

# Candela



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

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

**March 2020**

**ISSUE 99**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Welcome to the first Candela for the new decade.

While it often felt strange to say twenty nineteen, 20/20 certainly has a better ring to it. With it there are undoubtedly sighs of relief that the horror end to last year and beginning of this year seem to finally be quenched in the land of "flooding rains". Most of us are sending our prayers and thanks for having come through such difficult times only a little battered and worn. For those of you that are still suffering we send our heartfelt prayers.

As some 'wag' said, we've only got pestilence to go now. Others have suggested we needed to have staggered our prayers for rain so that we didn't get it all at once in such a deluge. But it did douse the hellish fires so we can count those blessings. After difficult times a bit of



humour not only illuminates interesting correspondences but also lightens the load and helps us find our way forward again.

Which is a wonderful (and not at all contrived) segue into letting you know that Julian Duckworth's "Roadmap" to Swedenborg's teachings is only relative moments away from being printed.

*\*\* Continued on page 2 \*\**

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### **Next Issue – June 2020**

The next issue is going to be on the theme of Fairy Stories and their meanings. The deadline is **15th May 2020** Please send me any articles or ideas by then.

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

**Ruth**

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.


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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) 9416 2812 or browse <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/membership>

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

This is an exceptional labour of love that will provide us with pointers to Swedenborg's writings for many years to come. You will all be able to enjoy the guidance of the Roadmap as the SAA Committee has decided it will be our member's gift to you for this year. Our eternal thanks to Julian for his love of word-smithing. His is an exceptionally well-honed 'use' that we are very fortunate to have within our spiritual community and indeed within the SAA Committee.

With that is a second uncontrived segue from Committee to a farewell. After many years on the Committee I am stepping down, so this will be my last President's Message to you. Thank you for your kind encouragement over the years (hugs to you, you know who you are :). Whilst I always knew that my writings could never reach the erudite heights of

others, many of you said that my messages (which were decidedly more like homilies than learned teachings) touched you in different ways, for which I am grateful.

So, on that note, wishing you and your families and friends a long and loving life.

*Very kindest regards*

*Jan*



**Passing into the spiritual world, of members of the Swedenborg Association of Australia.**

Three of our members have died in the last few months. I feel sure that they have met up in their new and active lives to meet and discuss about all they are learning and experiencing. They may have even started a spiritual world SAA to help support us back here.

They are:

Geoff Forster

George Parfoot

Philip van Baaren

May the Lord bless them in their new awakening into the spiritual world.

Those that are in heaven are continually advancing towards the spring of life, with a greater advance towards a more joyful and happy spring the more thousands of years they live; and this to eternity, with increase according to the growth and degree of their love, charity, and faith.

Heaven and Hell 414



## HELEN KELLER – MOST IMPORTANT PERSON OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY?

**By Wayne Kasmar**

Helen Keller (1880–1968) was well known during her lifetime, and she is still remembered as an inspirational human rights crusader and champion for the deaf and blind or for anyone suffering from limitations or handicaps. She was also a remarkable spiritual seeker who took great delight in sharing with others her joy for the spiritual reality of life. John Hitz was the person who brought Emanuel Swedenborg and his religious teachings to Helen's attention, giving her a copy of *Heaven and Hell* when she was fourteen. She writes:



*When I began Heaven and Hell, I was as little aware of the new joy coming into my life as I had been years before when I stood on the piazza steps awaiting my teacher. . . . My heart gave a joyous bound. Here was a faith that emphasized what I felt so keenly—the separateness between soul and body, between the realm I could picture as a whole, and the chaos of fragmentary things and irrational contingencies that my limited senses met at every turn. I let myself go, as happy healthy youth will, and tried to puzzle out the long sentences and weighty words of the Swedish sage. . . . The words "Love" and "Wisdom" seemed to caress my fingers from paragraph to paragraph and these two words released in me new forces to stimulate my somewhat indolent nature and urge me forward evermore. . . . I was not "religious" in the sense of practicing ritual, but happy, because I saw God altogether lovely, after the shadows cast upon his image by the harsh creeds or warring sects and religions. The Word of God, freed from the blots and stains of barbarous creeds, has been at once the joy and good of my life.*

While perusing a book in the local library recently I came across a larger-scale and rather pleasant photo of Helen Keller, and knowing her enthusiasm for Swedenborg and his writings, I took the time to read the accompanying text. Here I was surprised to learn that in 1991 TIME magazine announced that she was the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's Most Important Person.

