

# Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

**MARCH 2023**

**ISSUE 111**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Here we are with another issue of the Candela, the journal of the Swedenborg Association of Australia. There are some interesting and helpful articles in it for our spiritual work and journey. Enjoy and use it.

The word "blessing" seems to have an almost exclusive religious connection. I bless God for the goodness in my experience of life and yes, for just being alive. I believe God blesses me like God blesses each and every other person in ways we can see and ways we can't. So that is a two-way thing, me and God, God and me. And we can feel blest or is it blessed?

When we come to us and other people, the use of "bless" diminishes. Not

**[Next Issue –June 2023](#)**

There is just one main article this month but I have found it very helpful. I hope you do too. Our next issue will be in June, please send any articles to me by May 18<sup>th</sup>.  
**Email to [ruth@duckworth.me](mailto:ruth@duckworth.me)** or post to the registered office.

*Ruth*



completely though; I've heard quite a lot of people say, "Oh, bless you!" when you've given them something or helped them. Granted, these people are usually those who are or have been church-goers so it's in their blood and vocabulary.

But have you noticed that while we may say, "Bless you!", when we say "Bless him/her" there's sometimes a bit of a downer in the comment? "Bless him, he's not got much up top." So, there's compassion and fellow-feeling, but it's being angled in an awkward way. That's a bit of a pity.\*\*\*Continued on page 2\*\*\*

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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.



**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](mailto:saa@swedenborg.com.au)

Website: [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au)

**National Committee Members:**

Julian Duckworth (President)

Wayne Kasmar (Secretary)

Michael Chester (Treasurer)

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DebraThompson

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\* \* *continued from page 1* \* \* Perhaps theologically this strange combination is a reflection of our human limitations and our hope and need that God still takes care of us, having created us.

Let's take a moment to look at the word "bless". It goes all the way back to Old English of 900 A.D. and back then it had the form "*bleds*". Notice the word 'bled' which of course comes from 'blood', and fascinatingly so does 'bless' because way way back, to propitiate the gods blood was sprinkled on the altar, a bird's, an animal's, or who knows, even a person's. Propitiate means to get it right again with someone, in this case, a god, with a blood-sacrifice. (Notice the possible association with Jesus' death!)

"Bless" - even with this pretty gruesome history - basically means 'supremely happy'. This is the idea in Jesus' Beatitudes or Blessings, each of which begins, "Blessed are those who..." but the basic point is that someone who is poor in

spirit, or who mourns (their own incompleteness), who acts with meekness and so on will be able to come into a supremely happy state of life. (For happy read 'fulfilled' or 'complete').

The other thing I want to bring your attention to about "bless" is that it is so much like "bliss" but they're not actually related. That word *bleds* became *bless* because it was easier to say and also it sounded like bliss which also means supremely happy so they copied it.

While all that background might be interesting, we need to go back to the personal use of bless and being blessed. Our life is mostly taken up by interacting with other people, some intimately, some regularly, some just once, and let's rightly include people we hear about but will never meet, like those in a war or a devastating natural disaster.

I feel that it would be a very good thing for us to up our direct blessing of other people, whoever, whatever, and take this word away from its limited religiosity, me and God, God and me. Other people can be great or be hard work, but they are another gift of God to help our regeneration.

Bless people for who they are, not what you want them to be like. And in this way, the origin association with 'blood' seems right, because blood is life, and spiritual life is charity, love for our neighbour because we love the Lord God. This is the blessing, Life for evermore.



Bless you, then!

*Julian*

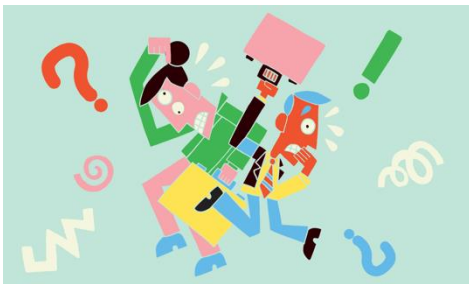


## Investigating our Lives in the Light of the Swedenborg Teaching – Part 2 (The Psychodynamics of Swedenborgian Psychology) by Bede

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”  
(Proverbs 4:23).

