

Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

September 2021

ISSUE 105

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

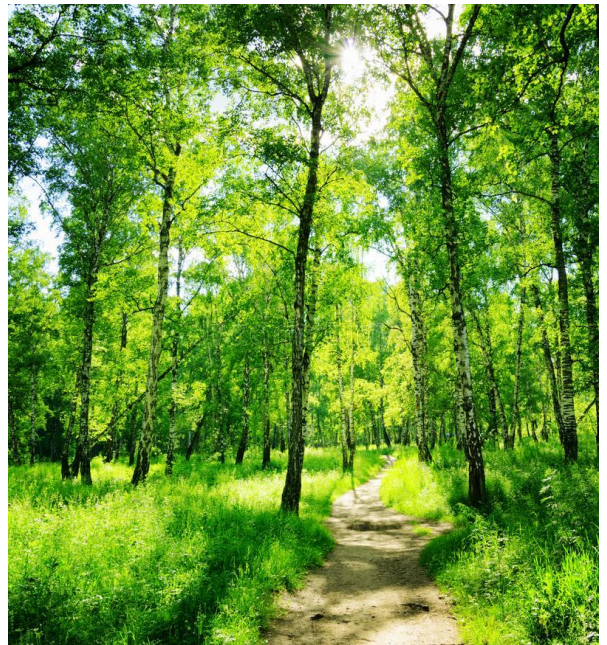
Here's another issue of Candela which we hope you will enjoy reading and gaining from, as we move into Spring, warmer days, new growth, and our own personal spring-like experiences.

I guess that the colour we most associate with Spring is green, because of the new shoots, stalks, blades and leaves which burst forth from the pent-up buds which have been swelling and biding their time in Winter. Here in Australia, the difference between foliage through all the four seasons is far less marked than say in Canada or Scandinavia where Spring is riotous after black (dark nights) and white (cold snow) for several months.

Perhaps one equivalent here would be the way that after a rare rainfall, the western desert suddenly comes ablaze with the Sturt Desert Pea where nothing looked alive before.

But back to green. I would stick my neck out and say that there must be far more different greens than any other colour. I think that's because it is the colour of life... well, of plant life.

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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.

Next Issue –December 2021

Our next issue will be in December, so if you would like to write about a spiritual topic, or about Christmas please get it to me by **15th November 2021**

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

Ruth



SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION of Australia Inc

ARBN 109 811 985

Registered Office:

Swedenborg Centre

4 Shirley Road, Roseville NSW 2069

Tel: 02 9416 2812

Email: saa@swedenborg.com.au

Website: www.swedenborg.com.au

National Committee Members:

Julian Duckworth (President)

Wayne Kasmar (Secretary)

Michael Chester (Treasurer)

Ruth Duckworth (Newsletter)

Howard Thompson

Debra Thompson

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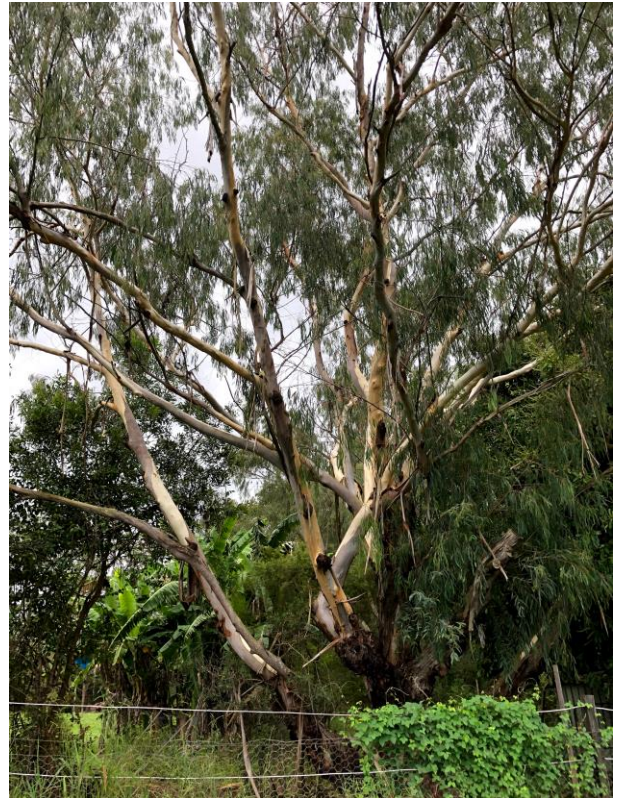
I look out of my window and see every kind of green from dark bottle green to light lime green, no two trees the same. The lawn is far from homogenous because it has several kinds of grass in competition with each other.

