditions, he would have been familiar with the stories of the Scandinavian Trolls and the Tomtes, the household spirits of Sweden.

Swedenborg the Poet

When he was 25, Swedenborg wrote a number of allegorical fables like those of the Roman poet **Ovid**, in which are concealed intrigues within politics, royalty and religion going on in Europe in the previous fifteen years. Actually it sounds a bit "Gilbert and Sullivan"-ish. These fables were written and published in Germany, one being entitled *The Northern Muse* which gives an account of the Swedish race and a forecast of its future under the leadership of the great King Charles XII "*Phoenix of the ancient Gothic nation and Monarch of the North*". Another is called *Camena Borea*. Unfortunately, I do not think these have ever been translated into English.

That is somewhat of a digression. There would not have been much information about the history and spiritual background of the various Celtic groups available in northern Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century when Swedenborg was actively engaged in learning and adding to the knowledge of the origins, development and workings of the natural universe and the peoples living in it. Even today, little is known of the ancient Celtic culture in an historical sense. Linguists have built a theory about their origins that leads from the Russian steppes, through several migrations with much intermingling with Hittites, Mycenaeans and Indo-Europeans, until 9th

century BC when they emerged as a distinct group (*The Celts in Myth and Legend* by Timothy Roberts). By 600 BC, Europe north of the Alps was dominated by hundreds of Celtic "*oppida*", fortified cities that controlled trade routes. They then expanded in all directions, south and east into the Greco-Roman world on the Mediterranean sacking Rome, and onward into Turkey where they founded the Kingdom of Galatia; north and west into the British Isles.

It was in AD 55 that the apostle Paul introduced the Galatian Celts to Christianity. As Rome gained the upper hand in its own great expansionary period, Celtic culture became Romanised and much of the mythology of the continental Celts, which had not been written down by them, died out; little has survived until today. However, the Celtic mythology of that part of Europe the Romans did not eventually conquer - being the extremities of Ireland, Wales, western edge of Scotland, Cornwall and Brittany - survived, but only after passing through the sieve of Christian scribes who wrote down the tales but after removing some Pagan elements. Much of the original Celtic culture is known through Celtic art, the most well known sources being the illuminated manuscripts of the European Dark Ages, which while reflecting a Christian background, continue the traditions e.g. *The Book of Kells*, *Lindisfarne Gospels* of the 8th century AD

Myth Truer than History

R.J. Campbell in his book *New Theology* (page 261) points out "*that myth and legend are truer than history for they take us to the inside of things, whereas history only shows us the outside.*" Swedenborg would readily agree with this conclusion. His principle focus during the whole of his life was directed to understanding the Word of God as we have it in the Judeo-Christian Bible. His work as a scientist, anatomist and philosopher was undertaken as a means to hopefully unlock the mysteries of Divine life expressed in nature and the Bible. He was to achieve that goal but not through his own intellectual prowess but through a revelation by which he was led to see how everything in our world is an expression of a spiritual reality, not only in general but in

absolutely every minutest part, whether tangible objects including our own physical bodies, or the more intangible aspects of thoughts and feelings. The key to unlocking this intimate connection is the science of correspondences; definitely a science in terms of its immutable structure but also an art in terms of its application in order to achieve true spiritual perception.

An Ancient Word

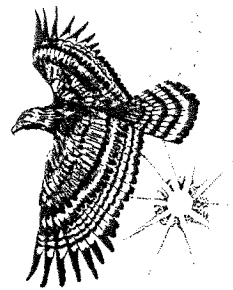
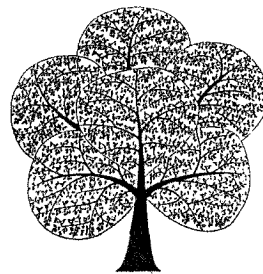
I would like to indulge your time at this point to read a few extracts from Swedenborg's writings about correspondences, about an Ancient Word in which all sacred understandings, both written and verbal, are sourced and the Word as we have it today in Christianity. These come from perhaps Swedenborg's smallest work - a manuscript of some 40 pages in the English translation which he left unpublished entitled *De Verbo* or *The Word of God from Experience* (parts of paragraphs 17, 18 and 19). Before doing so, though, I would first point out that when Swedenborg uses the term "Church" it is not to be taken as an ecclesiastical organisation as such but a relationship of men and women, either individually or collectively as a Society or culture, with their Divine Creator.

Each and all things which are in nature, correspond to spiritual things; in like manner each and all things of the human body. But at this day what correspondence is is unknown. In the most ancient times, however, the science of correspondences was the science of sciences, thus the universal science, so that with the most ancient people all manuscripts and books were written by correspondences. The fables of the most ancient times and the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians are nothing else; the book of Job, which is a book of the Ancient Church, is full of correspondences. All the ancient churches were churches representative of heavenly things; all their rites and also their statutes, according to which their worship was instituted, consisted of nothing but correspondences . . . and because correspondences are such things as exist in the ultimates of nature, and because all things of nature correspond, and the things which correspond also signify, therefore the sense of the letter of the Word consists of nothing but correspondences.