The most obvious fact of our life is that we are constantly moved to action by emotion. The word ‘emotion’ if we break it down into its Latin derivation, is composed of the letter E which means ‘out’ and the word ‘motion’. So, ‘moving outward’ is the essential meaning of this word.

It is interesting to note that we are **CONSTANTLY** (at every moment) being moved to say and do things. We have no choice about this. If we see a bus hurtling towards us, we don’t think and then decide what to do. Rather an **URGE** arises in us and we find ourselves moved to act.



The fact is that what we say and do is **ALWAYS** governed entirely by the

desires that arise in us. This happens when we become aware of our psychological reactions, when we are facing what people say and do, the conditions we find ourselves within and the condition of our body. This means that the desires which come alive in us are always calling the shots. In other words, they are constantly moving us.

As human beings, we are **ENTIRELY** governed by emotion. No philosophy or spirituality can change this fact. This fact can **SEEM** to say that we are helpless and determined and because of this, freedom is not possible for us. This was Dr Freud’s position.

However, in the vision of Swedenborg the fact that we are governed is not denied but rather he shows us that the only choice we have is **WHAT** we are governed by.

This means real freedom is exercising our choice in **WHAT** we are governed by and living that choice as a **way of being in the world**.

Now we come to the most important point concerning our spiritual transformation:

The way we are being in the world does not just happen. The **CAUSE** has nothing to do with our psychological past, even though this seems to be the case but rather **SOMETHING** active in us right here right now, is unconsciously determining how we see and how we act.

Swedenborg gives a very clear view of the basis of what moves us moment by moment. Even though he lived a hundred years before Freud, he dealt so much more elegantly with the harmful unconscious forces that continually move us as human beings.

Some of us may have wondered about, sometimes with great despair, the reason why we remain the same despite many efforts to change ourselves. We seem to be enclosed in the **same** kind of emotional reactions, the **same** kind of interpersonal conflicts, the **same** kind of unhelpful behaviour, the **same** kind of thinking. **Repeat. Repeat. Repeat, is often the story of our lives.**



This endless **repeating** is because the basis or the organising principle of our lives remains the same. This unconscious organising principle determines all the kinds of thinking that arise in us, the types of emotional reactions that become active



in us, our physiological reactions like posture, breathing and muscular tensions and what we say and do in any given situation.

Literally this unconscious organising principle determines our experience of ourselves, our experience of other people and how we experience the world. Our sense of life and being - our sense of the type of person we take ourselves to be, is the direct **effect** of this unconscious, dynamically active organising principle.



From the above, we can see that unless there is a change in what **moves** us to think, say and act, there can be no real change possible for us. This is because any real change in an individual must consist of a **conscious** shift into an entirely different organising principle that we, as an individual, can live **FROM**.

We are not suggesting a modification of our psychophysical functions (thinking, feeling, physiological reactions and our conduct). This would be like cutting the branches without getting to the root. The root needs to be plucked out. We are talking about a radical change. The Latin meaning of the word 'radical' means 'root'.

Swedenborg not only unfolds the nature and structure of our human problem, he also unfolds a radical approach to its solution. I am reminded of a saying that my Indian teacher, Dayananda, used to often repeat: "If you don't **know** you have the disease,

you won't desire (we could replace the word desire with **WILL**) the cure". It is for this reason that I am going to concentrate in this article, on **seeing** the disease Swedenborg so clearly outlines. This is so that we can **SEE** the fact of this disease as it exists in our lives.

This is important because if we don't see the need for **SALVATION**, we will not be **moved** in seeking it.

So, **WHERE** and **WHAT** is this disease that we need salvation from? Does it lie with the conditions we find ourselves within? **NO**. Is it our spouse? Well, it can seem like it but **NO**. Is it with the unpleasant things that people can say and do? **NO**. Is it located with our physical health? **NO**. What about our psychological pain and suffering? Now we are talking because human suffering is a huge problem. But **NO**, even this is not **WHAT** our disease is or **WHERE** it is.

Now, there is no denying that all these things mentioned above can **SEEM TO BE** the **CAUSE** of all our different forms of suffering and upset. They can seem to be **WHAT** our problem is and it seems to be **WHERE** our problems lie.

