

Candela

Newsletter of the **Swedenborg Association of Australia Incorporated**
Organisational Details are provided on next page

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"They Who Love Believe in Love"

A discussion has been launched in the papers concerning the Darwinian evolutionary theory and what is being called 'Creationism'. Darwin argues along the lines of 'probability' reasoning and Swedenborg along 'deterministic' reasoning. Both are legitimate scientific models provided one is conscious enough to realise the possible flaws in probability reasoning.

This model is based on little or even no proven starting point. Kepler believed the 'probable' form of the solar system was made up of the Platonic solids (the tetrahedron, octahedron, cube, icosahedron and dodecahedron) but from his conclusions was able to see it was an entirely different construction - that of elliptical orbital planets. Newton later was able to add to this hypothesis by actually calculating the orbits through his mathematical calculations of gravity.

Thus the faulty premises were able to lead to a more finite explanation of our universe.

It seems to me, and I feel somewhat exposed in expressing an individual opinion on the meaning of life, that Darwin uses the model of probabilistic reasoning to place God at the lower end of creation and all things descend towards Man from there.

Swedenborg on the other hand, argues deterministically, that God creates the All and the All is the pattern of creation, not in time and space but as an entity. It looks like time and space to us because we are in those dimensions. Swedenborg could argue from a firm basis because he experienced the spiritual world. For us the problem is not so simple. Our mind is a spiritual dimension and is our way of forming a belief. Belief is not something that can be reasoned, ground out of logic. In fact it has nothing to do with intellectual conclusions. It is a condition of the mind and heart that results from the performance of our will. It is they who love who believe in love; the virtuous who believe in virtue; the industrious who believe in industry; the worshippers who believe in God.

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Two copies of this Newsletter are being sent to members as usual, the second for giving away.

Our real creed lies in what we do, not what we say. This is why Swedenborg places so much emphasis on use.

There is much social injustice in the world and much trauma from natural disasters. We seem to have spoken about this before. Is it becoming more turbulent in the world? Religious differences are the cause of many of the world's problems which seems strange when the whole idea of a religion is to return to the One.

Many religious people base their belief on the written word. Without guidance, words can be misunderstood and mis-applied to life. There needs to be a "belief" emanating from what people "do" in regard to what the Teachings "mean".

On behalf of the SAA Committee, I wish everyone a Holy and beautiful Christmas and I wish you all the very best for the coming year

Agape,

John Brogan, President



Sons of the East

The wise men from the east who came to Jesus when He was born belonged to those people called the 'sons of the east'. This becomes clear from the fact of their awareness that the Lord was to be born, and that they knew of His Coming from the star which appeared to them in the east.

The fact that such a prophecy existed from of old among the sons of the east, who were from Syria, is clear from Balaam's prophecy concerning the Lord's Coming (Numbers 24:17):

I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A star will arise out of Jacob and a sceptre will rise up out of Israel.

The fact that Balaam was from the land of the sons of the east, that is, from Syria, is evident from Numbers 23:7,

Balaam uttered his declaration and said, From Syria has Balak, the king of Moab, brought me, from the mountains of the east.

The wise men who came to Jesus when He was born are called the magi, but this expression was used for wise men at that time.

Swedenborg: *Secrets of Heaven* paragraph 3762

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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 Swedenborg Association of Australia or its Committee.

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, please refer to page 12.

Candela - 2006

We are returning to Issue themes for at least the first three issues of 2006.

Our theme for the March issue will be:

Is God in Control?

Sounds profound but there is much valuable and interesting concepts in this subject both when viewing world events and daily living. Why not let the subject roam around in your mind and heart over the next two months and commit your thoughts and feelings to paper for submission. **To be a lively Newsletter, your contributions are needed.** Copy deadline will be 2nd March. Again we suggest possibilities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ an article of up to 1000 words | ✓ a poem, etc. |
| ✓ art work in the form of line drawings | ✓ a question to which you would like an answer |

June theme: *"Male and Female He Made Them"*

September theme: *Health & Spirituality*



What Child is This? by Lee Woofenden

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

A simple, tender domestic scene - one that has been repeated by the billions in thousands of cultures throughout the world, and throughout human history. A newborn baby lies sleeping in a mother's lap.