This caused me to be confused as I knew at the turn of this century TIME had announced Albert Einstein as its selection as Person of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Were there here two different categories of Person of the Century that TIME awarded? I know that the magazine had a tradition of annually announcing a Person of the Year (or Man of the Year in more sexist times.) This award was always a little strange as it was given to whoever had had the greatest impact on events during the year, whether for good or bad. So, on his basis it won't surprise you that even Adolf Hitler has been a TIME's Man of the Year.

So, might Albert Einstein, being TIME's Person of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, be assessed number one in this category on this same basis? While separately the magazine might consider Helen Keller to be the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's Most Important Person – someone who has a deeper and ultimately longer lasting effect on the world? Certainly, Einstein's legacy to the world is not straightforward. While he obviously did a great deal of good through his scientific breakthroughs, one wonders what a survivor of the Hiroshima or Nagasaki atomic bombings thought of his being 'awarded' the title of Person of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Of course, Einstein wasn't responsible for creating the atomic bomb, but it has certainly complicated his legacy – something our bombing survivor may note with irony.

But Helen Keller's legacy was quite different. The library book explained that before she gained a public profile, people looked upon the 'handicapped' with fear and pity and felt they were best dealt with



by hiding them away in what were often inhumane institutions. Those with disabilities were considered 'defective,' and automatically the deaf were thought of as stupid (the two commonly used meanings of the word 'dumb' still reflect that.) People were astounded when this young blind and deaf woman started to conduct public lectures and spread a message of hope and optimism. Single-handedly she changed society's way of viewing people with disabilities.

So, when TIME made her the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's Most Important Person, was the magazine judging the weighty depth of her influence, and endorsing the idea that it is the health of spirit that is ultimately the important thing in human life?

Trying to find out more about the 1991 announcement by TIME regarding Helen Keller, I went online and found ... nothing! The only reference online to TIME magazine and any sort of Person of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century type announcement was the widely publicized one about Einstein that I had remembered from 20 years ago. He was top of a list of 100 people that TIME put together to help come to their decision.

So, somewhat remarkably, the author of the library book seems to have simply got it wrong. Helen Keller was one of the 100 worthies that TIME listed and perhaps that is all the author meant to state in the book but somehow he got his wires crossed. But, then again, where did he get the idea that TIME made the announcement about her back in 1991. That seems so premature in any case given the century still had another decade to run at that point.

I came to the conclusion that the author's research was pretty diabolical when elsewhere in the book he provides commentary about the famous photo, also reproduced there, of US Marines raising the American flag on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War Two. Here he informs us that this event occurred in Indonesia. He was out by about two thousand kilometres.

I must admit, it was a disappointment to find that Helen Keller

was not the 20th Century's Most Important Person after all. It would have been a real feather in the cap of Swedenborg if she had. To have had the Person of the Century state, 'Swedenborg's message has been my strongest incitement to overcome limitations,' as Helen Keller did, would have been an excellent thing to use in drumming up interest in him and his writings.

In fact, thinking about his effect on her and others who did similar advocacy work in other areas, I wonder if we shouldn't be calling Swedenborg Mr. Enlightenment. Through his writings he really did influence many people to make the world a fairer, better place. As soon as the modern age started to emerge strongly in the 19th century, advocacy for obviously downtrodden groups started to arise. Racial discrimination, discrimination against women and harsh treatment of children were the three areas where challenges emerged. And in all three areas people influenced by Swedenborg were at the forefront of the battle.