Another favourite green of many is that of the Australian bush, where grey green reigns in an infinitely varied picture, unique, unknown in any other place on the planet.

And this ubiquitous green is apparently the colour of what is alive. In some traditions it is the heart colour, the heart chakra. Why green though? Well, yellow and blue put together make green, and perhaps the yellow's the sunshine and the blue is the water (and the sky too!) and put sun and water together and you are going to get eruption of nature.

But there's some science too. Green in plants indicates the presence of a

pigment called chlorophyll which traps energy from the sun and converts it into sugars and enzymes, using carbon dioxide and water and breaking down the H₂O and releasing the oxygen which we can then breathe in. Only green does this and a tree without leaves isn't going to live much longer even well-rooted in the ground.



But what might spiritual green be all about, to what could green correspond? I think one thing is that we are meant to 'feed' on Divine truth (the Sun, the Word, the Lord) and convert it into energy which, with us, isn't just running a marathon but is the will to, the motivation to live by what we have been fed with. So, it really is "Eat your greens up!"

In the whole climate change area, one thing which regularly gets pointed out is that deforestation harms the natural removal of carbon dioxide and the provision of oxygen. 30% of the world's land surface is forested and agriculture has killed off 50% of this total.

So, where's the spiritual correspondence in that? Bear with me.



Carbon Dioxide harms the atmosphere because it traps gases and creates heat. Oxygen helps the atmosphere because it enriches the atmosphere with a 'shield' which lessens the dangerous effect of very strong sunlight.

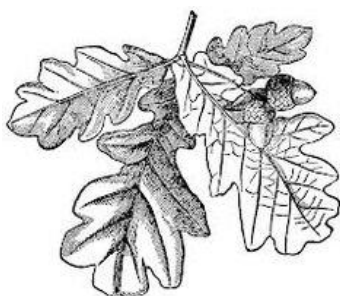
So, if we convert that equation to spiritual things, carbon dioxide can be seen as a fairly self-centred approach to life and oxygen can be seen as an altruistic everything-centred approach to life. The green in every leaf there that exists is collecting the selfish stuff and giving out the loving stuff. All got from the sun, which spiritually is the Divine, but getting internally processed.

So why then are there so many different greens? Aha, because Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell 56 tells us that heaven (where the oxygen is) is perfected by its variety. The more variety there is, the more heaven is what it is.

Well, now it is probably time for us to go and plant something, which, while I've been tapping this out, I've seen my neighbour planting things in her garden bed. This synchronicity tends to make me think I was meant to write what I have but I should point out that I started first and then she came out with her trowel and plants!



Beech leaves



Oak leaves

Something amazing to end on. At the UK New Church/Swedenborg retreat in England, Purley Chase, there is a tree which is an example of a rare fusion. A beech tree and an oak tree grew close as saplings, and for some reason, they fused

into one tree which each year bears hybrid beechy-oak leaves and oaky-beech leaves. An expert from Kew Gardens inspected this and said that while it's rare it isn't unknown. "You can't make it happen!" And in that lovely spiritual place, there grows green a representation of the marriage of all good and all truth.

In these present times, stay safe and go well,

Julian



A quote from Swedenborg's Spiritual Diary, a collection of his observations and notes of his spiritual experiences.

185. I have sometimes fallen into thoughts about mundane affairs and the cares connected with them and just so often have I fallen away from the company of spirits. I perceived the cause of this to be that the core interior corresponding things were then separated, and the mind only inhered in external things without any correspondence. This is why the sons of the Ancient Church throughout their life spoke with angels and had continual communication with them, for in the externals the corresponding internals were represented to them. But as long as man indulges only in external things, he is removed from manifest communication with angels. Man is ruled by spirits, and these by angels, and in this manner, he is ruled by God Messiah by his permitting, and this in all things and in the very least things, and thus men are guarded from the evil spirits every single moment.