That is a miracle in itself. No matter how much we study it, we still don't know just how it happens. And no matter how many times it happens, the fact that this incredibly complex biological, psychological, and spiritual being has come into existence is so mind-boggling that the safest thing for us to do is just not to think about it too much. Every new birth, every new human being, is a work of science and art far, far more advanced than the human mind has even been able to *conceive*, let alone create. If we think about it too much, our minds may be in danger of expanding beyond any reasonable boundaries, and coming face to face with the infinite Creator, whose work of science, art, and spirit each one of us is.



What child is this? Is this truly a child who brings us face to face with our Creator? Is this truly a child in whom the Infinite One has come to meet us and dwell among us?

If it is dangerous to our mental complacency to think too much about the birth of a human child, what about allowing ourselves to consider the possibility of a *divine* birth? How risky might that be? Our culture has made Christmas its biggest holiday, and gives lip service to Jesus Christ, for whom the holiday is named. But to teach that the birth of Jesus Christ was a *spiritual* event, a divine entrance into our world - that is forbidden in our schools, in our government, and for the most part, in the commercial and corporate world as well, where Santa wins out over Jesus hands down.

Why? Of course, one reason is that not everyone in our culture is Christian. But this doesn't explain why *all* religious teaching is banned. There is a deeper reason: it is *dangerous* to the values of our culture, our government, our corporate world to contemplate too deeply the birth that took place two thousand years ago. In a society and a world that values power and money above all, it is dangerous to consider that there may be something far more

powerful than any human power, and far more valuable than all human wealth. It is dangerous because it calls into question the very foundations of this world's values.

And it is dangerous to each one of us because recognising - truly letting it sink into our hearts, our minds, our souls - that our Creator may have visited us two thousand years ago calls into question our own fundamental values. It makes us evaluate our beliefs, our loves, our goals, our lives.

It is far safer to treat Christmas as a secular holiday; to put out of our mind any possibility of a miraculous divine entrance into our world. Then we can have our holiday celebrations, and continue on afterwards as if nothing more has happened than a big festival, a big family gathering, a big exchange of gifts and good will among our family and friends. And all of these are *good* for us to enjoy. Even the shadow of Christmas that is our society's secular celebration of the event brings its own blessings and renewals to a tired world.

Yet through it all, the Gospels continue to pull us back to that dangerous question, *What child is this?*

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? What child is this that the angels heralded, prompting those shepherds to come visit a newborn in a stable? What child is this whose birth prompted wise men to travel from a distant land to offer him costly gifts symbolic of a great king's birth?

What child is this whose birth was originally celebrated by both the simple and the wise, and is still celebrated two thousand years later by people of all types and all races? What child is this whose birth is now celebrated by millions, even billions, compared to the few dozen people who were even aware of it long ago when it actually happened?

A human birth is miracle enough. Yet this was no ordinary human birth. This was a birth that so changed the course of human history - especially human *spiritual* history - that it became the turning point of the calendar that is now used almost universally throughout the world. This is a birth that instead of fading into the mists of time has become more and more powerful as the centuries have gone by. This is a birth that no human being could have achieved. This is a divine birth.

What child is this? Even Christians have debated this question ever since Jesus Christ came



among us.

Complex doctrinal systems and vast ecclesiastical bodies have been built around particular answers to the question, "What child is this?" The religious debates have raged for centuries: Was he divine or human? Was he the son of Mary or the Son of God? And was he the Son of God, or was he God himself?

Swedenborg's spiritual teachings provide the answer that he is "All of the above." Jesus Christ was divine *and* human. He was the son of Mary *and* the Son of God. And he was and *is* God himself. Jesus Christ was and is God himself, Jehovah from eternity, come to earth in human form, as "the Babe, the son of Mary." He was God himself, who loved us so much that he came from his place of pure divine love and wisdom, of infinite warmth and light at the centre of the universe, and travelled all the way down through the spheres of heaven and earth to visit us here at the cold, dark fringes of Creation.

He was the Divine Being, the Creator of the Universe, who had such yearning compassion for his creatures that he could not leave us to suffer in our human darkness and cold. From his infinite mercy, he came among us, became as human as one of us, was born from a simple, humble human mother into a life of poverty at the lowest, darkest, and most violent point in human history.