In all three areas there were many who made significant contributions to the eventual victory. When it came to the fight for better treatment for people with disabilities, however, there was pretty much the one person in the beginning - Helen Keller. Her achievement, it could be argued, is pretty much unmatched in the way she single-handedly transformed people's attitude to those who were dealt very poor hands by life. The importance of this change in society cannot be overstated. Without it we could never have claimed to be truly human. Perhaps TIME should have decided on Helen Keller as the 20th Century's Most Important Person after all. It would have been a decision that really wouldn't have been too hard to defend.



The only thing  
worse than being blind  
is having **sight but no vision.**

- Helen Keller



## Helen Keller Spiritual Life Centre

Cultivating a bit more heaven here on earth

**50 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 U.S.A**

A New Church in Boston called the Swedenborg Chapel is underway with an exciting new venture.

They are building a centre dedicated to Helen Keller beside their church.

A resident of Cambridge MA during her years as a student, Helen Keller graduated from Radcliffe College in 1904, three years after the completion of the Swedenborg Chapel.

As a self-described Swedenborgian, we see this corner as the perfect spot to honour the spiritual legacy of Helen Keller.

Their website is

<https://hkslc.org/>

Through interactive accessible exhibits, we will bring Helen Keller's story to life, sharing her deep and evolving Swedenborgian faith, the faith that grounded, challenged and inspired her to do the work of justice and peace. The Centre will be a nexus point for justice and faith, action and contemplation, as we honour the need to work for a better world, while also finding peace in the present moment.

- Accessible interactive exhibits sharing the story of Helen Keller's life and faith.
- Reference library and books for sale on Helen Keller, the spiritual tradition that grounded her, and by authors that continue to bring forward Keller's spiritual vision.
- Spaces for contemplation and renewal (sanctuary, labyrinth, meditation room.)
- The organization of a regular Helen Keller Conference.



- Meeting space for study groups, advocacy efforts, classes, and community building.
- Regular lecture series
- Programming offered by Centre partners.
- Much more!

Helen Keller Spiritual Life Centre will focus on the following six areas, each lifted up by Helen Keller as vital to her vision of a better world.

### Disability Advocacy

"The chief handicap of the blind is not blindness, but the attitude of seeing people towards them."

### Peace

"Let us all unite, then, and insist that America disarm now. Now is the time for the great task of all true Christians, to inspire the masses with a definite faith in peace and goodwill."

### Anti-Racism

"Let us hurl our strength against the iron gates of prejudice until they fall, and their bars and sundered and we all advance gladly towards our common heritage of life,

liberty and light, undivided by race or colour or creed, united by the same human heart that beats in the bosom of all."

### Economic Justice

"The test of a democracy is not the magnificence of buildings or the speed of automobiles or the efficiency of air transportation, but rather the care given to the welfare of all the people."

### Feminism

"Women have discovered that they cannot rely on men's chivalry to give them justice."

### Creation Care

"Reverence for the beauty and preciousness of earth, and a sense of responsibility to do all we can to make it a habitation of health and plenty for all people."



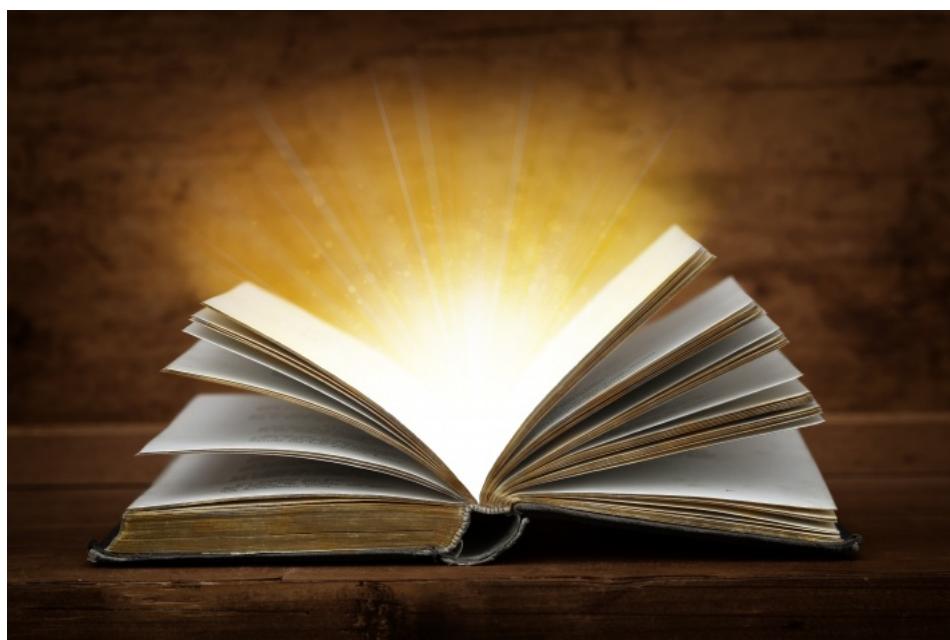
## A Poem from an on-line reader in the U.S.A

