

# Candela



**Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc**

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

**May 2016**

**ISSUE 84**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Friends,

Here is another issue of the Candela which we hope you will very much enjoy and get inspiration from your reading. And enjoy the coming winter period which is seen by many as a time of beneficial resting, consolidation and indwelling.

The other day my wife Ruth and I watched the moon rise. I've never done that before so I was excited to look forward to seeing the moon – it was the day of the full moon too! – rise up out of the ocean as we stood, with several other people also watching, waiting for the event.

Swedenborg says that the moon corresponds to "faith" and that faith has the quality of giving light to the mind during a period of ignorance. This wonderful and helpful correspondence fits perfectly with everything about the moon whose light is not its own but is reflected from the sun's light on it.



This works best at night time which corresponds to those times in our lives when we have our doubts or feel we do not know much about our spiritual life, or that God is not there for us.

*\* \* continued on page 2 \* \**

**Please Note:** The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the Swedenborg Association of Australia or its Committee.

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## **Next Issue – August 2016**

Please note the Member's page (4). If you feel unable to write a longer article you may feel able to write a few words for this. The deadline is **20<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

Email to [ruth@duckworth.me](mailto:ruth@duckworth.me) or post to the registered office. *Ruth*



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Membership of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc. is open to anyone who wishes to pursue an interest in Swedenborg, the man, his science and his spiritual teachings.

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

\* \* continued from page 1 \* \*

There we stood waiting on this beach with the ocean spread from far left to far right. The last lingering rays of the sunset were rapidly fading; the moon was due to rise at 5.28 p.m. I suddenly panicked as I didn't know where on the horizon I should be looking to see the first twitch of moon rise. Ruth got her iPhone and showed me exactly where it would come – she should have said, "Have faith!" – and I saw it would be just below and a little left of Mars and that Saturn would be following shortly. I fixed my gaze.

Unlike sunrise the sky did not prematurely lighten or brighten. Swedenborg says that the sun corresponds to the Lord and to God's light and love and presence. Watching the sun rise helps explain the creation story where it says on day one that "God said 'Let there be light' and there was light." Yet it is only on the fourth day that the source of light, the sun and the moon and stars, gets created. This seems a conundrum. But watching sunrise gets this perfectly, as the sky

lightens for many minutes before the sun itself appears.



For us, spiritually, this prior lightening of the sky is important. For example we can see (note 'see') that doing some good, being charitable, appreciating people for who they are and other true ways of being are like light in our mind which are almost self-evident if you try and live a loving life. We do our good and we enjoy people and wonder why doesn't everyone do the same? Later, we come to see that all good comes from the Lord and not from us and we realise that every person is a child of God. This is our sunrise, bringing God into it.

None of this happened on that beach. The ocean and the sky were as one, and dark. Then a single point of light appeared and broke through. Streaks of cloud passed across it and I am sure the ocean spray reduced the effect, but there it certainly was – light in this darkness. And it grew and became a line and then an arc and then a globe, a dull orange ball.

Having faith in our spiritual nights probably begins like that moonrise did. It doesn't come with a flash but with a need and even a dare. "I will trust that things will work out as they should. I don't understand how or why, but I will have faith, faith in God, and faith in a beneficial outcome, even while it is dark." And fascinatingly, as the dull moon began its climb and rise from the ocean, it changed colour and began to brighten and grow yellow. And it cast its light across the ocean and around the sky. So it will do for us when we keep steady in our faith path. Ruth reminded me that it is the moon which is responsible for the ocean tides. This is something I simply don't



understand but I can see the connection with the spiritual level of our lives. Having faith is often during a time of turbulence and our spiritual lives regularly experience the patterns of highs and lows like the tides. Our oceans are vast and deep and the waves pound the rocks.

We left the moonlit beach to get in the car and go. As we walked back up the path I noticed that the moonlight was now having an effect on the houses and gardens we walked past, places where people live. And then it dawned on me that this was a double reflection. The moon does not have its own light but its light is reflected from the sunlight falling upon it. This is about the best bit of the whole correspondence of the moon meaning faith. God's light is being reflected through remembrance and provision and the stunning fact that, for us, the sun and the moon look exactly the same size but they aren't really.