Gone Fishing!

by Joe Vandermeer

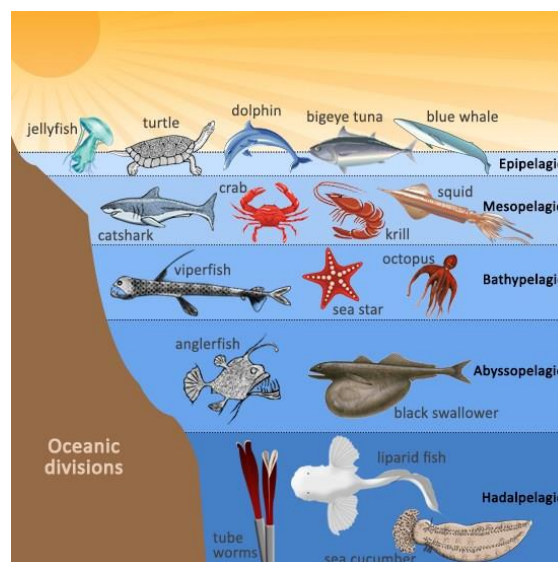
Every body is unique. And I do mean *body*. Some bodies are gifted in certain departments in which others are lacking. This was once brought to my attention when someone alerted me (and everyone else!) that I, in comparison with others, was overendowed in a certain zone of my body (height), but in another zone I was rather deficient. She meant that I didn't have much of a bottom, nothing to sit on. Perhaps the allocated material had all been spent on giving me extra height? I never checked with God for an answer. But at least it was a source of amusement, at least for her, not so much for myself. After all, I was used to it (my bottom, that is) and so I didn't regard it as a problem. Actually, to see one's own bottom is fairly difficult at the best of times, which to me meant "out of sight, out of mind". I have made friends with many cushions, because other than plastic surgery, what could I do about the situation? I took comfort in them being amused, even though to me it seemed a fairly abysmal joke. 'Abysmal'? Yes, *abyss* means 'bottomless', while *abysmal* means 'extreme bottomlessness' (from the Greek: *a-* 'without' + *byssos* 'bottom'). I relate to that...

It is not surprising that like the parts of our body, the atmosphere above us too is divided into parts: *troposphere*, *stratosphere*, *mesosphere* and *thermosphere*. So too are the regions under the surface of the ocean which are known as the *Epipelagic*, *Mesopelagic*, *Bathypelagic*, *Abyssopelagic*, and *Hadalpelagic* zones.

What caught my interest is the *Abyssopelagic* zone, also known as the *Abyss* or *Abyssal* zone. Since this region



is several kilometres under the ocean surface, you can well imagine that conditions there are extreme. It is completely dark and near freezing. The pressure is enormous, being the equivalent of living under a mountain of dry sand that's more than a kilometre high. Yet creatures can and do live there. They have been given unique features to cope with these harsh conditions.



One of the most remarkable things that lives in that layer of the ocean is the *anglerfish*, of which there are about 300 species. Studying this fish made me realise that having an odd-shaped body part is not so abysmal when compared to the features of this amazing creature. It has a huge mouth endowed with vast translucent teeth. It has jet black eyes and a strange lure dangling from its head. Enough to cause nightmares, and that's not even mentioning its behaviours! This is no Nemo.

Anglerfish come in several varieties, most of which are less than 30cm long, but some can grow up to one meter long.



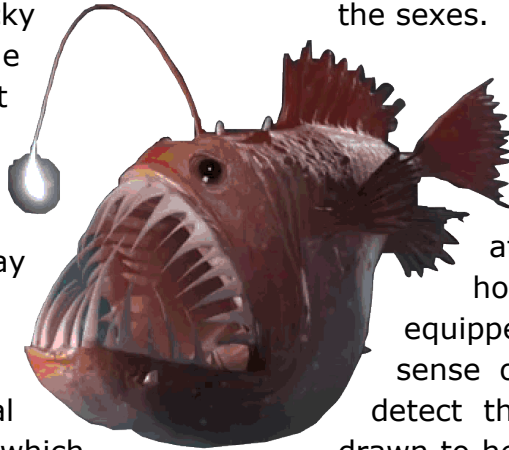
Meals in the depths of this oceanic midnight zone are few and far between, and anglerfish are not picky eaters and will consume almost anything that swims or crawls. Some of these fish have very long tentacles capable of detecting a meal a long way off.