Brian Bouton MD

### IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

<u>IN</u>	<u>Inward</u>	<u>Nearness</u>
<u>THE</u>	<u>Transcendent</u>	<u>Holy</u>
<u>BEGINNING</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>Eternal</u>
<u>WAS</u>	<u>Existence</u>	<u>God Innate Nuanced Numinous Infinite Natural Grace</u>
<u>THE</u>	<u>Word</u>	<u>Affirms Surrounds</u>
<u>WORD</u>	<u>Transfigured</u>	<u>Heavenly Essence</u>
	<u>Wholly Original</u>	<u>Redeemed Divine</u>

<u>IN</u>	<u>Inward</u>	<i>Draw us ever innerward Draw us deep to Your Word</i>
<u>THE</u>	<u>Nearness</u>	<i>Harness us near and dear Earnest desire so clear</i>
<u>BEGINNING</u>	<u>Transcendent</u>	<i>Ascending to the Highest Answering to the Finest</i>
	<u>Holy</u>	<i>Seeking Word most Holy Knitting souls to be Wholly</i>
	<u>Eternal</u>	<i>Your Word eternal Love Arms reaching from above</i>
	<u>Before</u>	<i>Way back no time no thing Vast empty before angel sing</i>
	<u>Existence</u>	<i>Sounding the unvoiced into being Lighting the blind into seeing</i>
	<u>God</u>	<i>God unseen in vast so deep Human souls still and asleep</i>
	<u>Innate</u>	<i>Wisdom and love before any time Wrath and love in Christ rhyme</i>
	<u>Nuanced</u>	<i>Subtle simple a genius clock Wheels within wheels unlock</i>
	<u>Numinous</u>	<i>Sacred beauty full and luminous Life water from Christ fountainous</i>
	<u>Infinite</u>	<i>Limitless God flowing with mercy Word rivers of fathomless fluency</i>
	<u>Natural</u>	<i>Innate gift of endless giving Universal outpouring for the living</i>
	<u>Grace</u>	<i>Gracing us unwon mercy and love Gracing Him for us Dove above</i>

**WAS****Word***Always there from very start**Divine love eternally heart***Affirms***Love proved by Your death**Sustaining all with Holy Breath***Surrounds***Encircling the least of us**Energy filled, enlivened dust***THE****Transfigured***Painted finger us entrance**Invitation seven heaven dance***Heavenly***Evenly hearing all your people**Aspiring to height of steeple***Essence***Christ paragon crux of love**Wondrous woven treasure trove***WORD****Wholly***Longing to see your Holy Face**By your side please save a place***Original***Christ virginal Creator of all**Foundstone we heed your call***Redeemed***Deem us worth Your sacrifice**May our faith true suffice***Divine***On gospel words gossamer fine**Allow us to forever dine*



## Video on Sickness and Disease

by Michael Chester.



Back in 2007, John Maitland gave a very special talk titled '*Understanding Sickness and Disease through Swedenborg*'. It's special because of the uniqueness of what was covered. Here are two of the important questions he was seeking to answer:

Is there meaning in sickness and disease or are our chronic illnesses just prizes in life's Black Lottery?