I have heard and perceived from heaven that the men of the Most Ancient Church, who are those meant in the spiritual sense of the first chapters of Genesis by Adam and

*Eve, were so consociated with the angels of heaven, that they could speak with them by correspondences, and hence the state of their wisdom was such that whatever they saw on earth, they perceived at the same time spiritually, thus conjointly with the angels. It was told me that Enoch, of whom mention is made in Genesis (Chap. v. 21-24), with his associates, collected correspondences from the mouth of those people, and transmitted the knowledge of them to posterity. From this it came to pass, that the science of correspondences not only was known, but was also cultivated, in many kingdoms of Asia, and especially in Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and also in Canaan. From thence it was carried over to Greece, but was there turned into fables . . . which were collected together and described by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.*

But when the representatives of the church in the course of time were turned into idolatries, then by the Divine Providence of the Lord that science was successively obliterated, and with the Israeliitish and Jewish nation it was altogether destroyed and extinguished After the science of correspondences was there lost, their posterity, who were ignorant what the images and likenesses set up by the ancients signified, began to worship them as holy, and finally as deities, because they were placed in and near the temples.



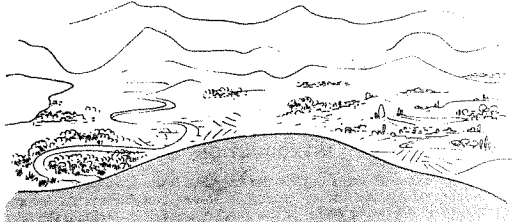
There is not time this evening to show precisely how the teachings in Swedenborg's writings open up the inner, spiritual meaning within the whole of The Word. Many of you will be very familiar with that anyway and we have plenty of books available on the subject to read. Suffice it to say, the Judea-Christian Word is established as book by which fable, legend, and individual interpretation of historical events, through correspondences, provides us with a veritable storehouse of knowledge about spiritual life and the spiritual journey which we all need to take to achieve heavenly happiness.

In recognising that the Bible has a common origin, through an Ancient Word, with the rituals and writings of all early cultures, we also accept that those writings, stories and rituals can provide a means to understand underlying spiritual principles through the now restored knowledge of correspondences. Clearly, for the ancient Celts, everything in the natural world possessed its own spirit and they developed a way of life which was rich in religious symbolism in tune with that belief.

The Eagle - Emblem of Jupiter

One nature symbol used in Celtic mythology, with strong Roman affiliations, is the **Eagle**, emblem of Jupiter, god of the skies. During the Romano-Celtic period, the sun god of the Celts became merged with the Roman Deity and took the same associations, including that of the eagle. The magnificent wingspan of this bird and its ability to fly at great heights made it a natural companion for any deity of the heavens. In the Celtic myth, *The Mabinogion*, Lleu, a divine warrior whose name means "*Bright one of the Skilful Hand*", is struck a fatal blow, but immediately changes into an eagle and flies into an Oak tree, the sacred tree of Jupiter. ***What can we make of this story?***

Briefly, animals as a class are warm, active and sensitive; they feel both pleasure and pain. Plants, too, are living; they grow but are not conscious of suffering or of pleasure. The mineral kingdom is fixed and hard; it makes the basis from which plants grow and on which animals stand. The three kingdoms - animal, vegetable, and mineral - correspond to spiritual qualities both existing in the spiritual world and within our individual mental being. It is our feelings which are sensitive to pleasure or pain and these are our animals of the mind. They grow and develop sensitivity as we make our way along the spiritual pathway. Our thinking processes also grow but, in themselves, our thoughts are not sensitive to pleasure or pain but are the food which nourish our feelings. The foundation from which our mental plants spring is the ground of the mind; the facts which are accepted as fixed are its rocks.



So when we think of the eagle in the story, a bird which rises high above the ground circling about using its wonderfully penetrating sight to watch the plethora of little objects on the ground far below, we can picture an affection for spiritual thought of the strongest, most searching kind, which rises above superficial appearances, and takes the most comprehensive views of life, the most in accord with the Divine Wisdom. "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles*". Eagles represent people who develop a strong will for what is good, and which allows them to rise into spiritual intelligence. The oak is a sturdy tree, with very deep and spreading roots, strong, wide-reaching branches, and wood which combines strength, hardness, toughness and durability. In terms of the human understanding, the oak tree corresponds to a mind characterised by a firm tenacious grasp, unyielding even in trifling details, almost to the point of obstinacy. This is the quality of the firm grasp of the basic principles of what is right, which is essential for getting going in our regeneration - the springtime of our spiritual growth.