The dangling rod on its head (a modified dorsal fin) has a bulb on the end, which is a sack of skin in which live bioluminescent bacteria whose light acts as a lure to attract prey. The fish and bacteria have a symbiotic relationship, once probably acquired from the surrounding waters, the bacteria are no longer equipped to survive without their host.

The extreme dark eyes of the fish are designed to capture maximum light, so it can better see what it's about to eat, while the large razor-sharp teeth are attached to a distensible jaw and expandable stomach so that it can take care of any morsel of food up to twice its own size. Many species of anglerfish have long feelers to help them locate prey in the dark of the deep ocean. Some eyes have developed a special infra-red sense so that they can sense body heat. At this stage the wolf from Little Red Riding Hood should come to mind. I get the sense that it is built to be an eating machine and that this is fortunately its favourite occupation.

A few hundred years ago when scientists first discovered these fish and tried to classify them, they regarded it as a species of large fish and another species of small fish. Not until the 1920s was it discovered that the large and the small fish were the same species, the large one was the females while the little one was the

male, in the same way that some spider bodies of the one species differ between the sexes.



Male anglerfish don't have the lure, nor the large jaw and teeth of the female. When a female feels like attracting a male she releases a hormonal scent. Males are equipped with an extremely sensitive sense of smell by which they easily detect the female, and are feverishly drawn to her even in the pitch dark. Once the male closes in, he bites the female usually on her belly, and does not let go until the cells of his face actually fuse with her body, permanently joining the pair in incredibly unholy matrimony. The male's eyes and fins atrophy away, and here he will live out the rest of his life nourished by her blood (so eating whatever she had for dinner), although he can still breathe with his own gills and, most importantly, still produces sperm with which she can fertilise her eggs. Is that the definition of 'fatal attraction'?

Up to six males have been known to attach themselves to a single female by 'kissing' (biting) her. He ends up a complete parasite, only being useful to her as a pair of gonads. Talk about mating for life!

Everything in our natural world has a spiritual counterpart from which it is causally derived and to which it is linked. One reason for that is so we might derive useful instructions from such links called 'correspondences', a picture-language which can be read and understood for learning fruitful spiritual insights. Such insights can help us understand our inner mental-spiritual lives and assist us to establish aims that lead to a healthy and useful ongoing life for ourselves.



Every correspondence has both a positive meaning as well as an opposite meaning. Context can be important in deciding which interpretation is being referred to.

So how do we make sense of the spiritual significance eluded to by such deep-ocean creatures?

Water corresponds to knowledge and sciences, and an ocean is a body or collection of water, which represents a collection of knowledge of the sciences in the natural mind where such things generally reside. In the opposite sense an ocean can mean a collection of biased views and false and mistaken assumptions and beliefs.

Darkness represents the things which belong to a person's ego because they are without the inner light of wisdom, and mainly consist of false beliefs about oneself, reality and the world. Thick darkness represent evils.

Cold places correspond to states in us devoid of love. Hellish spirits are in coldness and darkness in proportion to their state of hatred and their endorsements of falsity.



Deep things below tend to represent more external things, while things higher up represent more internal things which are also more perfect.

Fish correspond to an acceptance of factual knowledge whose habitat or dwelling place is the ocean or natural mind. In the opposite sense fish denote those who think sensually, trusting only the sciences, from which we might so easily conceive false ideas (when we don't take into account spiritual matters).

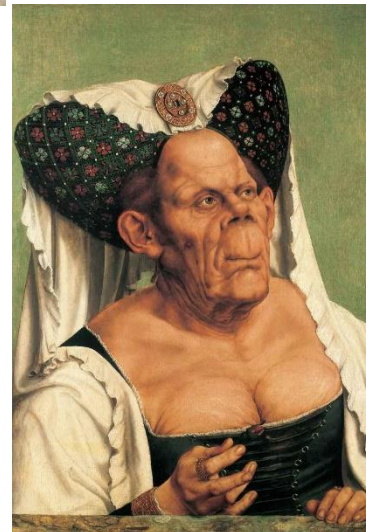
Eyes correspond to intellectual sight, i.e. perception and understanding, and mouths take in that which is outside oneself, outermost things, things which serve to provide our nourishment and sustain us.