And here were homes where people lived, bathed in the glow of the full moon but really, with the double reflection, they were bathed in the full light of the sun (God) continuing to shine from wherever it was and bounce off the moon on to the earth. But it hadn't moved, only the world did, only we did. And it will always be like this at times and we will need to trace our faith back via the moon to the sun and the divine Source of all life.

With my very best wishes

*Julian Duckworth*

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## A Swedenborg Anthology

### Doubt

Since we are beings experiencing life as our very own, doubt about spiritual realities such as eternal life, the loving kindness of God, or even that God exists, may sometimes arise. Swedenborg suggests that doubt is a normal and important part of our regeneration cycles.

### Degrees

This forms a very key part of Swedenborg's account of reality. Degrees are the distinguishable levels between things such as spirit and body and heaven and earth. He describes degrees as discrete, meaning that there is an alteration in moving from one level to another level. Spiritual thought is discretely different from moral points of view.

### Diversity

There are no two things exactly the same in creation. Diversity exists in divine creation because each created thing is its designated part in the whole. God loves to create yet another different thing. Swedenborg describes how heaven is made increasingly perfect by its increasing variety or diversity.

### Doctrine

Swedenborg used 'doctrine' quite specifically to mean the organised arrangement of spiritual teachings about the various aspects of reality. The benefit of doctrine is in its sequential coverage of these. In correspondences, a city is an example of doctrine in that it has been constructed and works as an organic whole.

### Eternity

Eternity is a word we use to describe the fact of the afterlife. It continues on without any stop to it. However, it is our states, not time, that we will experience in eternity. We will live for ever but probably never think of it like that but find eternity in the intention and enjoyment of what we are doing now, and losing ourselves in it.

### Enlightenment

Perhaps because of his intense awareness of spiritual world influences on us, Swedenborg does not advocate us seeking our own enlightenment on what is true, but rather acquiring it through hearing and obeying what God reveals to us through the Word. This enters us at a deeper and more consistent level.



## S.A.A. MEMBER'S PAGE

We have started this page to encourage members and readers to write small articles, comments, interesting happenings or events. It can be rather intimidating to attempt a full article so we hope this will inspire you to put pen to paper. You can even remain anonymous if you would prefer that. I know that readers have told me before that they enjoy short paragraphs written by different people as well as the longer more erudite articles.



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### SURPRISES

One of the delights of being familiar with Swedenborg's works, particularly in reference to correspondences, is the surprising places where one encounters his influence.

I recently had the pleasure of reading C. S. Lewis' **Chronicles of Narnia** for the first time. I could hardly believe my eyes. There was the story of Creation in the first book, **The Magician's Nephew**. **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** contained the Crucifixion, complete with the innocent being slaughtered for the sins of others. **The Voyage of the Dawn Treader** focused on the deadly sins of greed, sloth, anger, envy etc. And our passage into and place in Heaven, 'further up and further in', delightfully expressed in the final book, **The Last Battle**.

In every chapter Swedenborg's correspondences jump off the page. Plants and animals, human traits, virtues and sins, are all woven into a delightful fairytale.

Little wonder then, that C. S. Lewis was influenced by George MacDonald, novelist and Victorian visionary, who "like many of his friends, pored over Swedenborg. One of his (MacDonald's) friends from early days was Garth Wilkinson, the famous Swedenborgian doctor and homoeopath".

C. S. Lewis was close friends with J. R. Tolkien and a common thread can be

found in their writings. They were part of the **Inklings**, a wonderfully named informal writers group.

Swedenborg can be found in the most unlikely places. Where have you noticed his influence?

*Delighted*

### Secretary's Report

One of our committee members **Jennifer Danckert** has agreed to become our new Secretary. She has been a reader of Swedenborg since being introduced to his writings by Dr Philip Groves.

We would like to welcome some new members to the SAA:

**Timothy Gordon** and **Gwen Barnes** both from NSW.

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership so that we can continue with our work of making the works of Swedenborg more widely available.

