

Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

February 2019

ISSUE 95

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 2019

We've all settled in to the new year by now. Children back at school, first meetings of the year held, holidays a distant memory.

When I'm wondering what to write about for these messages more often than not there is a recurring theme popping up that has prompted contemplation in the previous few weeks. A word or phrase that sticks in my head and makes me look at it from different angles. This time it's been the word "support".

In this day and age, we're told how important it is to be independent. Self-reliant. Self-motivating. Self-sufficient. Hmmm. Seems to put a lot of emphasis on "Self" doesn't it? Yet we know how much

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Please note: The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the S.A.A. or its committee.

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was one only.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord,

"You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, "The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

Next Issue – May 2019

Our next issue of Candela is in May. Please think about writing something to share with our readers; maybe on how the study of Swedenborg's works has helped you cope with everyday life.

The deadline is **31st April 2019**

Email to ruth@duckworth.me or post to the registered office. *Ruth*



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For details on how to join, call (02) 9888 1066 or browse <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/membership>

* * continued from page 1 * *

support we need to be able to function. Support for children as they go into their new schools or classes, inter-generational support, support for the ill, for the disabled and for the homeless. On a work level, IT-support and project teams supporting each other. Our buildings need to have the right support structures too. The Opal Towers didn't quite get that right.

Support for the environment. Support for other countries not so fortunate as ourselves. In times of distress our support network of family and friends helps get us through. I'm sure you can find a myriad of examples of the real state of our interdependence rather than independence. It's endless. And I think a great correspondence for the reality of our situation.

Because behind all of that, in truth what all of that depends upon, is the loving support of God for our world, our countries, our

communities, our families and ourselves. In short -

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

We all might be standing behind you but it's God that's standing with you.

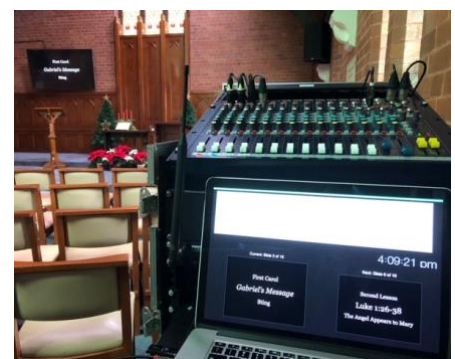
Supportively yours

Jan

New A/V System in Roseville

With the recent move into smaller headquarters in the two front rooms of the Sydney Society of the New Church manse on Shirley Road, the Swedenborg Centre no longer has a place to hold its larger gatherings and programs. Recognising the need to continue to have access to such a facility the Swedenborg Centre partnered with the SSNC to upgrade the audio, video and lighting in the SSNC sanctuary.

The next time you visit you should notice improved audio for both voice amplification and recorded music as well as lighting on the chancel and large television screen that will permit, with greater ease, the inclusion of graphics and text in both programs



and services. We may even be able to have the occasional movie night in the sanctuary, making the most of both the screen and the improved sound system.

We are now looking to the use of the system to record and even live-stream events for those unable to travel to Roseville. Do come along to one of our meetings to check it out.



IS GOD EVIL? By David Moffat

This article was originally a talk given on Sunday 5th August 2018, the tenth of a series entitled, "The Bible for Atheists". The series addresses questions posed on our local Facebook page. You can listen to this talk and the others in the series by visiting <https://lovelearnserveblog.wordpress.com>.

The Question

"The old testament is full of horror stories that paint a very evil picture of God, and which provide poor moral guidance for modern humans. [There are far too many examples for me to give specifics and



anyway I find bible research extremely dull and boring. If you don't believe me then you should watch the atheists' videos on YouTube. Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris. Google their names +atheism.]" (from Barry)

Some years ago, an interview with Stephen Fry was doing the rounds of social media, generating much interest. The interviewer put the question, "Suppose it's all true, and you find yourself at the pearly gates - what would you say to God?" Stephen Fry began, "How dare you! How dare you create so much suffering that isn't our fault? How dare you attempt to appear loving and good?" He goes on to express his preference, for a god like the Greek gods, who "didn't pretend not to be human in their appetites,

capriciousness and unreasonableness, didn't present themselves as all-seeing, all-wise, all-kind, all-beneficent. The god who created the universe is quite clearly a maniac, totally selfish."