So we are left with not knowing what and where the problem or 'disease' is that we need to be saved from.

Now I would like to suggest a useful way to look at **ALL** the happenings that we are confronting every day. **Every experience is happening in front of us**. This especially applies to our psychological reactions. This is important because we need to be clear on **WHAT** we are facing. What we are facing is simply happening. Thoughts and emotions are just happenings in the world, just like anything else. Just like the weather happenings come and go. A person saying and doing something that we don't like is a happening. This happens **IN FRONT** of us. So too when we see anger arising in us; this is also a happening. It is not an '**INNER**' experience; it is still happening in front of us.



However, if we get lost in the anger or any other psychological reaction, our sense of life and being and the emotional reaction (for example the anger) **BECOMES** one and the same; we are no longer facing the anger in front of us. We could substitute anger with



boredom,  
emptiness,  
anxiousness,  
inferiority,  
jealousy,  
superiority,  
sadness, self-  
righteousness,  
indifference,  
ruthlessness,

feeling good about myself, feeling bad about myself and all the other manifestations of a self-life separate and apart from God.

All the many and various forms of this self-centredness fall within the spectrum of self-inflation or self-deflation.

In our present-day culture, ego inflation or ego satisfaction is considered happiness. This is a profound mistake.

When our sense of life and being is coming from the reactive activity of our psychophysical functions (thinking, feelings, physiological reactions and our conduct) we are not endowed with Life. We are now **BEING** a self which is not a "holy offspring of God", hence not governed or moved by the Goodness and Wisdom that **IS** God. **At any one moment, when we are not receiving the Life that God is giving us, we can't help but BE a psychophysical entity that is dead to Goodness and Wisdom.** We are BEING what Swedenborg terms 'spiritually dead'. He also says when Love (Goodness) recedes, man grows torpid (in Latin numb) and when Wisdom (Intelligence) recedes, we are stupid. (Thanks

Swedenborg. Why don't you tell us what you really feel!)

Now let's get back to the activity that my teacher Dayananda called 'keeping the outside, outside'. Remember we were saying that we are always facing happenings which are completely out of our control? They are the functioning of this universe and are entirely given. These happenings always involve contraries: Pleasant/unpleasant. Comfortable/uncomfortable. Successful/unsuccessful. Friendly/unfriendly. Just/unjust. Happy/unhappy, etc, etc.

We can't change the functioning of the universe. Happenings are always happening. We can take consolation in the vision of Swedenborg that the entire activity of the universe, despite appearances, is intelligently arranged and this intelligent arrangement is always functioning towards the end of bringing each and every one of us to **BEING** at home **IN** God.

**This means that God is not only omnipresent** (not away from any aspect of our present experience) **but is actively drawing us into the Life and Light He is.**



There is a method of investigation that the Existentialists use which is very useful. It is called '**phenomenology**'. Big word but all it means is looking at things as they **appear** in experience. In other words, stick to describing the



experience as it unfolds. We bracket off our judgements and let experience tell its story.

As I said in the last article, we need to see our lives in the light of Swedenborg's teaching. There is no point in studying Swedenborg as a theology or a philosophy, as separate and apart from ourselves. We need to study our lives in the very clear light he shines for us. We want to see **WHAT** he is communicating **AS IT EXISTS** in our lives. He presents us with a very clear mirror in which all our stupidities, vanity and self-deception can be clearly seen.

This examination can't proceed unless we are willing to see what we are really like rather than what we would like to be like. We need to learn how to be sincere. In the old days, sculptors used to make mistakes which resulted in cracks. They would fix these by filling them up with wax. The Latin meaning of the word 'sincere' means 'no wax'. We have to be willing to see ourselves, cracks and all. This is not easy. Why is this so hard?

Because human beings cut off from the Life of God can't help but be self-hating. From this condition of being alienated from God we can't help but be miserable in ourselves. We then crave being a good look in our own eyes and in the eyes of others in order to defend ourselves against seeing our real condition.

We do this by forming an idealised picture of ourselves that we take ourselves to be. And then we compulsively try to live out this picture. When we do this successfully in our own eyes, we have a delicious feeling of self-satisfaction. When we do this unsuccessfully, we have a very painful experience of self-dissatisfaction.