*We can have a kind of faith which is based on various truths we have heard or picked up and this faith gets turned on and off according to what happens. When we are in fear and anguish, we turn it on but when the anguish subsides, we turn it off. A real faith, which is a spiritual confidence that is based on the decision to do what is good because of what you believe about the Lord...a real faith does not come and go but has been deeply rooted and developed over the course of our life.*

**Arcana Caelestia 4352**





## **AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WAYS (TO FIND SWEDENBORG RESOURCES)**

This article aims to help you find information about Emanuel Swedenborg, his ideas and his writings, so that you might tap their relevance for dealing with spiritual life in this modern world. Many readers may already be familiar with much of the material, but hopefully you will still find something here of use. Even experts don't find it easy to map a useful path through the forest of material available about the man and his work (his was possibly the best documented life of his century). This piece is roughly designed as a globetrotter's guide to a few key destinations rather than pretending to be comprehensive. There are many works which go into great detail should you need that. We will mention some useful websites, interested communities and reading materials. As a way to expand this introductory list of resources, we would love for you to share with us your favourite sites and resources so that we might all enjoy their benefits.



## **WHY THE INTEREST IN SWEDENBORG?**

The writings of Emanuel Swedenborg result from his efforts to document his unique experiences and insights as a use to future seekers and readers. Since his death in 1772, these writings have been regarded by many social influencers like Goethe, Carl Jung, William James and numerous others\* as a valuable set of insights on details of spiritual life and spiritual realities. A big benefit of Swedenborg's writings is that they reveal the deep and useful sense woven into the language and symbolism employed by the authors of the first books of the Old Testament (Genesis and Exodus) and the last book of the New Testament (Revelation). When this language is understood, sense can be made of our life, of mythological tales and even fairytales as well as archeological and scientific findings. Appreciating this ancient language which Swedenborg called 'correspondences' helps save such precious material from being thrown in frustration onto the intellectual scrap heap of seemingly irrelevant historical and impersonal ideas, and instead gives these ideas a new life as they are once again pressed into practical service for our personal spiritual growth (our "regeneration"). There's no point keeping such a bright light hidden under a bushel, so check out some of the good resources below and see for yourself their immense value.

For a comprehensive list of people whom Swedenborg influenced, see

[www.swedenborgproject.org/swedenborgs-influence](http://www.swedenborgproject.org/swedenborgs-influence) and

[www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/influence](http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/influence) and for the actual quotations from famous people about Swedenborg, see [www.swedenborg.com.au/tributetestimonials](http://www.swedenborg.com.au/tributetestimonials)

## **WHO WAS SWEDENBORG?**

The Swedish nobleman, scientist and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg was born in 1688 and lived in Sweden around the time of Sir Isaac Newton, J.S. Bach and Mozart. Swedenborg died two years after Captain James Cook first visit to New Holland, not long after which the First Fleet brought a set of Swedenborg's writings to the new colony.

Emanuel's cousin was the great botanist Carl Linnaeus, famous as inventor of the scientific classification of species of the natural world. Swedenborg travelled much through Europe as part of his education and would later publish his keen observations of the natural world he loved to study, including everything from metallurgy to mathematics and astronomy, from growing plants to anatomy and metaphysics. About all these things he conversed with great contemporaries.



Swedenborg's life initially saw him become a prolific scientific explorer and researcher of the natural and anatomical worlds, gaining fame among European intelligentsia as a gifted and important author on the natural world. He was a great discoverer and gifted inventor, as demonstrated by his correct ground-breaking theory on the formation of stars and planets and his design for a workable airplane.

During his working life he served his king and country as a productive member of the Swedish parliament, where he had the job of governing the mining operations of Sweden, but he also contributed to many other affairs of state including a search for ways to solve the problems of navigation at sea and discussing the country's monetary affairs.