In the story, Lleu, the warrior for the Divine, was a dedicated striver in protecting the truth in his own mind and life where the spiritual battles take place. Yet he used his own hands, his own source of power in serving truth. But to really serve the Divine, he had to go through a transformation, a rebirth, becoming as an eagle in developing a strong will for doing what is good from a spiritual perception. He does this by holding onto and implementing in his life those basic principles of what is right, returning to the Oak tree after soaring the heights of spiritual perception, appreciating the depths of understanding for implementing Divine life that are within the basic principles. He was able to become at one with the Divine life.

Tonight, in hearing and thinking about Celtic traditions expressed in story and art-forms, we should allow our minds to be raised to higher realms and learn what it all tells us about our inner worlds and natures as we endeavour to come into tune with Divine life.

Neville Jarvis

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Announcing:

Damien Miles Vandermeer, born to Danielle and Joe in October 1996.

All members of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd. send their congratulations and love to the proud parents, and to their new gift from the Lord.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following new members:
Jan Goldsmith (Chatswood, NSW)
Heather McNeill (Manly, NSW)
Audrey Welsh (Roseville, NSW)

1996 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1996 AGM, held on Saturday, 17th August was preceded by a talk by Mr Christopher Skinner, Convenor of the Melbourne Group. He spoke on the activities of the Melbourne Group and outlined the challenges he sees for the future. He emphasized the importance of fellowship, mutual support and growing together within SAA. The 15 members and friends attending the meeting appreciated the opportunity to meet Chris and learn more about what is happening in Melbourne.

The business meeting itself went smoothly. The Board members elected for the new term are

President - Kevin Attwater
Secretary - Michael Chester
Treasurer - Jack Benson
Directors - Ruth Duckworth, Alexis Jarvis, Wayne Kasmar, Waldis Jirgens (Canberra), Chris Skinner (Melbourne).

This leaves two positions unfilled which may be filled by the Board during the year. A vote of thanks to **Alexis Jarvis** for her work as Secretary over the last three years was received from the floor and carried with acclamation. Votes of thanks were also carried enthusiastically to former Directors: -

Michael Wright for his untiring support and creative input;

Joe Vandermeer for his varied and thoughtful input over the last 4 years;

Guy Patching whose wide interests now preclude him participating at Board level.

Special mention was also made of **Lachlan Hinds** for his many contributions, especially in connection with the *Celebration of Easter*.

It was decided that subscription rates for 1997 remain the same (1 year - \$25.00; 3 year - \$60.00; Concession - \$15.00 (no 3 year rate). The treasurer reported a balance of funds of \$14,847 at 30th June 1996.

After discussion on providing Honorary Life Membership, the following Special Resolution was carried with a majority of 12 votes to 2:

That the Articles of Association be altered to include the category of honorary Life Membership and that the following criteria be used to determine suitable candidates for such honorary Life Membership -

1. *Written nominations for honorary Life Membership should be submitted to the Board in confidence, setting out reasons for the nomination.*

2. *The Board must be in unanimous agreement in recommending the conferral of an honorary Life Membership.*

3. *The recommendation of the Board must be put to a General Meeting of members for confirmation by a majority of those present or voting by proxy.*

The Board will take into consideration the following points:

- Length of association;
- Capacity served;
- Contribution in furthering the objects as stated in the Articles of Association.

and will produce a underpinning a nomination which can be published.

OCTOBER BOARD MEETING.

During the AGM the President spoke about the achievements of the SAA and also about those objects which the Board had been unable to implement, particularly the setting up of a number of groups throughout Australia. He circulated a paper setting out the objects and how we can effectively achieve them and how do we focus beyond the main population centres of Sydney and Melbourne. From the discussion that followed various areas were mentioned that were dealt with during this meeting.

There was an acknowledgment that some contact needs to be made with members living in areas distant from where activities are being organized. Contact is useful because it provides a means of passing on useful information as well as getting feedback on how we can help them. Kevin Attwater volunteered to contact some members living outside Sydney and report back at the next meeting about improving contact between members.

The uses of a **Membership Card** were discussed. It gives a sense of belonging and functions as a receipt as well as assisting in providing details of the benefits associated with membership. It is to be reinstated in an amended form, being sent out when joining subscriptions and renewals are received.

Connecting North Ryde meetings to other places using voice transmission over the **Internet** was further discussed and endorsed.

Board meetings in 1997 have been scheduled for Tuesday evenings (7.30 pm) on 28th January, 15th April, 15th July and 21st October at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde.

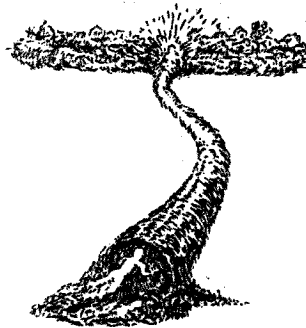
Heavenly food in its essence is nothing else than love, wisdom and useful service combined, that is useful service, accomplished through wisdom out of love.
Conjugal Love 6,6

Looking forward to your support and feedback in 1997.