The problem with this idealised picture is that we have a vested interest in not seeing anything that would show it up as being untrue. This is why our vanity is so tenacious. It has a defensive function. It prevents the truth from interfering with a good story.



We all have had the experience of vigorously asserting our rightness and wrongness of others. Often, we prefer to be right rather than being Good and Truthful. We have all had the experience of being put down. What is being put down? Easy, it is a cherished picture of ourselves that is being put down and hence we often scramble to reassemble it so we can feel good again.

Now we come to an interesting question. What is this self-life separate and apart from Goodness and Truth? Ourselves **AS** this self-life separate and apart from God arises as a **Way Of Being** in the world.

The first thing we can say about it is that it is a way of **BEING** devoid of **LIFE** (Goodness and Light of Wisdom). In other words, its **CONTENT** is not Love and Wisdom. We can see the **FORMS** that this self-life takes, is a many headed hydra (a monster in Greek mythology).

One moment we are **BEING** bored. The next moment we are **BEING** irritated. The next moment we are **BEING** sad. Then we are **BEING** angry. Now we are **BEING** elated. Maybe we are **BEING** self-righteous. All of these many different ways of being **KEEP** automatically popping up in the face of the happenings that are happening.

The big question is "What is the **CONTENT** of these many different **FORMS**?" Western psychology is very impressed with these different forms that clinically become evident. And from this, they assume that people have different kinds of problems. According to people trained in psychology, psychiatry,





psychotherapy and counselling, people are suffering from Anger, Depression, Anxiety and all kinds of different disorders. Looking at these problems through natural eyes, which is based on appearances, it is entirely understandable because they are looking at diverse **FORMS** of psychological suffering and they take the specific kind of unhappiness to be the problem itself.

Now we come to the radical (going to the root) Swedenborgian vision of what and where the human problem lies.

We all have these different **FORMS** of psychological suffering and destructive ways of being which **SEEM** to be different from each other. However:

**In Swedenborg's vision, all these different forms arise from one and only one CONTENT. They are in fact one CONTENT manifesting AS different ways of being in the world.**

What is this content?

### **LOVE OF SELF AND LOVE OF THE WORLD**

This means that we have now arrived at **WHAT** our problem is and **WHERE** the problem is. In other words, we arrive at the location of the problem which is **OURSELVES**.

It is important to see that love of self and love of the world is not a static thing. Rather, it is **the active movement of our heart towards ourselves and the world**. This principle, when active in us, determines how we see, our emotional reactions, our physiological reactions and our conduct.

When we talk about **Salvation**, we are talking about being saved from a heart (whose **content** is love of self and love of the world) which is actively moving us away from the Goodness and Truth that is God.

Let's **SEE** how this universal problem exists in the concrete particular of our lives. From here on out we must continually see that the meaning of our suffering (not physical pain but our painful psychological states)

no matter what form they take, is that we are enclosed in a way of being in the world in which we are cognitively blind to the presence of God. It is so easy to fall away from this spiritual vision of what and where our problems lie.

How many times do we hear ourselves or hear other people blaming others because they believe that their upset is **caused** by them? Even today I can easily fall into the falsity of thinking that my wife is **MAKING** me upset. I also notice that when I am upset with her, I can sometimes make efforts to change her in order to feel right in myself. Notice that in the presence of blaming, I am blind to the presence of the wisdom that is continually showing me that my problem does not lie with Silvia but rather lies with being cut off from the Life and Light that is God.

What else is happening when I am blaming? Well, I notice that I am not being moved by concern for the welfare of Silvia, my wife. Rather I am concerned about myself and in that concern, the idea of **BEING** loving is antagonistic to what I am wanting. I want my way and I am hating the Good. When I am living 'my life' rather than the Life that God is giving me, I easily hate God. So here I am in my upset with Silvia, hating God.



It gets worse. When I am blaming Silvia for my painful way of being in the world, the last thing I want to know is the truth that will set me free. I am feeling right and in that rightness, I am actively rejecting the light of God's wisdom. So not only am I in a way of being that is wilfully rejecting Goodness, I am also wilfully



rejecting the Truth in favour of my rightness.