Remembering those comments, and reading Barry's question, it became clear that you can't please everyone all the time! Barry suggests that the problem with the Old Testament is that it paints a very evil picture of God - precisely the sort of God that Stephen Fry will accept.

Taking the Bible as a book of moral guidance, it is important to understand that we learn more from positive AND negative examples than from positive examples alone. Both are required, side by side, in order for us to gain a full appreciation of any principle we might seek to understand. (There's another talk on our website which addresses this question directly, "What we learn from Opposites", <https://lovelearnserveblog.wordpress.com/2017/08/26/what-we-learn-from-opposites/>)

Let's look at an example outside of the Bible. In Shakespeare's well-known play, Hamlet sees the ghost of his father, accusing Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, of murdering him and taking his wife, and he asks Hamlet to take revenge. Act 3, Scene 3 finds Hamlet and Claudius alone, and Claudius, in prayer, confesses to the killing. Thus, Hamlet is handed both the opportunity and the evidence needed to justify the act. But he fails to act because Claudius is in prayer. Why? Because Hamlet's father, not having the opportunity to attend confession immediately before his death, is in purgatory, and in Hamlet's mind killing Claudius now would send him straight to heaven, reconciled with God. For Hamlet, that is no punishment at all.





So, he leaves Claudius alone, who at last confesses, "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

We learn a great deal from the villain of this story, Claudius, about repentance. Indeed, looking at any story, movie, or television show, you will learn as much from the villain as you will from the hero. Without the villain, the picture that you get of the virtue you are considering will be incomplete, one-sided. So, if you look at the Bible merely as a source of moral principles, and complain that it is not up to the task by virtue of the horror stories contained therein, I say it is exactly the sort of book we need to teach morals precisely because of those horror stories. Emanuel Swedenborg writes,

"For goodness is not recognized in its true character except by contrast with the less good and by the opposition of evil to it." (Divine Providence, paragraph 24 [see also Heavenly Secrets, paragraph 4172, end])

Of course, there's more to the Bible than a collection of moral lessons. One of the key principles Swedenborg teaches to help us understand the Bible is what he terms, "accommodation." This is the very simple idea that God speaks to us in our language. We see it very clearly in Jesus' use of parables, simple stories as a means to teach a deeper truth:

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 13:34)

But for Swedenborg, the whole Bible is an accommodation to our understanding of truths that would otherwise be beyond our grasp. In this series, we've talked

about a couple of different examples from culture and values of the ancient near-east, the environment in which the Bible was written. We've talked about slavery, for example. The Bible contains laws governing slavery, which is completely abhorrent to the modern reader. But in ancient near-eastern society, slavery was just part of life, and so it was necessary for those laws to be laid down in the Bible. The patriarchal society is another example. Women had no rights in the ancient near-east, they were goods and chattel, and so that is the way the Bible speaks. This is no longer the case. So, we look at the Bible, and tend to judge it because it appears to enshrine these laws, but in reality, we are judging ancient near-eastern culture into which the Bible was written. It needed to be written in that way so that those people in that time could understand and accept it. But it does not mean that we need to accept slavery and patriarchy in order to accept the Bible and the important spiritual principles that are found within it.

Here's one more example which is particularly relevant to our current concern: the covenant. Archaeologists have unearthed many documents from the culture and times of the Bible, and among them are examples of what is known as the vassal covenant. These are treaties or contracts between two powers: not equal parties, but imposed by a stronger power upon a weaker one. Imagine the situation that two nations engage in battle, one defeating the other. There are advantages for both sides in allowing the defeated king to retain some power, and so the victor would issue a vassal covenant. These documents follow a common pattern:

1. The preamble identifies the overlord and establishes his authority to issue the contract.
2. The historical prologue describes the previous relations between the two parties, and recites of the benefits conferred upon the vassal by the overlord.
3. The stipulations imposed upon the vassal (tribute to be paid, etc).