Michael Chester, Hon Secretary

The Near Death Experience.

with Dr. Cherie Sutherland



A very good number of people came along to the October meeting of the North Ryde Group to listen to an excellent talk by **Dr. Cherie Sutherland**. She is a fluent and straightforward speaker on her subject, and

communicates the details and examples of this phenomenon methodically and warmly.

She herself had a near-death experience 25 years ago (before such experiences were referred to in books such as Raymond Moody's '*Life After Life*') after which her own life changed dramatically. After a decade of university lecturing, she turned to full-time research into the after effects of NDEs. She has written four books, including '*Transformed by the Light*' and '*Children of the Light*', and lectures widely on the subject, with particular reference to children's experiences of NDEs.

She became fascinated by these experiences of children, and has talked about them with many children, as well as with adults who had their own experiences during childhood. She found that childhood near-death experiences shared many elements with those of adults, but also had some intriguing differences. Children simply accept the experience as normal, with their uncomplicated innocence. One child suddenly began talking about having seen heaven and bright people while she was later having a meal with her family. Another child spoke about "*having run through fields with God*" and added that it was possible to jump in heaven.

Many people today are very familiar with the contents of near-death experiences which echo so many aspects of religious belief. Dr. Sutherland emphasised the radical difference of NDE-ers to those who take drugs, touched on the cross-cultural nature of these experiences which are had by people of any religious outlook and even those with no personal religion, and dealt with the great life-altering effect of these experiences on the people concerned. A good number of questions followed this stimulating talk, as well as a sharing by some of their own close encounters. An audio tape recording of the evening is available for \$5.00.

Julian Duckworth

GROUPS NEWS

The **North Ryde** Committee has continued organizing monthly meetings with a guest speaker on the fourth Friday evening of the month. Many people made favourable comments on the **Celebration of Spring** held on Saturday 7th September. Brian Hungerford delighted the audience with his storytelling. And some of the poems recited by Clare Dunne lyrically reminded us of ever present spiritual realities. An evening of **Poetry, Art and Music** (related to the Celebration of Spring) was held on Friday the 27th of September. This was a very pleasant evening, hosted by Neville Jarvis during which a number of artists and sculptors talked about their work. Close to 50 people attended Dr Cherie Sutherland's talk on **The Near Death Experience** in October. People were very pleased with her presentation and question time was very stimulating. Another stimulating evening was presented in November by our President, Kevin Attwater, on the subject of **Swedenborg and Reincarnation**. Reports of recent meetings are included in this issue.

The outline of the 1997 programme has been worked out and copies are available to members. **Dr Philip Groves** will be giving a lecture on Friday 31st January 1997. His topic is **Swedenborg's view of the individual**. The **Celebration of Easter** will be organized by **Julian Duckworth**. Further details of all meetings will be issued in due course.

The **Melbourne Group** also continues to meet monthly (usually every fourth Friday) to hear and discuss a talk from a guest speaker or their Convenor Chris Skinner. In September **Robert Davies** gave a talk entitled **The Power of the Mind**, being very well received by the 23 people attending. Rev. Terry Schnarr, visiting from Sydney, talked on **Correspondences and the Bible** and it generated much interest. Nearly 30 came together in the late afternoon of the last Saturday of November to first listen to the talk **Does Anything Happen By Chance?** given by **Julian Duckworth**, partake in a shared tea, and join in an evening of music and fellowship. It was a great way to end the year for the SAA Group in Melbourne.

The **Perth Group** gets together on the third Sunday of every month. Whilst small in numbers - a regular attendance of 7 - clearly they find their time together stimulating and uplifting under co-ordinator, **Allan Uren**. They have begun looking at a series of talks introducing the main concepts in Swedenborg's writings, prepared by the Swedenborg Library and Enquiry Centre and report finding these to be of good interest and very helpful in terms incorporating a range of topics for discussion. Their last 1996 meeting was also in November.

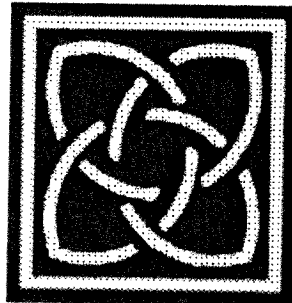
Reincarnation and Swedenborg

Kevin Attwater has been studying Swedenborg's spiritual writings in relation to reincarnation for the past year and has created a thesis on the subject. He gave a very informative presentation utilising many overhead slides and diagrams at the Swedenborg Association North Ryde Group meeting on Friday, 22nd November. There is currently a growing interest in the subject of reincarnation and Kevin brought together the ideas of Swedenborg and several other spiritual philosophies to examine their compatibility. It was a very interesting evening and generated considerable questions, comment and discussion, which continued during our special Christmas supper. The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre has a copy of Kevin's thesis available for free borrowing so if you would like to read it, please telephone (02) 9888 1066. There is also a video of the evening and you are welcome to borrow that also (postage costs need to be covered, though).