So, love of self is manifesting as wishing to preserve my rightness and the love of the world is manifesting as my craving for the worldly experience of being treated in the way I want. (I hope people will

still talk to me when I turn up to church on Sunday!)

What I am trying to show here is that we don't see the fundamental problem we are suffering from **AS** the love of ourselves and the love of the world. We always encounter it **AS** a concrete particular in our lives. Remember we need to see this disease as it exists in our lives **BEFORE** we can desire the salvation which will lift us beyond it.

So, if we suddenly wake up to the fact that we are blaming, we are being shown that we are suffering from the condition that God is continually working to save us from. This awakening is the activity of the Holy Spirit and in its presence, we find we are right here, right now, released from blame.

If we look at ourselves and suddenly find that we have become self-condemning, this is not the same as the revelation of our being enclosed in falsity. Self-condemnation is the punishing of ourselves in order to expiate our feelings of guilt. This is the seeing of natural man. This seeing does not release us from self-hatred or help us correct our destructive behaviour.

Revelation of where we stand in relation to the Goodness and Wisdom that is God is a liberating factor. When we see we are in falsity (people are causing the way I am being) it gives us the ability to move away from it.

When we are freed from blame and we arrive at ourselves **AS WE ARE** (a pain-

ridden **BEING** cut off from the Warmth and Light of God) we arrive at the exact place where our **Salvation** must take place. I will be taking this up in my next article but it must be pointed out that without opening our heart **AS IT IS** to the Warmth and Light of God, what Swedenborg calls self-regeneration is not possible?

I would like to show how our ruling love truly is the determining factor of our way of being in the world. **We Are the Love That Is Active In Us** at any one moment.

Let's say we have the craving (love) for the experience of love and approval active in us. This love is universally present, to a greater or lesser degree, in everybody. However, because of our vanity, it is universally denied. This craving (the movement of our heart) is now the context of our relationship with others. It will determine **ALL** our thoughts, and the meanings that we see. **Our understanding is a way of seeing.** In other words, this craving is the organising principle that will **determine the way we are BEING** when we are with other people.

With this craving active in us, when we are praised or approved by someone, we will think that that person is a 'lovely person'. We will have a feeling of emotional elation which we will take as happiness. We will feel relaxed and comfortable and our conduct will be social and friendly. In other words, **We are going to feel good about ourselves.**

Note: We are not saying that praise or approval is a bad thing. It is, in fact, a pleasant experience. We are talking about when this love and approval is pursued **AS the GOOD of Life.** St Thomas Aquinas showed that our will is a function of what we see as 'good'. If we believe something is good, we can't help but have a **WILL** towards it.

This is why awakening to the **GOOD of GOD**, through wisdom is so important because it causes a new will to be born in us towards that **GOOD.** We will talk more about this cardinal principle at another time.





With this craving active in us, when we are disapproved of or rejected by another, we will think the person is a 'rotten person'. We will have a feeling of emotional deflation (which is a very painful emotional state); we will be physically uptight and uncomfortable and in terms of conduct, we will attack or withdraw. In other words, **we are going to feel bad about ourselves.**

There are many kinds of cravings (self-preservation and worldly experiences) that can become active in us and determine the way we are **BEING** at any one moment.

One of the most important things to emphasise in our understanding is the fact that in both examples, we are under the common delusion (falsity) that something external to us is **CAUSING us to be the way we are.** This is the understanding of ourselves **AS** natural man. This understanding is entirely false.



Without wisdom (spiritual eyes) we are condemned to being enclosed in a spectrum of ego inflation and ego deflation for the rest of our lives. When we think that the Summum Bonum (the Supreme Good) is feeling good about ourselves and getting what we crave, we are truly enslaved. There is no freedom.

It is easy to say we need salvation. But what does it mean to be saved and what is it we are to be saved from? We need to be saved from a life separate and apart from God. **Also, we need to accept**

**the unpleasant fact that when we are living "our life" instead of the life that God is continually giving us, we are doing so wilfully and wholeheartedly.**

Rev Julian Duckworth, who kindly gives a group of us newbies an hour and a half of his time each week to discuss all these kinds of existential issues, was asked once "Are you saved?" He replied "Yes, continually". Now this is the whole point.

