



Candela

Newsletter of the
Swedenborg Association of Australia Ltd.

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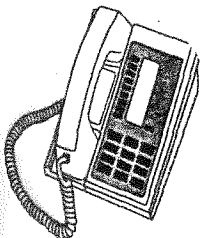
Issue 13

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The sixth Annual General Meeting of our Swedenborg Association of Australia is coming up on 9th August, 1997. Looking back on our activities and growth over the past five years since our Inaugural Annual General Meeting on 22nd August, 1992, I truly believe that our Association has been a worthwhile venture. Through our public meetings and associated activities we have introduced the ideas of the Swedenborg writings to a wider spectrum of people who will all benefit in some way through a better understanding of themselves and their spiritual growth.

We ask that you support the forthcoming AGM in whatever way you can; either by personal attendance if at all possible or by forwarding your greetings, comments and thoughts about your Association to our Secretary in time for your input to be considered at the Meeting.

Our recent circular letter advising of the change of Editor for our Newsletter, *Candela*, evoked a very small response. It was made clear in that response that our Members do value the Newsletter. But only one Member volunteered to assist in co-ordinating the Newsletter with the assistance of our Board Member, Alexis Jarvis. I sincerely thank those two ladies for their generous assistance.



As for the concept of Social Secretary, the responses clearly indicated a need, although mainly for our more remote Members. One member volunteered to share the role and this offer is being followed up.

We hope that you will enjoy this interim edition of your Newsletter.

With Love and Light,

Kevin B. Attwater

The following article is a transcription of an address given by Roy Simmonds at the Celebration of Easter on Saturday, 29th March.

THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection is one event in a series of events which we understand constitute the earthly manifestation of the Divine God in the persona of Jesus Christ.

The story of Jesus' life on earth is at once simple enough for a child to grasp and yet of infinite complexity, beyond our full understanding in a lifetime of study. How can finite creatures exhaust the contents of infinite wisdom in a single lifetime.

The teachings given by Jesus by word, by actions and by situations both actual and described are the final glorious statement of revelations handed down to us in the written word and by oral traditions by the prophets and religious schools from time immemorial. The Word is one such record.

The Word is a manual of reference which tells us how to live in order to perfect a vibrant living soul. Every story within it contains a powerful multi-level set of instructions and prophecies to this end.

I want to take us back to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to examine a short and apparently inconsequential little story titled variously, "Jacob's Vision" or, as I prefer, "Jacob's Ladder". I reproduce it here:

"Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth with its top reaching to heaven and the angels of God were descending and ascending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham, the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and the east, to the north and the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised."

It should be transparently obvious that each Biblical tale is merely a superficial package which must be opened to see the truths and instruction within. Layer after layer of meanings can be revealed but we must work with intelligence and knowledge to open the door to understanding. Thanks to Emmanuel Swedenborg we have a necessary and powerful tool which is the initial key to allow us entry. Even with this advantage we find that much pondering with insight is still needed. This story of apparently no consequence provides us with a one such challenge. So let us enter our story and see the incredible concordance that stands revealed between this tale and, some millennia later, the life of Jesus on earth.

Jacob comes out of Beersheba: *to come out of* is to come away from a higher state to a denser state.

** Jesus Christ is born. The Divine descends from Highest State to the natural state on earth, a very dense state.*

Jacob stays in a place of darkness (night has fallen): darkness is a state of ignorance, of disorientation, of fear, anger, frustration and violence.

** Jesus is born into a world in which all, including the chosen ones, have fallen into ignorance with all its attendant ills. Mankind has lost direction, cannot find God, distorts the teachings of the Word.*

Jacob takes a stone: stone is knowledge and truth at the natural level, worldly knowledge, worldly understanding.

** Jesus taught heavenly truths through worldly examples. "I teach you earthly things and you do not believe them.. will you believe if I speak of heavenly things"*

Jacob lays his head on the stone: Bringing the highest part of our rationality into contact with earthly knowledge, to achieve natural understanding. This is a rational universe and must be understood by logic and rational consideration.

** Jesus teaches by earthly parallels and places Himself clearly as the source of knowledge and truth at all levels "I am the Truth".*

Jacob has a dream (a vision): a revelation of truths and prophecies., an indication of a change of state.