At the conclusion of the talk **Michael Chester** presented Kevin Attwater with an inscribed **Presidential Badge of Office** which will become part of the Swedenborg Association of Australia's memorabilia as it is passed on from President to President.

Ruth Duckworth

CELEBRATION OF SPRING '96



The *Celtic Culture* was the focus of this year's Celebration of Spring, which was held at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde, in early September. It was officially opened by entertaining story-teller, **Brian Hungerford**, who in true Irish fashion made the formal announcement almost halfway through the evening. Beforehand, nothing was going to deflect him from the all important task of story-

telling. Accompanying himself on a "genuine Irish harp" (made by a Welshman, living in Adelaide, using Tasmanian timber), and the storyteller's bagpipe (what a wonderful instrument this is), he evocatively related two traditional Celtic myths. But liberally interposed were many personal anecdotes and observations which were as long, or longer, than the stories themselves.

Brian demonstrated, without taking himself too seriously, something of the profound difference of the Celtic way of looking at life and its experiences, to that of the usual Western approach. More patient and gentle, more in tune with nature and its rhythms, and more believing in things unseen, it has, in recent times, come to take on a somewhat beguiling attraction the more we become aware of the shortcomings in the philosophies and practices of modern western man.

Yet for all its appeal to something within us more simple and sensitive, it remains strange, mysterious and even frightening. Thankfully we have Swedenborg to cast light on that which would otherwise remain shrouded in impenetrable mists as thick as those that blanket a lonely Irish or Scottish coast. The organisers of the programme had the good sense to begin the evening with a talk by **Neville Jarvis** in which he made clear, using the writings of Swedenborg, the true origin and vital importance to mankind of mythology in the overall unfolding of spiritual life.

This enables us to make sense of a culture that is notable for not only great poetic force and heroism, but also profound tragedy and sadness. The music and writings of the Celts bear testimony to this. And during the evening we were treated to generous samples. We were lucky to have the **Forgarty Sisters** performing traditional Irish dance, leaving the National Irish Dance Championships to be with us.

Author and media presenter, **Clare Dunne**, provided one of the highlights of the night with her "*A Portrait of Ireland*" - a dissertation on the history of the poetry and music of her homeland, delivered in such a way that her personal affection for her subject was clear. Traditional music was provided by the **F-Holes**, who are more used to performing in pubs (F-Holes are the sound holes in violins, cellos, etc.) and **Rose Shakallis** and **Danielle Frances** who demonstrated nicely the extraordinarily complete sound that Celtic music allows just two voices to have. Comic relief, during the evening, was provided by **Joe Vandermeer** and **Lachlan Hinds** as the "*celebrated O'Really and McNaught*".

Phillip Hay of Leura was announced as winner of the **Swedenborg Prize for Religious Art** for his intriguing sculpture "*Eternal Waters of the Holy Grail*", a metal construction created out of found objects. The winner of the **Swedenborg Literary Award** was **Neville Jarvis** for his entry "*Salamanders in Venus*" - a look at the spiritual significance of geological surface structures on Earth and Venus.

A very enjoyable evening was completed with a supper of Irish fare bountifully provided by **Jonathan Bryce**.

**QUOTATION
TO CONTEMPLATE**

Every individual is called 'a living soul' from that which is living within. No one can possibly live, let alone as a human being, if there is not something living within, that is, if the person does not have some measure of innocence, charity, and mercy, or from these something of a similar or comparable nature. This measure of innocence, charity, and mercy a person receives from the Lord when an infant and during childhood, as becomes clear from the state of infants and also from that of childhood. That a person receives at that time is preserved within, and the things that are preserved are in the Word called 'remnants', which are the Lord's alone with a person. These remnants that are being preserved are what make it possible for someone when in adulthood to be a human being These states however are not states that a person acquires by learning but ones which are received as a free gift from the Lord, and which the Lord preserves When a person is being regenerated these states are the principal agents of regeneration, and is brought into these states, for, as stated already, the Lord works by means of remnants."

Arcana Caelestia, from paragraph 1050

To the best of my knowledge the concept of "**remnants**" or "**remains**" is a strictly Swedenborgian notion, though many present-day psychologists, giving it a different label, readily accept this idea.

When you read the selections under "**remains**" and "**memory**" in **Potts Concordance** you realise that **everything** that an infant or young child experiences is implanted in that person's mind and soul. Every action, every word, every external happening that a growing child is exposed to becomes part of his/her inner life.

Those attending certainly felt enriched for having a greater appreciation of a culture, and its traditions, which although having suffered greatly from the inexorable progress of modern ways, yet, if it survives, may end up teaching us things about life that prove invaluable in achieving happiness and wellbeing in our future world.