Every day our "self-life" which is separate and apart from God, comes into operation. In other words, this **WILL** (our heart, what we love, **content**) which is a movement away from the Goodness and Truth that is God, is continually becoming active in the **form** of a way of being in the world. This is what we need to be saved from daily.

Every day, in in the face of happenings, our "self-life" comes into operation as a way of being. What this means is that if we are upset about a happening e.g. someone treating us unjustly, it is so easy to fall into seeing this empirical fact through **NATURAL EYES.** When we do this we will have the very convincing experience that the **CAUSE** of our upset is external.

Also by moving against others when we are upset with them, in order to change them so we can feel right in ourselves, is also an indication of how afraid we are of getting anywhere near our pain and suffering **AS IT IS.** We avoid facing ourselves as we are when we blame. If we don't arrive at our heart **as it is,** we can't open that heart up to the healing warmth and light that **IS** God.

However, if we look at this empirical fact of suffering through **SPIRITUAL EYES,** we will see our upset as a correspondential manifestation of our fundamental problem from which we need to be saved.

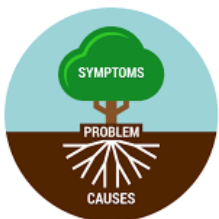
Please note. We are not saying that in reference to unjust acts, we don't respond in the best possible way. We need to render to Caesar what is Caesars. However, the upset is one thing and doing the needful is another.

When we are not blaming and are correctly seeing that any form of



unhappiness or disturbance is the love of self and love of the world in operation, we are arriving at ourselves as we are. This is the precondition of Self Regeneration. Because we have arrived at our heart, whose dominant love cuts us off from the **Love of God**, we can now open this very enslaved heart to God and be drawn out of this "self-life" into the Life and Light that is God and thereby be **SAVED** from the **DIS-EASE** that we all suffer from. When we look at our lives in the light of spiritual understanding, we are released from looking at our problems through the eyes of natural man. Also, we can now convert our daily lives into a spiritual practice along the lines outlined by Swedenborg. And as Julian says, we can open ourselves up to **SALVATION** that saves us from our misdirected loves on a daily basis.

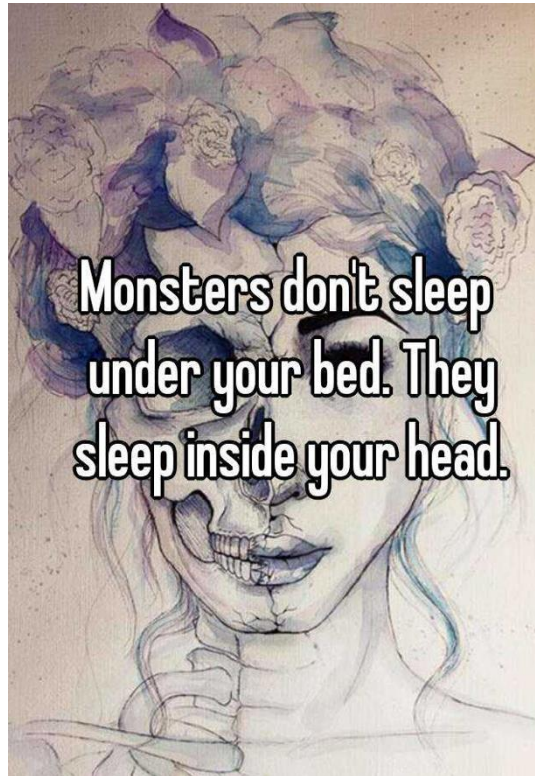
Trying to change the **form**, which is not the problem but rather a correspondential manifestation of our dominant love, is futile. This is why Western psychotherapy doesn't really work. They don't see that we suffer from a spiritual problem which is above the world of appearances. This problem is the **CAUSE** and the appearances or manifestations are the inevitable and lawful consequences or **EFFECTS**.