Swedenborg turned into a well-rounded individual. Besides being a useful and valued statesman, he was a clear and rational creative thinker and author. He was a practical man who mastered many



crafts and was skilled at making the things his scientific appetite required to conduct a thorough investigation of everything. He was an empiricist, meaning he sought to confirm ideas by personal experiment, experience, deduction and insight. He had a good feeling for languages and was an accomplished linguist. He had a rich feeling life because he took an interest in playing music, wrote poetry, had romantic interests in his youth, and was considered good company in his extensive social circles. He also showed a great deal of kindness toward people of all walks of life.

In the last decades of his life, Swedenborg's enquiring nature and keen observation had prepared him well to be chosen to undergo a second education in matters of the human spirit and psychology of the human mind. During this period of revelation, Swedenborg underwent some very unique and remarkable personal mystical experiences, all of which he faithfully documented and explained. It is for his penned works on spiritual matters and the rich ideas in them that he is now still remembered and admired. These works are what many people commonly refer to as 'the writings'.

We not only still have Swedenborg's own writings, but also what others wrote about him, his work and ideas. What others have written is commonly referred to as the 'explanations' or 'collateral works'.

Our interest here is primarily Swedenborg's publications on spiritual matters, those which relate to aspects of spiritual growth and the nature of spiritual life.

A good list with notes of Swedenborg's writings can be found in a reference work from the **Swedenborg Foundation** called **Swedenborg Explorer's Guidebook** (revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 2008 - more details in research section below).

To order books mentioned in this article, please contact the Swedenborg Centre in North Ryde, Australia or order online at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) Other locations for purchasing books can be found online, e.g. the Swedenborg Foundation, USA at [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com) and the Swedenborg Society, UK at [www.swedenborg.org.uk](http://www.swedenborg.org.uk) (or check Amazon, etc).

A good 8-minute video on who Swedenborg was and what should be read of his can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEa0e8AcS78](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEa0e8AcS78)

## THE WRITINGS

Some key themes in Swedenborg's writings are as follows (original titles in brackets, more recent titles in bold).

To read about the form and dynamics of the spiritual world and what life is like there, and about the continuity of our life experience after death, see his most famous work **Heaven and Hell**.



On the existence of the spirit world alongside the physical, and how spirit flows into our physical mind and body, see his work **Soul-Body Interaction**.

For details of the Divine's creative process, see his book **Divine Love and Wisdom**.

On the Divine Creator's means of perpetual maintenance of all creation, see **Divine Providence**.

For the language of correspondences which reveals the personal instruction woven into Genesis, Exodus and Revelation, see the works **Heavenly Secrets** (*Arcana Celestial*) and **Revelation Unveiled** (*Apocalypse Revealed*) and also **The White Horse**.

On the nature of love, on relationship between the sexes, and on the means and necessity of bringing them together into a harmonious unity, see his work **Love in Marriage** (*Conjugal Love*) – the recent David Gladish translation is excellent.

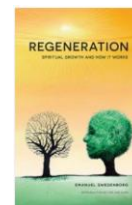


On some important steps of our spiritual regeneration, read a small but significant practical work called **Charity** (*Doctrine of Charity*).

Many aspects of our spiritual life are covered in a small book called **The Heavenly City** (*The New Jerusalem*). It covers our inner makeup: goodness and truth, motivation and understanding, inner and outer self. And our affections: selfishness, materialism, kindness to others. It mentions our spiritual life: faith, conscience, freedom, seeking reward; spiritual development: regretting and distancing ourselves from our mistakes, our rebirth and struggles. And it talks of rising from death, of the Bible, of Divine providence for us, of who Christ is, and of the government of human affairs.



For steps of the process of our regeneration, see his last completed work **True Christianity** (*True Christian Religion*) in two volumes, especially chapters 9 and 10, also reproduced as an extract in a practical book called **Regeneration**. *True Christianity* covers several key matters of faith, charity, free will, spiritual awakening, the nature of God, purpose, the second coming of the Lord, etc in more detail than in **The Heavenly City**. This is one of Swedenborg's most significant books.



A significance event in the spiritual realm which took place during Swedenborg's lifetime was the reshaping of the spiritual realm so that we might retain our freedom in spiritual matters, see his work **The Last Judgment**.