Swedenborg describes in *Heaven and Hell* (paragraph 555) that self-love and love of worldly things was the cause and reason behind some diabolical, frightful, ugly, monstrous deformities of appearance in the bodies and faces of people whom he had often encountered in the spiritual world's hells. It was explained to Swedenborg that such forms expressed (corresponded to) the quality of those people's inner state.



Does the sketch by Leonardo Da Vinci of a caricatured person (1500) or the depiction of *The Ugly Duchess* (1534) by Quentin Matsys give some idea of what Swedenborg might have seen?

We will get more out of correspondences if we can see that the differences between male and female form and behaviour in the natural world expresses in the world of picture-language the qualities of truth, facts, wisdom, knowledge as 'male' and the qualities of love, affections and feelings as 'female'. Each person can embody, express and manifest all those ('male' AND 'female') characteristics, no matter which gender we are. So, lessons learnt from correspondences can apply to all individuals and is not dependent on – or commenting on – one's personal gender.



So, if we see that the 'male fish' is dominated by the 'female fish', we can see that our love or appetite (a feeling) for certain 'facts' can virtually 'swallow up' and remain dominant over all other facts. And



especially here if we consider the opposing sense, a person who makes a strong choice (large 'fish') to prefer to think only from what the senses tell, then smaller facts often become absorbed into the realm of the dominant (possibly even false) idea while we strive to keep that dearly loved idea alive in our minds and hearts. We see this very strongly in looking at the effect and prevalence of cognitive biases, conspiracy thinking, and even cults. It's often the strength of a fearful idea (as in a conspiracy notion that we're all going to be swallowed up, dominated, victimised and overwhelmed by something powerful), which is a feeling that uses reason to support it like the 'female-male' dynamic of the anglerfish, which lures and dominates its diminutive partner into life-long servitude.

It's an advertising poster for clear and sound thinking. Spiritual health depends on our mental health and only we can choose whether we will openly consider another point of view, seek out the truth, and act upon that in order to do what is good. Our choice is echoed and reinforced by much that happens in the spiritual world, as Swedenborg clearly witnessed, experienced and described, but the details of how all that hangs together is a story for another episode.

Wishing you a pleasant journey of discovery as you dive deep into your own being to see what lurks below the conscious surface, while also studying what also occurs high above. The world is like a glorious picture-book of examples about all our various possible manifestations and states, which makes the world full of guidance and warnings, and so it can always remain for us immensely fascinating and a powerful guiding beacon.

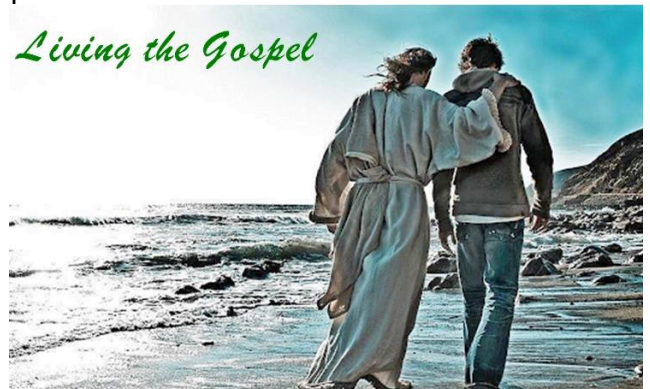
Recommending the talk 'Swedenborg's Christ' by Michael Chester.

Back in 2004, Julian Duckworth gave a very special talk titled 'Swedenborg's

Christ'. It's special because it covers a cosmic event that changed our lives. Julian looks carefully at the need for God to incarnate into this world and what it accomplished, and also explores the corresponding personal truth that the Lord comes into our own individual 'world'.