Are sickness and disease merely chance happenings in our lives?

It takes much investigation and reflection to present Swedenborg's view on this topic. John's deep interest in the interaction of mind and body and Swedenborg's insights on sickness and disease shine in this presentation.

Because of its vital significance, the DVD of the presentation has been converted to the mp4 format so that it can be made available on the internet. It can now be found

<http://www.swedenborg.com.au/learningresources#video>  
Here you will find the link to the video as well as links to the audio file and transcript.

If you want to go directly to the video, clicking on this web address  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ads\\_ivPYZbM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ads_ivPYZbM)  
 will take you to the Swedenborg Australia YouTube channel which gives you access to it.

There are many fascinating insights provided such as

- What we believe is an important factor in determining our health.
- Swedenborg's central idea that physical symptoms have their origin at the spiritual level has very strong support from many sources both medical and non-medical.

This video will provide much food for thought for anyone interested in maintaining their Wellbeing and will assist those in the health professions to gain deeper insights about their patients and improve the health care system. Well worth watching.

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### Extract from the "Roadmap"

See President's Message

#### **Conscience**

*Conscience is a general, rather obscure, principle from what flows in from God.* AC 1914

*No one can undergo spiritual temptation unless they have conscience.* AC 4399

*Interior conscience is where good and truth exist; exterior conscience is where justice and equity are.* AC 4167

*There is true conscience, conscience in obeying, and self-seeking conscience.* AC 1033

*Outward fears are not conscience but are only external bonds which allow us to live with others and seem friendly. In the other life these are of no account.* AC 1835

*Ancient people had direct perception, which later became conscience.* AC 2144



## Inner well-being – Can I rely on myself?

By Stephen Russell-Lacy

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We all probably want happiness and inner well-being. Yet sometimes we lack uplifting thoughts, forget the meaning and purpose which gave our life a sense of direction, or feel discouraged and stressed when facing adversity.

Is it really so difficult creating inner well-being for ourselves?

### Reliance on others for inner well-being

In times of hardship, we each need all the comfort, and encouragement we can get from family members. The boss may give us time off to recover. Our friends may put us up where they live for a while. But can others make us happy, deeply happy? Therapists know that despite their therapeutic skill, there are always some clients who don't improve. They also realise they cannot take all the credit for those who do get better by pursuing personal change. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. Unless people take responsibility for their own lives, nothing much changes whatever expertise is provided.

### Reliance on one's own efforts alone for inner well-being

Many have wondered about ever finding inner well-being when going through an awful personal crisis, or when feeling apathetic and alienated from work. If they have tried to conjure up hope, confidence and contentment even with help from others, they probably have encountered great difficulty.



My own experience has been that I sometimes lack inspiration and a sense of strength to pursue what I guess is the right direction – one that I value and find meaningful. I've come to accept I have freedom and thus responsibility to try to do something about my life. But that I can't achieve this by myself alone. I can point myself in the right direction but can't create tolerance and generosity in myself just by having the right intentions. The soul needs nurturing.

### Transpersonal energy creating inner well-being

I would suggest in addition to our own sensations and desires, personal growth comes from a greater light and energy. A higher power that give us inner well-being to manage the hurdles life placed in our path and to resist our personal demons. This idea of a higher power, however it is conceived, is also the view of the various 12 Step Recovery Programs available for various kinds of personal problems e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous.

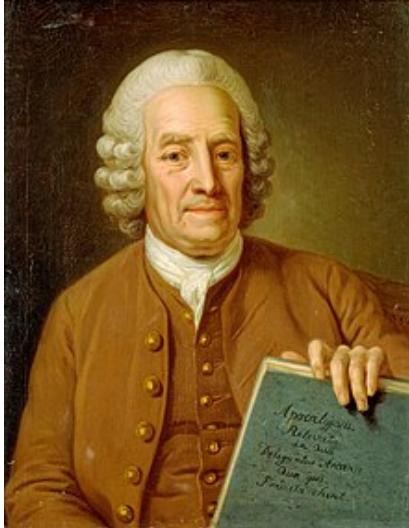
These group interventions share the view that there is a spiritual source from beyond ourselves that can provide an inflow of healing power. In his best seller *The Road Less Travelled*, psychiatrist Scott Peck points out that natural growth and healing, mystical experiences, and fortunate coincidences, are commonplace. He says they are manifestations of a powerful force originating outside of human consciousness which nurtures the spiritual growth of human beings. He calls it Grace. This is a force other than, and in addition to, our conscious will. He identifies it with the power of love. The desire to nurture the inner well-being of people.