4. Provision for the safe-keeping of the treaty and for periodic public reading.
5. List of witnesses (typically these are gods, in Hittite treaties).
6. Curses for violation and blessings for fulfilment of the treaty. (see *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 1297)

In the Bible, the agreements between God and the Israelites - our only modern use for the word, "covenant" - follow this same pattern, a political framework familiar to the ordinary people who first received it. So, we can see that even the way the relationship between God and his people is expressed is an accommodation, the Lord expressing His promises in a form that was well known and well understood by people at that time. Again, Swedenborg writes:

"The situation here is that the truth from God cannot be received by anyone unless it is adjusted to what he is capable of understanding, and so unless it is seen in a natural shape and form. For initially human minds can understand only earthly and worldly things, and not at all spiritual and celestial ones. If therefore spiritual and celestial things were made plainly visible they would be cast aside, as if they were worthless." (*Heavenly Secrets*, paragraph 8783, also 8760.2; 8920)

We like to think that God speaks in our language, indeed we seem to demand that it be so, as illustrated by the question we are considering. But we also have a great deal of difficulty with God speaking in anyone else's language, and this is the crux of our problem: modern people reading an ancient text in the terms in which it had to be written in order to be received and preserved. But, imagine an ancient Word written in 21st century terms, proclaiming the emancipation of both women and

slaves. Would it have survived? No. It is curiously, then, for us to demand that God speak OUR modern language to ancient peoples, when in fact common sense dictates that He needed to speak in THEIR language for scripture to be accepted in that time, and to have had its impact.

But there is also a greater purpose at play. Anyone who reads the Bible from cover to cover will see God leading people and cultures from clearly imperfect, flawed systems of thought and practice to better ones. There are many example of this. The worship of the ancient Jews is no longer practiced by the Christian church: Judaism itself has abandoned the barbaric sacrifices which were once common throughout the ancient world, and that is the hand of the Lord at work. We no longer accept slavery as common or acceptable in everyday life: that is of the Lord's providence (don't forget that the Christian church was at the leading edge of the campaign that abolished slavery). We can also see that attitudes to revenge change through the Word. The law given through Moses defines and limits revenge, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21). But



then, the Word moves to leaving revenge to the Lord rather than carrying it out ourselves, and ultimately we find the idea of revenge abandoned altogether and being replaced with forgiveness (Matthew 5:38).



There is also a change in our understanding of and relationship with God. Compare the Vassal Treaty of the Old Testament - God as the superior power, who blesses obedience and punishes rebellion - with the more mature relationship described in John 15:15,

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." You can see how that completely resets the promise, the covenant of the Lord.

We can see there are many examples of the Lord leading through the Word from what is primitive and barbaric to something more true and more real. But it has to start with the barbaric, because that is where we start.

When God brings bad news, news of destruction, we tend to blame Him for it - but is it a good or a bad thing to do? Any sensible person would rather know if something bad is on the way, wouldn't you? In the first book of Kings, Ahab called Elijah a trouble maker, because he always seemed to be around when bad things happened (1 Kings 18:17,18). Although he wasn't the cause of those bad things, he was seen that way by those who would rather not hear the news at all. Elijah was blamed for something that wasn't his doing, because Ahab would not recognise his own responsibility. It is human nature to do just that.

The prophet Ezekiel was charged to be a Watchman, commissioned to speak difficult and uncomfortable truths. Indeed, he was told that if he did NOT speak and someone died as a result of his silence, Ezekiel would be to blame. (Ezekiel: chapter 3, 33)

We don't like being told "home truths": Does that mean we shouldn't hear them? Are they the fault of the messenger? No, they're ours.

God often appears to stand in judgment in the Bible. He is described as jealous, becoming angry, taking revenge. But He is described that way only because that is how it seems to us. The remorseless criminal may well blame the judge who put him in prison or the police who caught him, but who is to blame for his predicament?