Trying to fix effects is like trying to solve the problem by changing the position of the chairs on the Titanic. We are going to still sink. Why I like the 19<sup>th</sup> century New Churchmen is that they had no problems confronting the dark side of being cut off from the life and light that is God. They didn't wimp out spiritually on this crucial point. This is especially true of Chauncey Giles whose book 'Why I Am a New Churchman' converted me to this religion.

We are all afraid of the **DARK SIDE**. We much prefer having our lovely notions

about ourselves which protect us from seeing ourselves as we are. This is understandable. However, a life separate and apart from God is dark. It's also miserable. All the violence we see in the world; all the injustice and unhappiness; all



the conflict between ourselves and others is a manifestation of the fundamental problem **WE ALL** need saving from.

The big question is: Can we solve the world's problem **as it exists in us?** Maybe this is how to be really responsible. This means we look to ourselves and take our attention off others. When we see others having the exact

same problem as ourselves in terms of content but not in form, our self-righteousness dies and we have a '**WE**' feeling. We can't look kindly at others without this understanding because we will be too self-righteous.

In the next article, we will go into the whole Swedenborgian method of self-reformation and self-regeneration. It is a truly remarkable approach that opens us up to the salvation that we so desperately need on a daily basis.

This method works wonders provided we **SEE** that we have the **DIS-EASE** that it is designed to cure. Without awakening to the fact that we have the disease, we won't value the cure. We need to be awake to this disease as it arises in us **EVERY DAY**.

If we value the cure, we will have a **WILL** active in us which will **MOVE** us towards it.

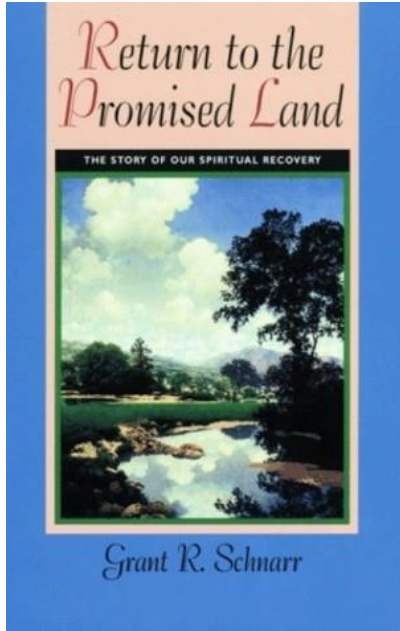
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Part 3 of this article will be in the next edition of Candela



## Book Offer for This Quarter

Below is this quarter's book offer. **Candela** readers who order the following titles during the next quarter will receive the discount 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.



**Return to the Promised Land** by **Rev Grant R Schnarr** (213 pages, paperback)  
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## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

To become a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia, check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) and click "Contact" in the top menu, which has details on benefits of **membership** and an application form listing current membership rates.

Also check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) for details of **group events** which are held online, but you can also be physically 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.

## THE NATURAL WORLD

The natural, physical universe is an amazing place. How was it made? Was there anything before it? Is it just random, or is there a purposefulness present?

We'll just outline a few points from Swedenborg's teachings:

- God created the universe and everything in it -- all the energy and all the matter.
- The physical universe grounds out or ultimates a corresponding spiritual universe.
- The main point of creation was to form places where intelligent beings capable of lasting spiritual life could and would develop.



- In the Bible, there are beautiful images of nature in many places -- mountains and hills, vineyards, olive trees, acacia wood, the trees of the field, rivers and seas, and birds, horses, and many other animals.

- Again, in the Bible, these images from nature are used to picture things in the lives of people - to be as a tree, planted by the waters, or - as with Judah - to be like a lion.



The natural world with everything in it is full of correspondences to our spiritual life, especially to the patterns and work of regeneration. There's a great deal to be learned about it, and here is a passage that you might find interesting, to start with.

*We need to know as well that it is humankind through which the natural world is united to the spiritual world, that we are the means of the union. For there is within us a natural world and also a spiritual world (see above; so to the extent that we are spiritual, we are a means of union. However, to the extent that we are natural and not spiritual, we are not a means of union. The Lord's inflow into the world and into the world's gifts within us continues even without our aid, but it does not come into our rational functioning.*

*Heaven and Hell 112*