Wayne Kasmar

And more importantly, not only are these millions of minute, daily experiences embedded in the child's memory, but the feelings and impressions associated with these events are also recorded. In brief, nothing that a young, developing child is exposed to is ever lost; every memory is tucked away, at some level, in the deep recesses of the individual's psyche. How essential it is then to surround a young child with positive, loving influences!

Obviously we are not consciously aware of most of our childhood "remains"; this would make adult life very cumbersome. God's fortuitous gift of "selective memory" is with us throughout our entire life process.

The role of remains is subtle, but extremely important. Without this early foundation the later process of adult regeneration - developing the spiritual life - would be well-nigh impossible. Every person in the world is gifted with remains, thus everyone is a potential angel. And as we progress through life, new remains, new spiritual qualities are constantly being added, assuming that one is basically heading in the right direction.

This is one of the main ways in which the Lord can reach us, touch us - sometimes directly, more often indirectly. Hasn't this happened to all of us many times: we seem to be "guided" in a certain direction; we are caught up in a difficult moral dilemma and suddenly, from deep within a voice, a song, a thought, a strong feeling surfaces and shows us the way! In these many instances, remains are being stirred up, evoked, brought into play, as they interact with the more shallow levels of our awareness. The needful thing is to be sensitive to these inner promptings.

Commentary by Paul Zacharias of Canada.

THINKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 1)

It is true, of course, that the full extent of all that is implied and involved in such Incarnation is and will forever be beyond the grasp of human minds; the finite can never fully comprehend the Infinite. Yet it is only as we recognise the coming of the Lord in and by a revelation of Divine Truth - **as the Word made flesh** - that we are able to enter a little more deeply into an understanding of the simple records of His birth in Bethlehem as they are recorded in the much loved stories of Matthew and Luke: the visit of the Magi or Wise Men and the experience of the shepherds as they made their way to the manger. I have used the words "*a revelation of Divine Truth*". Divine Truth is not just an abstruse or abstract formula or dictate: it is nothing less than the expression and embodiment of Divine Love Itself in a form adapted to human comprehension.

At times some theologians speak of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem as a Divine intervention implying that in some way it was a hurried improvisation forced upon God or Divine Love by the overwhelming power of the hells. Certainly and without any doubt it remains forever true that unless the Lord had thus come into the world by taking upon Himself frail humanity, no man could have been saved. But in no way whatever does this imply that it was as it were a rearguard action: a change of plan forced upon God by the upsurge and supremacy of the hells. **God or Divine Love was never on the defensive! He remained - and remains forever - in absolute and supreme control.**

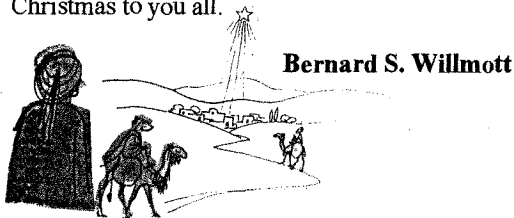
The necessity for the Incarnation had been foreseen and provided for from the very earliest times of mankind's life on earth, as the means by which and in which the purpose of Divine Love in creation might be fulfilled. In a word, and if you will accept it, the Incarnation of Almighty God, the "*Word becoming flesh*" did not find its beginning in the miraculous conception in the womb of Mary and the birth of the babe in Bethlehem. This was the last link in the Incarnation which began in the deep recesses of most ancient times when mankind surrendered to the dictates of self-love and self-dependence - pictured in the divine allegory of Adam and Eve. Such a statement in no way whatever diminishes the wondrous splendour of Divine Love manifest in the simple and humble circumstances in which the Saviour of mankind was born.

When earliest mankind surrendered to the dictates of self-love, they lost their ability to perceive truth intuitively. Yet without revelation man can know nothing of the nature of God. And the Lord God provided that He could come to man and that man might come to a knowledge and acknowledgment of Him and of His nature and purpose by another way - through the understanding of Divine Truth: and so that by means of such understanding man could restrain the impulses of self-love. So it was that with the increasing externalism that possessed man's thought and life, the Lord God provided that the form or expression of Divine Truth should become more and more external: more and more heavily clothed, but still interiorly the expression of Divine and Infinite Love.

Eventually it became so heavily clothed that it took the form of the Old Testament Scriptures, written in pure correspondences and subsequently in representations of historical events. We are, no doubt, reminded of some of these more open prophecies in the traditional services of Lessons and Carols each Christmastide. It is not only in these, however, but in the whole of the Old Testament that we can see if we will know how in this way "*the Word was made flesh*". And in what is called the "*fullness of time*" when the Church, the custodian of the Written Word, had almost entirely perverted its nature and purpose, and when scarcely any true knowledge of understanding Divine Truth remained, the Lord was willing to be born of a virgin and to live as, Man among men. As it is written "*The Light shone in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. He was in the world, and the world was made Him and the world knew Him not.*"

An unusual Christmas message? Perhaps so: but it is in our fuller consideration of and meditation upon the real purpose of the Incarnation, "*of the Word becoming flesh*" from the revelation given through Emanuel Swedenborg, that the familiar stories of the Lord's birth disclose how in very-truth they are indeed "*Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people*".