That is the way ancient peoples saw God, and that is how we see Him in our less mature states. Despite that, God's purpose is not punishment, but reform. But how are we to know our need of reform? First of all, we need to know the reality of the evils we find in ourselves.

*"Better to
get hurt by
the truth than
comforted
with a lie."*

KHALED HOSSEINI

"The Lord never judges anyone except from good, for His will is to lift all men, however many these may be, up to heaven, indeed if it were possible, up to Himself. For the Lord is mercy itself and good itself, and [these] cannot possibly condemn anyone. It is man who, in rejecting good, condemns himself. As a person has fled habitually from good during his lifetime, so in the next life he flees from it, and therefore from heaven and the Lord." (*Heavenly Secrets*, paragraph 2335, section 3)

"With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd." (Psalm 18:25 & 26)

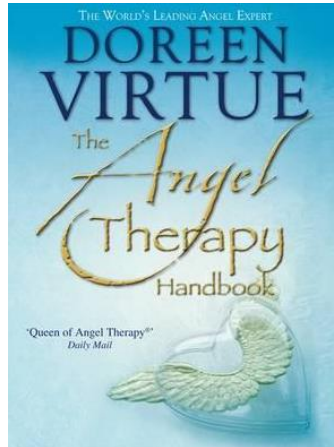


The Tale of the Angel

By George Parfoot

The book stared at me from the shelf. Now that is interesting I thought. That weekend I was baby-sitting the animals, and this would be a switch-off.

It appears that in every culture there is an awareness of other realities, which include personalities under various names. In our western culture, for example Celtic, these personalities are known by names that reflect their status and role at different levels, which is related to the frequency of their vibration.



At the bottom are elementals which include leprechauns, sprites and fairies, who relate to plants and trees. Angels and Archangels are a step up as they can communicate with us by lowering their vibration. From their point of view, at this point in time, they have a feeling of disappointment and rejection, which was not the case years ago when man himself was closer to nature. Progress has a price!

From our present attitude, they are relegated to the status of myth, superstition, witches etc. with lots of negative press which has programmed our current thinking.

This intrigued me: Their ability to communicate, their desire to help, and we certainly need all the help we can get, with benefits all round. The only requirement being to ask. And this is open to all, irrespective of cast, colour or creed, no third party or vested interest.

The simplicity is the golden key. Why not use it?

I returned home with the borrowed book. THE ANGEL THERAPY HANDBOOK by Doreen Virtue, as I had only had time to read a few chapters.

On the routine early morning dog walk I was jolted out of my day dreaming by the presence of a single white feather in my path, which I brought home. Further bed-time reading disclosed an account of an angel's presence being announced by the appearance of various objects which appear in groups of four. The following morning, same place, another four feathers. I have been doing this same walk for a year and never a feather.

Friday – Vera is stung by a paper wasp, washed and cold compress applied, redness and swelling apparent with pain.

Saturday – No improvement, in fact an increase in swelling.

Sunday – Further deterioration with blood pressure elevated to 238/90, necessity of a trip to Emergency. So, knowing that weekend casualty would be a long wait I grabbed my reading glasses and a book.

First surprise, Wyong Hospital ain't what it used to be. Emergency has gone, replaced by three different departments. So, in we go to Triage, Reception and Treatment where you actually see a doctor. We were impressed by the efficiency and attitude. This was a lot different to previous encounters with the system.

We were asked into the doctor's office, name given, not heard by me and forgotten by Vera. Of medium build and slow in movement, certainly not under stress.

He promptly fetched another chair for me.



Examined Vera's hand which was oedematous and said it, the wedding ring, would have to come off as it was restricting. Glancing at me for an understanding nod of approval. But then he asked, "What are you reading?" as I was still clutching the book.

Vera passed it over to him and with a quick glance at the title and contents asked me, "Do you still need my services?"

After very careful manipulation of the swollen finger and lots of lubricating the ring was removed intact. I was of course extremely worried, that I would be up for a new gold ring!