What I liked about this presentation was that it reminded me of the amazing event of the Lord God incarnating as a human being into planetary life and the many fascinating aspects associated with it. In particular, I liked the 8 points Julian mentioned when he reflected on the flow-on effects of the incarnation to humanity, the first being spiritual freedom. Another one is that we are able to relate to the Divine in a way that works. In our prayers we are able to address the visible human form of the Divine, strengthening our personal connection.

Living the Gospel



I consider it providential to my writing this article, that some of these benefits were mentioned in an article I read the previous day on dealing with the fear of coronavirus by Stephen Russell-Lacy. This is what he has to say under the heading 'Personal God and fear of coronavirus'

Religious believers like others may have a fear of coronavirus. The practice of Christian prayer is a focus on God as a person.

Those who favour a personal God suggest that any idea of God as an infinite force or abstract law behind the facts of science, that is anything other than Divine Human, actually makes God something less than we ourselves.

It is argued that without our sense of God's human dimension there would be no point to looking for the benefit of



communication through prayer and no chance of sensing God's personal presence. God as divine humanity means we can use the word 'you' when addressing divine Spirit.

This you-me relationship allows a sense of trust and acceptance to develop. Feeling accepted as 'a person warts and all' allows us to be honest about our need for improvement as human beings. This sense of trust helps us to rely on our God to find peace and calm in a frantic world and where there is fear of coronavirus.

For the full article go to <https://www.spiritualquestions.org.uk/2020/04/fear-of-coronavirus-who-to-pray-to/>

Because of its significance, the recording of Julian's talk is now available on the Swedenborg Australia YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1wPo0KME9Y>

Below the video you will find links to the transcript and short videos that cover similar topics to enhance your reflections on these matters. One person's comment said 'Julian has an excellent presentation style and makes things relatively easy to understand.' Well worth watching. Also recommended is Julian's article 'Swedenborg's Christ' in the previous Candela (June 2021).

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And now on a very different subject.

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What makes hell "heaven" and what makes hell hell?

by Julian Duckworth

This article is all about the state that we call hell and my aim is to clear up a number of misperceptions or anxieties about the hell that can be in an individual person and the hell that can be in a community in the spiritual world.

In a way that I would call healthy, we much prefer to talk about heaven than about hell. Goodness, we say, there is such a lot of wickedness (or whatever word you use) that goes on in this world, that to

contemplate a person being in hell or in a hellish state maybe for ever, or to think about some eternal community where everybody there is out to "finish off" everyone else there (except it's impossible to do that!) let alone seek to stir up horrible thoughts and feelings in us here, that sounds too terrible to contemplate.

Some of us would go further and say that God (who is Love) simply wouldn't allow it to be like that, at least not for very long, never mind for ever, but God would and must eventually bring each suffering spirit out and over to eternal happiness and heaven.

The only thing that we don't hear is exactly how God (who certainly IS Love!) is going to bring that about. And there's the nub of the problem.

Recognising that heaven and hell are real and that they exist because they are created from states in a person's mind and heart, makes talking about hell - along with all its ramifications - an important topic for us. If you are someone who sincerely feels that hell has nothing to do with you because good is all you desire and live for, I would, with great respect, say, "Bear with me, please."



Years ago, I sat with six or seven others for lunch out somewhere, and after we'd eaten we chatted over coffee. Suddenly one person started complaining about something, and others joined in, and soon this became a ding-dong about how bad things can get and it included certain people too, who weren't with us at the



time. Then one person drained their coffee and said, smiling, "I think we've been in hell for the last fifteen minutes. Time we left!"

The interesting thing to note is that we had quite enjoyed ourselves in those fifteen minutes!

Before we go any further, there are a number of ground-rules to set down:

- We are going to live after we die, ultimately either in heaven or in hell.
- God never punishes anybody, ever; nobody is "sent" anywhere.
- Hell-on-earth is not a "trailer" for what hell in the spiritual world is like.
- God does not want there to be hell and infinitely wishes that everyone was in heaven.
- Nobody is pre-destined to be bound to end up in hell no matter what they do.
- There is no immediate mercy when we die which puts everything right and brings all into heaven.
- To begin to understand heaven and hell and ourselves we need to understand what our 'ruling love' means.