** Jesus is the personification of Truth and Wisdom and Prophecy. Jesus teaches all the wonder and subtlety of both Heavenly states and earthly rationality.*

Jacob sees a stairway(ladder) reaching from earth to heaven: A way to ascend to higher states is revealed. Mankind's lot is not hopeless after Eden.

** Jesus says I am the Way. No-one comes to the Father save through me.*

Angels are seen descending and ascending : Angels are messengers. These are the endless truths and teachings coming down from heavenly states and the states of adoration and delight in the Divine sent back to heavenly states. This is our obligation.

** Jesus demonstrates the process repeatedly by public and private prayer and by public declaration of respect and love for the Father.*

God stands at the head of the staircase. This represents the highest state. He states that, "I will give you the land on which you are lying": This confirms the quality of Jacob's altered state.

"Your descendants will be like the dust.....west and east north and south...." This teaching applies to the whole world.

"All peoples on the earth will be blessed by you and your offspring": Jacob's lineage culminates in the birth of Jesus through whom all peoples can be blessed.

"I will go with you ...I will not leave you....until I have done what I have promised": You will retain this quality of state ("Quality of State" is Life) until all is accomplished.

** Jesus is the ultimate state, Jesus is steadfast to the end of universe, till Divine purpose has been serviced completely. Jesus says "I am the Life".*

Jacob awakes to the realisation of a new state within.

** The Resurrection.*

Jacob now makes the three important statements;

1. The Lord is in this place and I did not know : *realisation of the Omnipresence*

2. Surely this is the House of God : *the house of God within Man is the Soul*

3. This is the gate to Heaven ; *the Gate to Heaven is Jesus Christ.*

Jacob takes the Stone (Truth) and sets it upright (toward heaven) and anoints it with oil (Oil corresponds with Love). **Love and Wisdom is our definition of the Divine.**

** Jesus sends the Holy Spirit : the Spirit of Truth : "A new commandment I give you, love one another as I have loved you". Love and Wisdom This is Jesus Christ. This is the Divine.*

So there we have the bricks and mortar of the piece. We have stripped the outer layer from our simple little story and have tasted the wonder within. It seems that Jacob's dream has startling significances. However at this stage, although we have a marvellous mechanism, it doesn't do much for us in the way of specific instructions. So it appears we must now delve into the next layer of meaning.

Firstly, let us be clear, Jacob does not exist as such in this next layer. Jacob is me, is you, Jacob is all of us individually. The Lord God represents the instrument of instruction.

Secondly, while the skeleton revealed in the preceding passages is real enough, it is merely the framework from which hangs the instruction proper. So let us flesh out the story in the same order as we have previously used.

1. We have come from a high origin, spiritual beings, clothed in flesh. Whole beings, bifurcated, separated and become incomplete.

2. We fail and strive in darkness of misconception and ignorance and seek to bring our God-given rationality into communication with the Divine, accepting the wisdom freely given.

3. We, taking cognisance of the Word, apply ourselves to learn and understand as much as we can of this wonderful, stupendous creation, our Divinely created universe, our present home.

4. We, if we are diligent, discover our nothingness, which is a safe and proper state from which to start our ascent toward heavenly states, seeking help from on high and given heartfelt thanks for it.

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);
- 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

MELBOURNE Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mt. Waverley at 8 p.m.
For forthcoming programme see Group Notes.

PERTH Third Sunday Evening of each month at 74 Wyatt Road, Bayswater at 7.30 p.m.
Currently studying a series of talks introducing the main concepts in Swedenborg's writings.

SYDNEY Normally Fourth Friday Evening of each month at The Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road North Ryde at 7.45 p.m.

July 25th Dr. Al Gabay of LaTrobe University (Victoria) on *Swedenborg, Alfred Deakin and Messmer*

August 12th Annual General Meeting at 2 p.m.

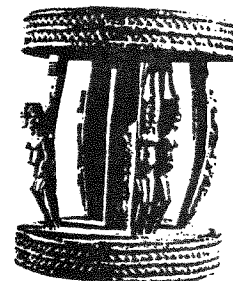
August 23rd One Day Work shop *Developing Your Spiritual Skills* with Ruth and Julian Duckworth

September 6th Celebration of Spring - commencing at 7 p.m. (See below)

September 12th An evening of Poetry and Art with various exhibitors from the Spring Celebration

CELEBRATION OF SPRING '97

It's not too late to begin that unique piece of artwork to enter in the fifth **Swedenborg Prize for Religious Art**. The theme is, of course, **Spring** with an emphasis on *Sacred Symbols of the African Religious Tradition*. An interesting program is being developed for this, our major function of the year. Our storyteller during the evening will be Colleen de Winton, a writer, musical director, singer and songwriter who has worked in Europe, New Zealand and is now based in Australia. She has an extensive background in stage performance, theatre and musical productions.