This is the Child whose birth we celebrate. This is the Child whose message - whose very presence - challenges everything this world stands for, down to its very foundations. This is the Child who, if we allow him into our mind, into our heart, into our soul, will completely transform us, turning all our old values on their head, and making us a new person inside and out.

This is the *dangerous* child whom the world and its governments must eliminate, but who triumphed and continues to triumph over all of them, and who is still fighting the battle for each one of us, and for all the nations and peoples of the world. This is the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

And they will name him Emmanuel, which means "God with us."

Lee Woofenden is editor of "Our Daily Bread", a monthly journal of 'Inspiration & Meditations' published by the Swedenborgian Church in USA, from which this article was taken with permission. He also ministers to a Swedenborgian congregation at Bridgewater near Boston, Massachusetts, USA



ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Another year drawing to a close. Summer is here, and the holidays are about to begin. Christmas is almost with us.

As I write my cards, and wrap presents, I pause to connect to the Christmas message and what it means for me.

The outpouring of love, from the Divine, to each of us; manifesting as Jesus, the Son of God. What a gift! How can I ever give thanks enough for such unconditional love?

This is what Swedenborg's writings talk to me about! How through each and every good and useful moment of my life, I give my love and thanks to the Lord. Thank you Swedenborg! The eternal Truths you have shared about the Word and the Lord are a Light in my life!

To our Readers - May your Christmas be filled with joy, love and thanksgiving, and receiving, and may you continue into 2006 and beyond with the Love of the Lord.

New Members:

We welcome:

Alexander Benjko (WA)
Phillip Carroll (NSW)
Clancy Griffith (NSW)
Murray Keller (NSW)
Laura Riddell (NSW)
David Riis (Qld)

to our membership.

General Business:

Our next, and final, Committee Meeting for the year is on the 8th December. Keep an eye open for next year's events.

Until then,

Love, Light and Laughter,

Louise

Louise Brogan, Hon. Secretary





GROUP'S NEWS

Brisbane:

It could be that it was a mistake to move the November meeting from our usual 4th Wednesday to the 5th Wednesday. In any case, nearer Christmas, as we all know, demands press in on us making attendance more difficult, especially during the day. As it was we had 5 people attend our November meeting, on the 30th, the last for 2005. The amazing thing is how far some come, from as far as northern New South Wales and from the Gold Coast. The topic was *Influx* and the meeting began with recorded excerpts from Handel's oratorio 'The Messiah' which led into points being made about inspiration, its ebbs and flows, etc, and then on into the way we are impacted on at various levels, by people around us, at the outer level, by associate spirits and, most significantly of all, by influx from the Lord.

Whilst I led the meeting and gave the main talk **Paul Eldar**, now living in Canberra, also had recorded an excellent talk on the topic, an excerpt of which was played. Taped copies of Paul's full talk are available to anyone interested.

Brisbane friends extend warm Christmas greetings to all.

Ian Arnold



Melbourne:

David Moffat was our speaker in September, his topic was *Entertaining Angels*. David spoke on the way angels and spirits interact with us, using specific quotes from Swedenborg to demonstrate the link between the two worlds. The evening was well attended with 23 present and discussion was lively adding to everyone's understanding of the topic.

We brought together a Panel of Speakers from the Muslim, Buddhist, Bahai and Hindu philosophies/religion in October, the subject being *Love of Fellow Man* or *Love of the Neighbour*. Whilst the speakers focussed on the theme, each had a slightly different approach and teaching; yet the essential thrust was the same. It provided a very good opportunity for everyone to see the river and harmony of essential truths that run through each religion or philosophy. A good attendance of 24 was present excluding the speakers.

Swedenborg and Darwin: the Origin of Man was the topic in November with **John Brogan** providing a very stimulating and informative talk. John used

slides to show the evolution of species and the essential harmonised structure, but identifying the difference between Darwin's continuous evolution theory and Swedenborg's teaching of discrete degrees. Rather than on a Friday evening, this meeting was held on Saturday as a break-up event for the year; it was followed by a shared meal. The attendance of 13 was lower than in previous years.

We have been pleased to have a good variety speakers and topics this year and we hope to provide the same variation on 2006

Chris Skinner



Perth:

We have a small group of committed people who support each meeting. Over the September to November period our topics have focused on understanding Swedenborg's family and scientific background. We have entitled the series *Groomed or appointed? Understand the background, understand the man!* This approach appeals to our growing knowledge, while at the same time adding a little more depth and wider interest than we might otherwise have.