Go back to the title for this article... "What makes hell "heaven" and what makes hell hell?"

Implicit in that strange wording is a profound truth, which is, that to those who are in hell, it is delightful to be there, to the extent that it feels to be heaven to them, yet at the same time it is frustrating to the point of torment and rage. These two quite opposite emotions are entwined and co-existing in each person who's in hell. The tragedy is that this predicament has come to be exactly what the person involved in it always wants it to be like, and repeatedly. Any alternative to it would be dismissed as absurd. "Why would anyone not be like me?"

A logical follow-on from this, note, is that *everybody goes to heaven*, is in heaven, in what they believe heaven is and by inference, the opposite to that would be

sincerely felt to be hell. Remember all the time that nobody is ever sent to hell, by God, or some panel of judges, but they take themselves to their hellish heaven. In the same way, nobody gets rewarded with heaven, but those who go there, go because it attracts them.

Let's illustrate this with a contrast. Those in heaven love God as their Lord, provider, protector and friend, and they feel a deep freedom in being led by God. They see hell, and with sadness and compassion say that while they themselves are free, those in hell are slaves. Those in hell love themselves and 'love' others in order to get what they want to get. They may see or hear about heaven and God and say that while they themselves are free to do just what they want, all those in heaven are slaves to that tyrant, God.

We need to move into an important and often-debated area, which is the question of whether hell is for ever? While this awesome idea sounds a bit like "How big is the universe?" it is the key point for a lot of people who can to some extent cope with badness in people and a kind of period (purgatory?) during which they come to see the error of their ways and put the work in to change from hell to heaven. This feeling of horror about an eternal hell is a very understandable feeling in people who care deeply about other people, and it comes from a good motivation. But it's also rather naïve.

Let's use the example of bringing up a child for a moment. When a child becomes old enough to explain things to, a parent may tell the child to remember to do X. The child does X but the day after doesn't, so gets reminded. This continues on with two results. The first is that the child forgets or doesn't bother so often that the parent says, "How many times do I have to tell you to do X!" This creates a "time-line" in the relationship. The other result is that in time, the child does start doing X for all sorts of reasons, selfish and unselfish, but eventually sees that doing X is good for everybody. Years later, the child-now-married may well bless his/her parents.



So, taking that analogy, we might superimpose it on someone (NOT a child!) who always harms other people and seems to do that deliberately and with enjoyment. We think that if that person is told and counselled and therapied, that eventually they will come to their senses and slap their head and say what a complete idiot they have been. And yes, this might happen, and can and does happen IN THIS LIFE.

This life has the purpose of giving us the whole range of experiences including our own spectrum of feelings and emotions. In going through these, we meet them and we make decisions to allow them to carry on and hold sway; or to re-think, seek another way and refuse to be led by this present problem. In this life we generally have this faculty of choosing to decide. If we don't, for whatever reason, then our progress towards heaven or hell will be very different, not being based on these kind of choices.

When we leave this life and go into the spiritual world, we gradually come into quite a different situation. What we love and what we have grown to love and what we have made our habit of loving will become what leads us in what we go after in the spiritual world. This will become complete and integrated, by us. There will be as much help given to people-now-spirits as can be given, to which the new spirit will respond and confirm their love, whatever kind of love this is. There is no rejection by the spirits who help, nor condemnation nor giving up on anyone, and the purpose of this is to bring out the love that is there, ultimately the love for heaven or the love for hell.

In this newer dimension, it's helpful to us here who are in the dimension of time and space, to appreciate that 'for ever' is not a time-thing but much more about now, then now, then now, an "ad infinitum reality" which ultimately becomes one sole reality for us and about us. That's what is meant by being prepared for heaven, for

hell. What's opposite falls away and we lose any awareness of it.

Those who are choosing heaven will begin to find that their temptations or spiritual struggles lessen to be hardly any. Those who are choosing hell will begin to find that their conscience gradually fades till none of it is left. Each of these is done from Divine mercy.

The primary thing is that we each follow and firm up on the delight of our existence which becomes who we are in the end. And we really do feel that we are in heaven and that if we are in the heaven called hell, all our frustrations are only temporary setbacks to a certain success and triumph we know is about to happen.