Swedenborg's spirituality is as universal as it is personal, and its benefits are not dispensed to a limited set of people in any single organisation. Nor is his spirituality one of doom and gloom and outward piety. It is very much founded on a practical life and on inner personal states. A happy (heavenly) life is to be gained through doing useful things as part of the expression of our love of higher things such as goodness, useful service, others and our benevolent Divine Creator. The personal, inner, practical and universal nature of Swedenborg's spirituality is borne out by the definitions of some special terms used in Swedenborg's works which differ in subtle but significant ways from our conventional interpretation of them. So we should consider these terms very carefully and clarify our understanding of them to make the most of his writings, for example the terms and nature of 'neighbour,' 'faith,' 'charity,' and 'church'. To look up these and other such special terms in Swedenborg's own words, either see [www.eswedenborg.com/writings/topics](http://www.eswedenborg.com/writings/topics) or visit the other search sites mentioned below.

Another good list of words used by Swedenborg with their one-line meaning can be found at [www.swedenborgstudy.com/articles/Word/wordsintro.htm](http://www.swedenborgstudy.com/articles/Word/wordsintro.htm) or if you really wish to go the whole hog and look up Swedenborg's own words in his original Latin, this is nowadays made fairly easy by finding it online, for example search for something in Swedenborg's writings at <http://newchristianbiblestudy.org> then choose *Latin* as the 'translation' selection.

There are a lot of ways to enjoy Swedenborg's writings and ideas. Although Swedenborg originally wrote in Latin which was the international language of his day, most people today approach Swedenborg's own work by accessing one of the excellent translations available in English or in many of the world's other modern languages. One recommended English translation is from an ongoing project known as *New Century Editions* (NCE). Many of Swedenborg's works are available online for download (including NCE), much of it generously made available for free reading online or perhaps for a small fee to download it to your Kindle or similar electronic reading device. Check out the Swedenborg Foundation bookshop at [www.swedenborg.com](http://www.swedenborg.com). The beauty of the online material is that it often is searchable. For recommended sites to look up Swedenborg material see further below.

For a complete list of spiritual works in chronological order, see [www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/writings/#complete](http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/writings/#complete)

On Swedenborg's period of science writing, see [www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/scientific-writings](http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/scientific-writings)

## **COLLATERAL AND EXPLANATIONS**

If you're unsure where to start reading, you could try the **Swedenborg Roadmap** to help find a starting point that may interest you. See [www.swedenborg.com.au/Websites/saa/images/books/presentingswedenborg.pdf](http://www.swedenborg.com.au/Websites/saa/images/books/presentingswedenborg.pdf)

There are many people's interpretations, summaries, applications and insights of Swedenborg's material. There are also biographical books and audio-visual material, as well as popular recent online YouTube clips hosted by Curtis Childs in which Swedenborg idea are explored, see [www.youtube.com/offthelefteye](http://www.youtube.com/offthelefteye)

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

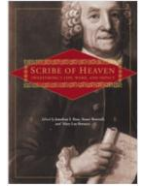
**A Scientist Explores Spirit** - short introduction to Swedenborg's life by George Dole and Robert Kirven, includes key concepts.

**Emanuel Swedenborg: Visionary Savant in the Age of Reason** - by Ernst Benz, a classic early Swedenborg biography.



**Scribe of Heaven** - contains short essays on Swedenborg, including a short biography.

**The Swedenborg Epic** – by Cyriel Sigstedt. A good biography of Swedenborg. Read it online at [www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org/ES/epictc](http://www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org/ES/epictc)



## SEARCHING THE WRITINGS

... across several platforms at once:

[www.eswedenborg.com](http://www.eswedenborg.com)

To search, browse, read Swedenborg's own words presented on the same page as the Bible verses he references in his work:

[www.kemptonproject.org](http://www.kemptonproject.org) or <http://newchristianbiblestudy.org>

[www.biblemeanings.info](http://www.biblemeanings.info) – maintained by Ian J Thompson.

[www.swedenborgstudy.com](http://www.swedenborgstudy.com) – excellent list of useful books, blog links, online material, etc maintained by Ian J Thompson.