Subsequent treatment of IV injection, Hydrocortisone ointment by the nurse, also very compassionate, we were

allowed to go home, impressed by the service.

After sleeping on the events, I voiced that the doctor had behaved like an angel, for the whole episode felt like it had been orchestrated. Leaving the question, "Is that a possibility?"

The following mornings walk I was confronted by a single white flower that I recognised, as we had the same shrub in our first house on the Central Coast, an old house that was deceased estate.



The common name is Angels Trumpet – Datura Candida.

News

We are happy to have a new SAA committee member.

Allow me to introduce myself **By Howard Thompson**

Hello readers of Candela. As you may be aware, the Sydney Society of the New Church, following the retirement of their long-serving minister Julian Duckworth, has called Howard Thompson to serve as their new minister. That new minister, is me. So, you may find yourself asking, where did Howard come from? How did I get here?

My wife, Debra, and I found the New Church in the 1990's while exploring educational options for our oldest (and only at the time) child. What we found was the Bryn Athyn Church School, a New Church primary school located just outside of the city of Philadelphia U.S.A. (Bryn Athyn is an intentional community founded on Swedenborgian principles 100 year ago.) At the time I was working as an insurance executive and Debra was an administrative assistant at the Pennsylvania Ballet. While



we both considered ourselves people of faith, we were married in the Anglican Church and did attend on a regular basis, I do not believe that in our late 20's we were fully engaged in our faith. Looking for the best education we

could find for our daughter, neither of us was prepared for the profound effect her enrolment in a New Church School would have on our lives.

Several years in and we were fully integrated into the Bryn Athyn community, attending church regularly, joining a doctrinal class and even attending the General Assembly held in Canada in 2000. As our daughter grew and two brothers were added to the family, so too did our faith grow. In 2007 I undertook a formal (though part-time) study of the teaching



of Swedenborg via the Theological School in Bryn Athyn. In 2008 after many discussions and much prayer, I left my insurance business and enrolled full-time in Theological School.

For several years the Thompson family had 2 children in the Bryn Athyn Elementary School, 1 child at the Academy of the New Church Secondary School and me attending the Bryn Athyn College not 1,000 metres from the other schools. As a side note, I can tell you that it was no easy task to return to the classroom and complete a Masters course of study when one was in their mid 40's.

After ordination in 2011 our first posting was in Bryn Athyn. That posting lasted only a year when in 2012 I accepted a call to serve the Colchester (UK) Society of the New Church. We served Colchester for 6 wonderful years and with the end of our UK visas on the horizon we accepted a call to Sydney. If England was a big move, Sydney was a BIG move, but we are adjusting. It is a beautiful part of the world with a rich New Church history and fine, dedicated, people committed to continuing service to the Roseville community in the light of the Heavenly Doctrines.

I have joined the SAA committee to help further spread the teachings of Swedenborg.

There is obviously much more to our story but this should serve as an introduction and I look forward to further engagement with Candela in the years to come.



(The photo was taken atop Mt. Kosciuszko during the recent New Church Retreat)

NECKS

by Julian Duckworth

For Christmas, I got something to cool me down during the long hot Australian summer. It's an Ice Towel which is designed to rapidly cool down your body. It's enclosed in a sealed tube and it is kept damp in there. You don't put it in the fridge but leave it handy. You take out the rubbery towel and shake it to activate its coldness "that lasts for hours". Then you put it round your neck to instantly feel the cooling effect. And yes, it certainly works a treat. It seems that if your neck is cool, the whole of you is going to be cool too.

I've come across previous versions of this and I have two rolled-up cloth strips in which are dry jelly capsules which you

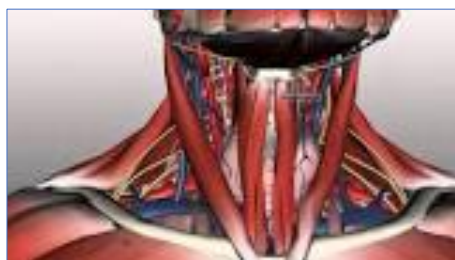
soak in icy water and similarly hang round your neck to get the benefit. Except for the time I forgot about the tube which I'd left in the sink and it swelled up to be as stiff as a poker and I could only put it down my back...