The very thing of hell is enough to make us cry, of course, because it is so sad, so wasteful and misguided. But objectively, the fact of existence being heaven and hell is a result of Divine Mercy and in the final analysis, of Divine Love.

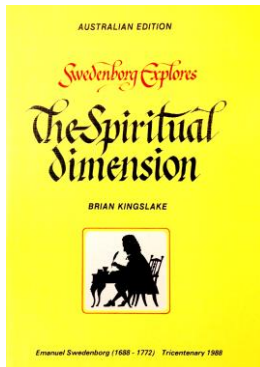
There are two more angles on this which end our study of hell. One is that along with the statement that God never punishes and never sends to hell, neither will we head for hell through having an "unfortunate heredity". If we flare up, or dominate, or fall into self-pity because of family traits or even early upbringing, this is not "us"; it has been handed us and can be removed, maybe with difficulty, but we did not choose it. Hell revolves around us knowing what we could turn away from, but we will not, we confirm and re-confirm until it conforms us. Hell is based on living wilfully, knowingly and deliberately.

The other angle is that hell can serve a use. Hell seeks to undermine and comes to us and our private thoughts with the purpose of weakening us to force compliance. Therein can lie hell's defeat, when we see its poison and we say, 'Oh no, never that.' And take care here, if hell can be seen to be useful, does that mean God needs hell to be there? I will let you think that one through.



Quarterly Book Discounts

Due to the Swedenborg Centre remaining having been closed during the Sydney Covid lockdown, we have decided to extend the previous offer from the last issue. **Candela** readers who order the following titles during the next quarter will receive the discounts listed below, **while stocks last**. Complete the Order Form below and send to the Swedenborg Centre or phone on 02 9416 2812 and mention this page.

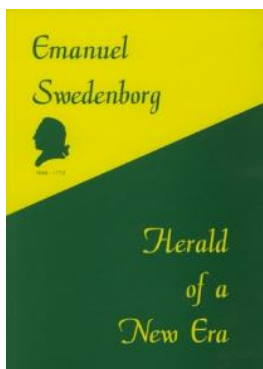


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Your details (in capitals please):

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms. _____

Address: _____

_____ **Postcode** _____

Credit Card Payment: Visa/Mastercard No. _____ Expiry ____ / ____

Signature: _____ Name on Card _____ Phone No. () _____



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

If you are not yet a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia you might like to consider becoming one. Check the website at www.swedenborg.com.au (click "Contact" in the top menu) which contains more details on benefits of **membership** and an application form which contains the current membership rates.

Also check the website at www.swedenborg.com.au for details of **group events** which are held online (and/or physically except during Covid lockdowns) at various locations around Australia. Follow the "about → contact" menu items on the website for a list of locations and contact info of your nearest group convenor, and see the "events" menu item for Zoom links so you can join online events.

Our new website is continually being updated with new study material and latest news and information.

If you're still in a Covid lockdown, here is something helpful to pass the time.



pre-Covid-lockdown

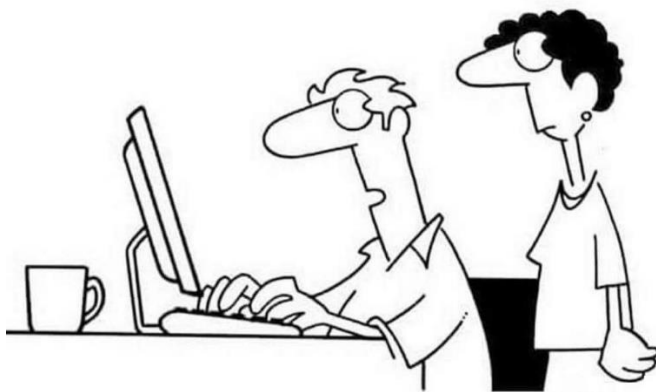


post-Covid-lockdown

Boss: You've been late 3 times this week. Do you know what that means?
Me: It's Wednesday.

I named my dog "5 miles" so I can tell people I walked 5 miles.

A huge stack of toilet rolls fell on me in the supermarket. I'm ok though, just soft tissue damage.



"I'm writing about all the things I ought to do before I die. It's my oughtobiography."