[www.theisticscience.org](http://www.theisticscience.org) – excellent resource site by Ian J Thompson, on Theistic Science (a branch of theoretical science which derives general principles from laws transmitted through scientific revelations from God).

[www.theisticscience.org/books](http://www.theisticscience.org/books) - list and links for books associated with the above Theistic Science site, containing links to online editions of some of Swedenborg's own writings as well as to related subject material like 'discreet degrees' and 'correspondences'.

[www.theisticpsychology.org](http://www.theisticpsychology.org) – excellent resource site by Dr Leon James, professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii (Theistic Psychology is the scientific discovery of spiritual laws given in rational scientific revelations).

## SEARCHING THE BIBLE

<http://biblehub.com> - online Bible study, search by book, verse or word in many translations. Compare various English translations in parallel, or the original language with English translation in interlinear form. Also provides commentaries and links to concordances (e.g. Strong's) to explain word meanings in the original language.

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) - read the Bible in just about any foreign language you want.

### MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO FOLLOW NEXT MONTH

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## Battle with yourself – How to win.

By Stephen Russell-Lacy

You may be uncomfortable with some negative traits in yourself. Instead of being greedy you may wish to learn moderation, instead of being judgmental, to learn tolerance. Or maybe your Achilles' heel is self-pride or impulsiveness and you want to develop modesty and patience. Whatever your weakness, the question arises how do you change? For example you might attend a problem drinking clinic or a slimming club but don't consistently keep to the programme. I would suggest that to find the better person within, you will first need to battle against yourself. It is not enough to accept you need to



change, you also need to have a strong resolve and put effort in to curb your impulses: to put up a fight against your demons whatever they are. This is the viewpoint of Western and Eastern religion; that one's lower nature has to be repudiated before the higher self can properly emerge. To gain the positive, one needs to conquer the negative. But how do you do this?

### Getting fighting fit

Before going into battle a soldier needs to prepare. To wear the right armour and get hold of a shield and sword. The armour protects from harm and the sword kills the bad guy. You also need to be fighting fit. It's the same when you battle against yourself. You need protection from dangerous





illusions and to be armed with right knowledge and understanding.

The enemy is within. It comes from all the negative influences around you. The allure of product-advertising that suggests an impulsive purchase. The angry and impulsive behaviour of fictitious characters in film and television who function as role models. The strident and loud voices that proclaim that you have the right to be happy no matter what the cost.

Being armed with the sword of truth is to remember alternative right ways of thinking that encourage how you ideally would like to be. What is the truth about the fantasies that sustain your negative actions? What is the truth of your ethical code that teaches proper dealings with people? What is the truth of your higher principles that can guide you away from a selfish uncaring attitude?

*"It is truth that goes into battle first, for the battle is fought from truth since it is from the truth that a person recognizes what falsity is and what evil is. Such conflicts never arise therefore until a person has been endowed with knowledge and cognitions of truth and good."* (Emanuel Swedenborg)

### **Running battle that goes on for a long time**

Sometimes we expect immediate results and get easily disappointed by set-backs. You need to appreciate that the struggle with negative habits can go on for a long time before a clear-cut victory can emerge. This is because the problem behaviour is likely to have become entrenched within your make-up and have several facets that all need tackling.

*Inside each of us, there is the seed of both good and evil. It's a constant struggle as to which one will win.* (Eric Burdon)

Although talking about the world of politics, Margaret Thatcher once observed that one may have to fight a battle more than once to win it. One of the Bible writers bemoaned the running battle that goes on for a long time:

*How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will*

*my enemy triumph over me?* (Psalmist)

### **Uphill battle**

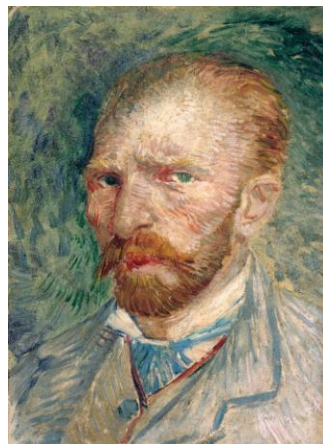
In fact the battle can feel like an uphill one with the odds against you. *The battle of life is, in most cases, fought uphill; and to win it without a struggle were perhaps to win it without honour. If there were no difficulties there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved.* (Samuel Smiles)