## Swedenborg's experience

Emanuel Swedenborg was a Christian mystic and spiritual philosopher who was born in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Once he had a vision of a shining presence. He said a brilliant light appeared to him in a similar way to how the sun appears to all of us. Only one which radiated spiritual heat and light. Light symbolising the wisdom that enlightens our thought: heat, the feeling of compassion that gives warmth to our concerns. He said that this spiritual sun, normally invisible to us, is the origin of all that is good and true in life and thus our inner well-being. The physical sun in our sky is the basis of our geography and time. Similarly, for him, the visionary sun was the basis of all personal direction and orientation.

In line with this mystical experience, Swedenborg comments on the biblical creation narrative – not he said to be taken literally but an account of the potential creation of spiritual development in each person. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the creation myth, the sun, together with the moon and stars formed. Symbolically speaking, receiving the sun's light enlightens our understanding of higher principles: receiving its warmth stirs in us a concern for others. The picture here is an individual newly recognising that there is a higher source of deeper thought and kindness that comes from beyond oneself. Swedenborg maintains that this acknowledgment is critical. For without it, we each will depend only on ourself to find inner well-being. And this will lead to disappointment, pride and a sense of something lacking.



## Conclusion about inner well-being

Swedenborg was writing during the Christian era in Europe. These days there are many who no longer believe in a personal God. I suspect that amongst non-religious people, there are nevertheless many who do believe in a universal spiritual source of everything. In other words, they acknowledge a Divinity that is both beyond, as well as potentially within, the individual. One that inspires, and is the origin of, compassion for others as well as for our own inner welfare. Also, the starting place of common sense to know what are useful and effective ways to act.

Whatever our troubles, I would suggest inner well-being is possible if we can learn how to connect with this divine creative spirit. And keep connecting. It can be seen as the kind of love that is a real thing in itself flowing into us from beyond ourselves. An infinite and everlasting reality originating beyond our own limitations.

Copyright 2019 Stephen Russell-Lacy  
Author of *Heart, Head & Hands* Swedenborg's perspective on emotional problems.

<https://www.spiritualquestions.org.uk/>

This is the link to Stephen Russell-Lacy's website where there are a lot more articles about life and psychology from a Swedenborgian perspective.

*The Lord flows into everyone with all his divine love, all his divine wisdom, and all his divine life.*

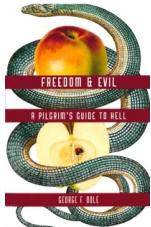
In the Book of Creation, we read that we were created in the image of God and that God breathed the breath of life into our nostrils (Genesis 1:27; 2:7). This means that we are not life, we are merely organs that receive life. God could not create another being like himself. If he could have done so, there would be as many gods as there are people. God could not create life or light either. God could, however, create people as forms that receive life, just as he created the eye as a form that receives light. God could not and still cannot divide his own essence—it is an indivisible oneness. True Christianity 364



## Reader Book Discounts this Quarter

As a reader of **Candela**, if you order the following titles during the next quarter, you will receive the discounts listed below **while stocks last**.

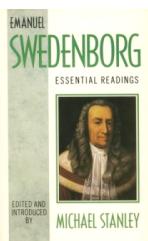
Complete the Order Form below (or a copy) and return it to the Swedenborg Centre or phone on 02 9416 2812 and mention this notice.