This fascinating principle of the neck being the place on us to cool could come from its exposure to strong sun hitting us in between our shirt or blouse collar and our hat. If our neck catches that intense sun we are really going to suffer all over. But I think there is more to the importance of our necks than only this sweatiness on a hot day.



Every part of our body with no exception is an 'illustration' of something to do with heaven and the way that heaven itself works, especially in its usefulness. So, just as an example of this, think about your teeth and what they do. They bite or even tear off bits of food, they grind pieces of food into sludge which we can then swallow easily, and they nearly always come in two sets: baby teeth and adult teeth. Each of these facts about teeth plus many others describe something about the correspondence or spiritual heavenly meaning of how teethness (?) is part of the life and use of heaven. We won't go through possibilities now because it is good to work towards your own understanding, but here is one clue – teeth are involved in the very first contact we make with food, long before it is distributed as nourishment round the body.

In the same way, our neck carries a heavenly correspondence which we will go through and describe. Many parts of our bodies are places where things become joined such as knees, shoulders, hips, ankles and very importantly, necks. Necks join all the content and activity which goes on in our head with the rest of our body, such as our heart and our hands. In our mind we come up with some inspired idea to start something, do something or be something. Great! Except that for anything



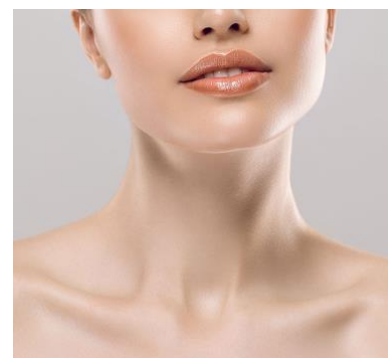
to come of this fantastic idea, it has got to take on some action and shape by

getting passed through to the rest of our body where the doing gets done. Via the neck.

An average neck is about 14 centimetres across but think about all the different things which have to pass through it to keep head and body together; your spine and spinal cord, your trachea, your oesophagus, many blood vessels, glands, nerves and muscles. Busy place indeed! Kings Cross train station in London is

reputed to have thirteen underground layers carrying tunnels, cables and ducts. Our necks probably beat that. Try this: Put your hand out and pick something up and look at it. Your eyes (up in your head) saw and chose some object and your hand (which can't see) was guided to pick it up. Picked up safely sends a return message through your neck back to your eye via your brain, all in an instant. No neck, no achievement. "Off with his head" will always be a death sentence.

So, the spiritual meaning of the neck is very much to do with keeping the balance of things. This has a whole stack of implications. When you keep the balance between two things you incorporate the



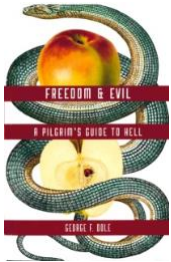
place of each, the need for both together in what we sometimes call a symbiotic relationship (like the rhino and the tick bird who both help the other). An easy example is the partners in a marriage, usually a wife and husband, but true of any two committed people finding their relationship. A bit more abstractedly would bring up good and truth, love and wisdom, faith and charity, and the key idea of what is inner and what is outer, all of these are dealt with extensively in Swedenborg's writings bringing out the need each time for both in every pair.

One very special association of the neck as a joining and a passageway is to do with the person of Jesus Christ. Let me introduce this idea carefully. Swedenborg is in no doubt that the person of Jesus Christ is completely divine but this divine life is also completely human and at times felt itself to be only human and the divinity part of it went into some obscurity. The purpose of God coming into this world was to ensure (by overcoming temptations) the means for people to have spiritual freedom to work on their salvation by choosing what is good and true...*Continued on page 12....*



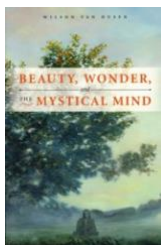
Discounted Book Offers for the Quarter

As a reader of **Candela**, if you order the following titles during the next quarter, you will receive the discounts listed below (while stocks last). Complete the Order Form (you can copy it) and return it to the Swedenborg Centre or phone on 02 9416 2812 and mention this notice.