SO - a happy and blessed - and thoughtful - Christmas to you all.



Some Thoughts on the Divine Esse

by Valda Parkinson

I have derived from Swedenborg that whilst we are tinctured with the Life of God, we tend to forget our Divine Origin, and lose ourselves and our central spirit in a maze of concepts, ideologies, personality fronts, etc. We wear and cultivate our personality fronts, and identify with them - and we are looking to develop a character, to build a character. We will look anywhere but within our bewildered little souls. And we are looking for God somewhere else? Out in the sky, in the Pope's Palace? Anywhere, but in the very dawn of our life, the golden glowing lovely dawn of our life, in its unperplexed purity.

In **The Infinite and The Final Cause of Creation** (page 136), Swedenborg says, "*But yet there is nothing natural that is not Divine . . . and there is nothing conceivable without a Beginning and Cause in the Infinite.*" This little book seems like pure music.

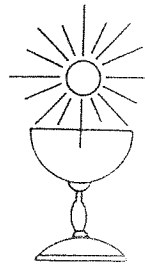
My own father called God "*The Divine Reality*". We really cannot pin any name on the Creator, and it is in finding names and labels that we tend to get lost in a maze of unreality. Yet we have to talk, and exchange ideas, and therefore have to create a title for "*the Great One*" and different languages have different names - you cannot in truth refer to the Creator as "*He*" as "*It*".

In **Divine Love & Wisdom** (paragraph 15), Swedenborg says "*That which exists from an Esse, makes one with the Esse.*" The Divine "Esse" illumines and is present in the case of the soul of the man, and all Love and Wisdom stems for this. Swedenborg also says that God is Life, and we are recipients of Life. True, but we are not only a cup; we would not be conscious if that were so. We are the Life and the Light in this cup, and **are** the cup itself - even this cup is spun of the Substance of God.

*We have forgotten how to be Holy
We have forgotten how to be whole.*

If we look at "*Contents*" part 1, first page of **Divine Love & Wisdom**, we read:

*"The Divine Love and The Divine Wisdom are Substance and Form in Itself, thus Very Reality of the One Only Reality." ;
"The Divine is the same in the greatest things and in the least things." ; and
"Love is the Life of man."*



In **True Christian Religion** - "*Contents*":

"There is a universal influx from God into the souls of men, that there is a God and that He is One."

These headings themselves are pure music.

The line in **True Christian Religion** Paragraph 63, "*God is Omnipresent in all Things,*" speaks for itself.

Candela in Action !

Don't just read this Newsletter - Do something with it.

Well, we hope that members will want to keep their own copy of *Candela* - they could well become sought after and be a very valuable asset as a complete set in the years ahead!

So we provide a second copy to every member with the expectation that this copy will be used to let others know what we are about. **It would be great if you could pass it onto an acquaintance, take it to your local library, leave it in a Waiting Room or in a common room at work, etc.** Please do help in this effort to extend the knowledge of Swedenborg and this Association. If you wish to have additional copies to pass on, please just let us know the number.

At the recent AGM, one of our members related a very pertinent incident involving the previous issue of *Candela*. While travelling on the suburban transport network in Sydney, she got talking to a friendly person who turned out to be a Buddhist. Towards the end of their conversation, this person gently offered her some Buddhist literature which she was pleased to accept. To complete the kind gesture, she offered him her copy of *Candela* that she happened to be carrying in her bag which was gratefully received by her travelling companion. Maybe the Buddhist also related this incident at their AGM!

PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

One of the benefits of SAA membership is a 20% discount on the regular price of nearly all books (excepting large sets), cassettes and tapes purchased through the various Swedenborg Book Centres around Australia. All you have to do when ordering in person, by phone or mail is to refer to your SAA membership. If you have not got a book catalogue and price list, you can get one from The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde. Below are titles which should be of interest.

Temptations

by Basil Lazer

Published by the trustees of the estate of the late Basil Lazer. 150 pages, paperback.

Normal price \$10.00.

SAA Members price \$8.00

This is a completely revised and formatted edition of a book self-published by the late **Basil Lazer** of Canberra some 26 years ago. The first edition was distributed widely, particularly in Ghana. This is a very professional production which is well laid out, easy to read, and some very thought-provoking illustrations by Australian graphic artist, **Donna Heldon**. It brings together many passages (in modern translation) from Swedenborg's spiritual writings on the subject of temptation to examine their cause, meaning and purpose. - chapter headings including: *where temptations come from; the struggles of temptation; the mechanics of temptation; the use or purpose of temptation.*



An Angel At My Shoulder

True stories of Angel Experiences compiled by **Glennyce Eckersley**

Published by Rider Books (UK) and released in Australia by Random House Books on 25th October 1996.