So don't give up without a fight. The army commanders train the troops to obey orders. They instil discipline through drill. Likewise you need self-discipline if you are to do battle and not give up without a fight in the face of the enemy. *Happiness is dependent on self-discipline. We are the biggest obstacles to our own happiness. It is much easier to do battle with society and with others than to fight our own nature.* (Dennis Prager)

Yes, having a battle with yourself can – and perhaps should – be a central issue in your life. However it is so easy to exaggerate the uphill nature of this battle. This exaggeration is another negative facet of what you are up against. It is an example of negative thinking that takes away your courage. Again the sword of truth can encourage your effort. The truth is we are the biggest obstacles to our own happiness. So try to remember the reasons for the battle with yourself. Recall why you wish to be different. And challenge the mistaken and unrealistic excuses you had made up to support your negative behaviour. You may lose one battle but live to fight another day.

### **Fighting chance**

When you have hit hot rock bottom you may feel you are fighting a losing battle. Perhaps wrestling with one's own nature in one's own strength is not enough. Alcoholics Anonymous teach that one also needs help from a higher power. Likewise religious people pray to their image of God for help. One complaint about religion is the way fundamentalist believers take their sacred writing as sacred because of its literal truth; for example that the battles





mentioned in the Old Testament justify violence against one's foes. But an alternative approach is to take such imagery as figuratively sacred.

This is to see a battle as referring to the inner battle of good versus bad within each human individual. This ties in with the idea of correspondence between natural things and spiritual qualities. Many observers—both Muslim and non-Muslim talk of jihad having two meanings. The 'greater jihad' is said to be an inner spiritual struggle. If only those jihadists wanting to terrorise the West would realise this.

According to this figurative view when we read the Psalmist praising God as the 'king of glory' 'strong' and 'mighty in battle', who 'fights' against those who 'fight against' him, we can understand the idea of an all-powerful God destroying evil thoughts and feelings within us rather than destroying people.

*You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. Psalm 18:39*

Stephen Russel-Lacy

<http://spiritualquestions.org.uk/>

*Throwing light on human happiness and the meaning of life by exchanging spiritual questions and comments and by exploring links between Swedenborg's writings, psychology and spiritual healing.*

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## WHAT SWEDENBORG ACTUALLY SAYS

Do you know what a 'distillation' is? If you distil something, you get to its essence. Think about a distillery. A distillation is a set or summary of the key ideas in someone's extensive writing. Think Swedenborg, whose writings are extensive and we wonder where things are and where to begin. And sometimes we simply want to know 'What does Swedenborg actually say?'

I have several distillations of Swedenborg's key teachings. Some are disappointing. One excellent one is 'The Path of Life' compiled by John Ager, an American Swedenborgian, done in 1913, in 27 distilled chapters, each with about a dozen sub-sections, covering all the essentials and not wasting an unnecessary word. Passages are taken directly from

Swedenborg's writings and are well-chosen.

I want to share part of another and a more recent one with you. This one is in a fairly big book called 'Swedenborg Researcher's Manual' by Rev. William Woofenden (see the note on this at the end of the whole article). It comes fairly near the end where a section called 'Key concepts unique to Swedenborg's theological writings' is included. What Bill Woofenden has expertly done is to distil out the essence of what Swedenborg actually says about four major areas, probably the four real key ones: God, the Spiritual World, God's Word, and Ourselves and our intended destiny.

The point is that nothing has been further explained or added to by Bill Woofenden (always a temptation to a writer) but summarised and rephrased in clear statements which catch the very essence of what Swedenborg actually says.

Here, as a taste, is part of the section on the Spiritual World. I acknowledge the source and publisher, The Swedenborg Scientific Association, and Rev. William Woofenden, with sincere thanks.