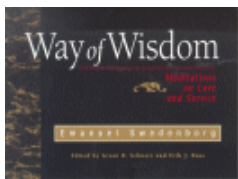
Freedom and Evil by **George Dole**

190 pages, paperback, RRP \$24, now **only \$15** (plus postage) for this quarter. Should we be good simply to avoid punishment in the life hereafter? George Dole suggests just asking such questions theoretically doesn't get us far, but examining the words of someone who has been there helps. Dole draws on Swedenborg's writings who wrote that we are unconscious residents of the spiritual world as well as being in the material world, and the hells he encountered have mirrors in our everyday lives. A topic well worth knowing, presented by a seasoned translator of Swedenborg's works.



Beauty, Wonder and the Mystical Mind by **Wilson van Dusen**

1999, 150 pages, paperback, RRP \$20, now **only \$12** (plus postage) for this quarter. Writing from lifelong personal experience in the spiritual dimension, Van Dusen compares the mystical to the aesthetic, noting the similar ways in which art and epiphany move and elevate the experiencer. Includes effective, practical advice.



Way of Wisdom by **Grant Schnarr & Erik Buss (editors)**

1999, 146 pages, paperback, RRP \$12, now **only \$8** (plus postage) for this quarter. Meditations on Love and Service. A delightful book of 100 gems of wisdom from Swedenborg to help the reader grow in spirit and humanity. The back of the book has short commentaries for each quotation and source paragraph numbers.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

If you are not yet a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia you might like to consider it. Feel free to contact the Centre for further **info on how you can become an SAA member** as a way to support this valuable work. Check the website at www.swedenborg.com.au (click "Members" in the top menu) which contains more details on benefits, membership rates and an application form.

Details of **group events** at various locations around Australia are advertised on the website at www.swedenborg.com.au home page (click "Events" in the top menu). Fliers for events (as a PDF document) can be found by clicking on the relevant event title. The Events and meetings web page also lists location and contact details of your nearest group convenor.

It would be good to establish Groups in other areas. If you can help, please phone Joe Vandermeer on (02) 9416 2812 or email him at joe@swedenborg.com.au;

Our website is continually being updated with special offers, new free study material and latest news and information.

Latest News and Information

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So, God, in coming as a person, gained a firsthand experience of what it is actually like to be a human being whom God has created. This was something new for God to have the experience of rather than just the knowledge of.

And looking at this the other way round, from our angle, by God coming



as a man, we have a viewable picture of divine life in the form of a person – Jesus Christ – who walked and talked, loved and felt, healed and told parables, and all the other personal actions that are in the gospels. Two ways which meet in Jesus in the middle, at what we call the “nexus” and note the closeness to our common word “neck”. And necks join two things, in this instance, God and man, and man and God.

Let's finish by looking at two very similar situations that are mentioned in the Bible. First, the reconciliation of Jacob

and Esau. Jacob had deceived Esau twice and he fled in fear of his brother. Over many years he became rich and prosperous. Eventually, and with some trepidation, he met up with Esau who ran

to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and wept. Notice the phrase "he fell on his neck". Second, and almost word for word the same, the end of the story of the Prodigal

Son who went away and spent his inheritance in riotous living and came home to be just a servant and no longer a deserving son. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

Reconciliation, forgiveness, acceptance, understanding and love are neck space things bringing the human needs and possibilities together and bypassing the lingering doubts and the reasons why not. So, the neck beautifully serves as the uniting medium.

The love of the Lord's life

When the Lord was in the world, his life was altogether the life of a love for the whole of the human race which he burned to save for ever. That life was of the most intense love by which he united himself to the Divine and united the Divine to himself. For being itself, or Jehovah, is pure mercy from having love for the whole human race, and that life was one of sheer love such as it can never be with any human being.

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