### ***Freedom and Evil* by George Dole**

190 pages, paperback, RRP \$24, now **only \$15**

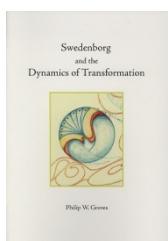
Should we be good simply to avoid punishment in the life hereafter? George Dole suggests asking such questions in a theoretical way doesn't get us very far. But to examine the words of someone who has been there can help. Dole draws on Swedenborg, who writes that we are unconscious residents of the spiritual world as well as beings in the material world. The hells he encountered have mirrors in our everyday lives. A topic well worth knowing from a seasoned Swedenborg translator.



### ***Emanuel Swedenborg Essential Reading* by Michael Stanley**

176 pages, paperback, RRP \$15, now **only \$10**

Highly recommended book as a fitness kit for anyone wanting to make the most of their lives. A useful overview of key themes in Swedenborg's teachings. The introduction sketches the background in which Swedenborg wrote his works. The chapters illustrate ideas in depth with quotations presented by Michael Stanley's clear commentary. Themes include the Divine Nature, our nature, rebirth, sexuality, and the spiritual ages.



### ***Swedenborg & the dynamics of transformation* by Dr Philip Groves**

Release date: 2010, 63 pages, paperback, RRP \$15, now **only \$10**

A collection of 5 essays looking at different aspects of Swedenborg's Writings. The titles are Swedenborg's Life: A Dynamic Life; Spiritual and Material Connections; The Sources and Nature of Spiritual Teaching; Conditions for Spiritual Growth and *De Verbo* revisited. Contains much wisdom and food for productive thought and reflection.

Send orders to the Swedenborg Centre, 4 Shirley Rd, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 or phone (02) 9416 2812, or email [orders@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:orders@swedenborg.com.au) and mention this Candela.

Title	<b>Discount</b>	Price	Freight	Total cost	Tick title(s) you want
<i>Freedom &amp; Evil</i>	\$15	\$5		<b>\$20</b>	
<i>E. Swedenborg Essential Reading</i>	\$10	\$5		<b>\$15</b>	
<i>Sw. &amp; Dynamics of Transformation</i>	\$10	\$5		<b>\$15</b>	
<i>Payable by Cheque/Money Order/Credit Card*</i>					Total: \$

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

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

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

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

#####

The Correspondence of Rain

Like many things, rain can be seen as a blessing and as a curse. Rain might help everything to grow well but it can dampen a holiday or flood a suburb. But our immediate associations with rain are that it is a good thing, an essential to life, a gift, a refresher, and that wonderful correspondence of falling down onto the earth by coming from up above. God's regular reminder of his majesty and his healing. It is heavenly!

Rain works like a huge watering can. It comes diffusely and falls in raindrops rather than in torrents. This tells us that God's gift of rain is benevolent and shared with us all; the rain falls on the just and the unjust, wanting to bring growth and new life. The rain itself is water, and water corresponds to what is true. The truth that we see is there to bring growth and new life to us.

Sudden heavy rain usually runs off the ground it falls onto, especially if it is hard and dry. This seems to correspond to our unwillingness or our inability to listen to the truth when it comes. It goes to waste. Gentle rain and showers work more effectively. They may run off a bit, but they begin to open up the surface as the hard soil begins to receive the moisture of the rain and softens up. As it softens, the rain can begin to penetrate in the

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ground more and more. What a perfect parable of how a mind can receive the truth in terms of what it needs to know and receive in order for it to begin to open up.

the creeks, streams and rivers begin to resume their courses, running along, joining up, and going eventually as one body of water into the vast ocean. This seems to tell us about how truth is to take us into the goodness and use of life, where we interact, provide, carry and sustain life, people being with people. There is nothing more poignant than a dry riverbed which, although it has been made, is serving no purpose. But a week of rain can change all that.

One effect, of there having been good rain is in the greening up of all the plant life around us, from the trees to the ferns, mosses, and the grass. This is intensely visual, as is the stunted brown of a drought. So, rain means resurgent life and growth and green wellness. All the more oxygen to do us good! Nature's health is the picture of our personal health in mind, spirit and body as we show gratitude, care, respect, and we discover the goodness and the wellbeing of it all. May it always rain within us as well as regularly around us.