## About the Spiritual World

### a. It is real

There is a real and eternal spiritual world. Its three distinct divisions are Heaven, Hell and an intermediate World of Spirits.

### b. The separation at death

When a person 'dies' he or she is merely separated from the bodily part used for life here. The person continues to live because a person is not a person because of the body but because of the spirit. It is the spirit or soul that thinks in a person



and along with affection is what makes a person. Death is merely a person's passing

from one world to another.

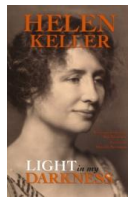
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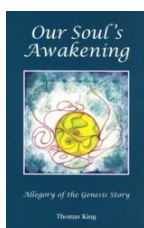


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King endeavours to achieve reconciliation of the inconsistencies found in the early chapters of Genesis using Divine inspiration as the key. The purpose is to unveil some of the deeper, or inner spiritual meanings contained in them using the relationship of natural objects to spiritual realities. These meanings relate to the awakening of the human soul to Higher Life leading to spiritual rebirth.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- **Brisbane:** Ian Arnold on (07) 3841 2552;
- **Melbourne:** Neville Jarvis on (03) 8555 9116; email: anjarvis72@optusnet.com.au;
- **Sydney region:** Michael Chester on (02) 98881066; email: michael@swedenborg.com.au;

It would be good to establish Groups in other areas. If you can help, please contact Michael Chester.

Our website is updated regularly. Go to <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings> for more details. Please let us know if you would like to be informed via email.

**Melbourne:** New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley.

Occasional – Check website for details.

**Sydney:** Fri 24<sup>th</sup> June **Swedenborg Readings – Regeneration**, facilitator Julian Duckworth  
Roseville New Church, 4 Shirley Road, Roseville. Commencing 7:45 pm.

Check website for latest details.

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### c. The process of self-examination in the world of spirits

As soon as all signs of life have ceased, the person is immediately resuscitated in the World of Spirits. This is done by the Lord through the instrumentality of the highest angels. Then the person is guided through a process of self-examination and self-understanding and is finally of his or her own volition to choose an eternal home, either in heaven or in hell. No one is rewarded or punished, all in heaven or hell are there by their own free choice.

### d. Every means is given to amend, and the choice is made

After death there is given to every person ample means to amend thoughts and affections. All are taught by the Lord by means of angels; and as they are then conscious that they are living a life after life, and that there is a heaven and a hell, they are all at first receptive of truths. But those who in this world did not acknowledge God and who made no effort to shun evils as sins against God, soon grow weary of hearing truths and withdraw as a matter of choice.

In short, Providence makes it possible for all to be saved (i.e. to choose heaven) and the person who does not so choose is alone responsible.

### e. The terms 'spirit' 'angel' 'satan' 'devil'

The term "spirit" is used to mean one who is temporarily in the first state after death called the world of spirits. The term "angel" is used to mean one who has finished the process of education and self-emendation and has thus been enabled to find a suitable place in heaven. Those who

choose a place in hell are termed satans or devils.

### f. The process of becoming and looking like your ruling love

When the spirit of a person first enters the world of spirits, his or her face and tone of voice closely resembles those the person had in the world. But subsequently the face and other features and actions become quite different, gradually changing to conform to the person's affections or ruling love.

When the exteriors of the life of the spirit in the body end and are set aside, the outward appearance and former affectations change, and one looks and acts in full harmony with one's inner being.

*Note – see the introduction to the article.*

*The original 'Swedenborg Researcher's Manual' was produced in 1988. In 2008 it was revised and added to, and re-named 'Swedenborg Explorer's Guidebook'.*

Julian Duckworth

### Final quote from Swedenborg

*There are five classes of those who read my writings. The first reject them entirely because they are in another persuasion or because they are in no faith. The second receive them as scientifics and as objects of mere curiosity. The third receive them intellectually and are in some measure pleased with them but whenever they require an application to regulate their lives they remain where they were before. The fourth receive them in a persuasive manner and are thereby led in a certain degree to amend their lives and perform uses. The fifth receive them with delight and confirm them in their lives.*