Why two copies? Members receive a second copy of *Candela* as an avenue for letting others know of the existence of this Association. *Please do hand it on or make it widely available.*

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 98881066 or 02 99132421) to obtain a membership leaflet.

5. We, learning to recognise the full flowing tide of infinite, exciting, soul-enhancing Love unceasingly given us, seek to create within ourselves a special place which we consecrate to purity, love, holiness and light so that we may present a healthy soul for the Divine purpose.

6. We, looking inward and upward, remember ourselves, our origin, our purpose and the way of its accomplishment.

In conclusion it must be said that this is a very shallow opening of the story. There remains a tremendous number of translations to make and interpretations to understand. I recommend that you continue the process. It is deeply rewarding.

Roy Simmonds

* * *

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following new members:

Lucy Tchekmeyan
Jackie Gibson
Robyn Alder
John and Ruth Blom

Board Meeting Dates:

The next two meetings in 1997 are scheduled for -

Tuesday, 15th July, and
Tuesday, 21st October

The venue is the Swedenborg Centre at 7.30 p.m.

Concluding quotation and message from the Secretary -

"The man of the Church knows that all good which in itself is good, is from God, and consequently from the Lord, who is "the true God, and eternal life," (John 1 v.20). The same is true of charity, for good and charity are one. Faith separated from charity is not faith, because faith is the light, and charity is the heat, of a man's life. If then charity is separated from faith, it is like heat separated from light, so that a man's state becomes like that of the world in winter, when all things upon the earth die. Charity and faith, to be genuine, can no more be separated than the will and the understanding. For if these are separated the understanding fades away, and presently the will also. So it is with charity and faith, because charity resides in the will, and faith in the understanding."

In the hope that the above quotation will assist you in your appreciation of man's 'winter states'. Wishing you the spirit of thankfulness in the coming months and looking forward to your support and feedback.

Michael Chester
Hon. Secretary

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GROUP NEWS

The North Ryde Committee has continued organizing monthly meetings with a guest speaker on the fourth Friday evening of the month. The Celebration of Easter was well organized by Julian Duckworth. It was a very enjoyable evening of music, dance, singing, talks, and poetry concluding with circle dancing in which everyone was involved. The evening was videoed and a copy is available at the North Ryde Centre. About 40 people turned up to the April meeting to hear Cherie Sutherland give an excellent talk on parents receiving visitations from deceased children. It was well attended by non-members. In May, 45 people came to hear John Brogan give a talk on Sacred Architecture. In June, Neville Jarvis' talk titled 'Salamanders in Venus' provided some comparisons between surface features of Venus and Earth and our inner states. 15 people attended this talk. An audio copy of the talk is available at the Swedenborg Centre.

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. Speakers organised for the coming months are Julian Duckworth (July), Ian Arnold (August), Gordon Dobbs (September), Les Sheppard (October) and Christopher Hasler (November).

The Perth Group is continuing to meet on the third Sunday of every month. They have begun looking at a series of talks prepared by the Swedenborg Library and Enquiry Centre introducing the main concepts in Swedenborg's writings.

QUOTATION TO CONTEMPLATE

When the storm is ending and the clouds begin to part, the sun's rays cause a beautiful bow to appear in the sky. The darker the sky, the more brilliant the colours. Can we relate this to our own regeneration?

for the bow, or the colour of the bow, is never manifested except within the cloud. As has been stated, it is the obscurity itself through which the sun's rays shine that is converted into different colours, and so the actual colour that is produced is determined by the nature of the obscurity which the brightness of those rays encounters. Similarly with the spiritual man. The obscurity with him, which is called 'the cloud' here, is falsity, and is the same as the intellectual side of his proprium. When innocence, charity, and mercy from the Lord are instilled into this part of his proprium, the cloud is no longer seen as falsity but as an appearance of truth together with truth from the Lord. Consequently there is the likeness of a coloured bow."