Normal Price \$15.00

SAA Member's Price \$12.00

Glennyce Eckersley has done an excellent job in collecting and commenting on the sixty-four accounts from people about their sense of being with angels at particular moments in life. She allows each person to speak for themselves, and she has arranged the stories into groups dealing with angelic presence bringing rescue, comfort, strength and other effects. She also deals with children's stories of angels with them, and of those at the point of death transition. There is some reference given to Swedenborg and others, and there is a very useful further reading and address reference given at the end. Glennyce writes warmly and very sensitively about these accounts, and brings a delightful naturalness into it all, adding (being a great cook herself) touches of information and explanation as she presents it all. It is a great read, nice clear print, and while there are no pictures, the large letters opening each account makes an attractive effect.

*N.B. To date only a review copy of **Conversations With Angels** has arrived; more copies are coming. We are taking advance orders which we would hope to fulfill before Christmas but that cannot be guaranteed.*



Conversations With Angels

Edited by **Leonard Fox** and **Donald Rose**.

Published by Swedenborg Foundation 1996.

156 pages, paperback.

Normal price \$20.00.

SAA Members price \$16.00

Subtitled *What Swedenborg Heard in Heaven*, this is a superb book offering selections about the wisdom imparted to Swedenborg as he travelled through heaven and hell which are recorded in *Love in Marriage*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, and *True Christian Religion*. The cover is very appealing incorporating an **Rublev Icon of the Old Testament Trinity** and the powerful statement of Swedenborg: "**People are born to become angels**". The text is well laid out incorporating some thoughtful illustrations, and contains excellent modern translations of Swedenborg's Latin by **David Gladish** and **Jonathan Rose**.

To obtain these publications, simply contact The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, NORTH RYDE, 2113 (Tel/Fax 02 9888 1066) with your request referring to your SAA membership. Do not send any money; an invoice will accompany the book(s) including surface mail postage. You can pay by Bankcard, Mastercard or Visacard by quoting your card number, its expiry date and the exact name on the card. However, a surcharge of 5% (i.e. a reduction in discount) will have to be added to cover fees charged by the credit card organisations.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group facilitator - Sydney region (Kevin Attwater on 9634 7808); Melbourne which meets monthly on the fourth Friday evening (Chris Skinner on 9435 8599); and Perth which meets in the evening on the third Sunday of every month (Allan Uren on 271 0226). It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help, contact Kevin Attwater.

FORTHCOMING SAA PUBLIC MEETINGS

DIARISE NOW

MELBOURNE Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mt. Waverley, 8pm.

Next meeting on Friday 22nd February 1997. Subject to be advised. Details by ringing Chris Skinner on 9435 8599 after hours.

PERTH Third Sunday Evening of each month at 74 Wyatt Road, Bayswater, 7.30pm.

Next meeting Sunday 19th January 1997. Subject: *Why learn about God?* Details by ringing Allan Uren on 271 0226.

SYDNEY Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at The Swedenborg Centre, North Ryde, 7.45 pm.

The first meeting of 1997 will be the Swedenborg 309th Birthday Meeting but due to the Australia Day holiday, it will be held on the Fifth Friday of January- 31st

The Guest Speaker will be **Dr. Philip Groves**, his subject being *Swedenborg's View of the Individual. Does the individual amount to anything significant in creation or must he or she be submerged in a community before their value is realised? Are there supremely enlightened souls at the apex of creation or are many souls elevated together to higher levels of being?* Swedenborg provides illuminating answers to these questions and reveals fundamental aspects of human individuality. Dr. Groves will be laying this before us.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of the 1997 Programme for the Sydney North Ryde Group for your information and use. More copies are available on request.

OBJECTS OF THE SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

a non-profit autonomous company:

- Promoting Emanuel Swedenborg as a scientist, philosopher and religious visionary, by means of his inspired writings, through meetings, lectures, and other functions
- Making available information on topical subjects drawing on Swedenborg's own contribution to stimulate interest and discussion
- Establishing, operating and supporting branches around Australia
- Providing material for the purpose of maintaining local libraries

Everyone wishing to subscribe to these objects can take up membership. There is a once off joining fee of \$10.00 and an annual subscription of \$25.00 (concession rate of \$15.00).

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP include:

- + Ready access to pursuing areas of interest in Swedenborg through the availability of books, tapes, videos and films.
- + A free newsletter.
- + Participating in lectures, seminars, workshops and specific events.
- + A 20% discount at Australian Swedenborg book distribution centres.
- + Joining together as a group with other members living in close proximity.
- + A Swedenborgian based book, tape or video is sent to each financial member each year.

If you are interested in joining the Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd., contact the Secretary at the Registered Office: The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde, 2113 (telephone 02 - 9888 1066 or 02 9292 8268) to obtain a membership leaflet.