Telephone and e-mail enquiries are indicative of a broader potential of support for our Swedenborg Meetings, although it may take some considerable time before any of these contacts become more concrete.

We wish groups around Australia a great Christmas and a fulfilling 2006.

Trevor Moffat



North Ryde, Sydney:

In October **Dr Vladimir Dimitrov** gave a comprehensive overview on *Wholesome Life Ecology*.

"The wholesome way is seen as a way of continual growth in self-awareness: from awareness of our physical bodies, instincts and desires to awareness of being bearers of the never-ending (timeless) dimension of existence."

~ from the Foreword of his latest book
Wholesome Life Ecology

During the talk he described his message as the embodiment of love. He began by mentioning some



of the big problems facing us such as ecological disasters, global warming, powerful corporations exploiting third world countries, many people dying from wrong diagnosis, obsession with technology and the stresses of a rapidly changing world. He indicates that by creating obstacles for us to live wholesomely, society provides us with friction that keeps us alert and vigilant, and makes us sharpen our focus of awareness. There were many important, vibrant ideas presented such as “*human beings are nature becoming self-conscious*” (Elisée Reclus)

The wholesome way is a kind of agreement between the individual and the forces and energies sustaining existence: one ‘agrees’ to apply genuine and earnest efforts to grow in self-awareness and mature into self-consciousness, while the existential dynamics ‘agree’ to fully support these efforts.

25 people warmly received Vladimir’s vibrant message. Here are a couple of quotes from the presentation. “it is important . . . whether we consciously identify ourselves with the infinite and imperishable or with the finite, transient and ephemeral” (Govinda, Creative Meditation, 1976). God is in you, just reveal it.

For those wishing to become more familiar with these ideas, www.lulu.com/content/164625 web page is a good place to start, going to the Preview (Foreword) of *Wholesome Life Ecology*.

I agree with Vladimir that the key ideas of *Wholesome Life Ecology* are an embodiment of love.

This talk is available on video for borrowing.

Michael Chester

North Ryde Meeting March 2006

This is going to be a session for

Any Questions - Spiritual Topics

You don’t have to be present to submit questions for consideration. In fact, we are seeking questions to make it an Australia-wide event. Do join in by entering your questions via letter to the registered office, phoning the Swedenborg Centre on 02 9888 1066 or emailing saa@swedenborg.com.au

The evening will be taped. Selected transcripts will be made available.

The Incarnation

Jehovah God is Love itself and Wisdom itself, or Good itself and Truth itself. He came down in the form of Divine Truth, which is the Word and which was God with God, and took upon Himself human form, so as to reduce to order everything in heaven, in hell and in the church. For at that time the power of hell was stronger than the power of heaven, and on earth the power of evil was stronger than the power of good, so that utter damnation stood threatening at the gates. This impending damnation was removed by Jehovah God by means of His Human, which was Divine Truth, and thus angels and people were redeemed.

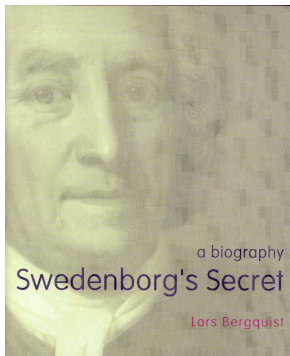
Afterwards He united Divine Truth with Divine Good, or Divine Wisdom with Divine Love in His Human and so returned into the Divinity which was His from eternity, together with and in His glorified Human. This is the meaning of the passage in John 1:1, 14: ‘. . . the Word was with God and the Word was God;’ and ‘. . . the Word was made flesh . . .’. In the same gospel 16:28: ‘I came out of the Father and I came into the world; I leave the world again, and go to the Father’.

Further in the following passage: ‘We know that the Son of God came and gave us understanding, so that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and everlasting life’.

1 John 5:20.

These passages show that without the Lord’s coming into the world no one could have been saved. The situation today is similar. So unless the Lord comes into the world again in the form of Divine Truth, that is, the Word, no more can anyone now be saved.

**Swedenborg:
True Christian Religion paragraph 3**



Swedenborg's Secret: a biography

by **Lars Bergquist**
516 pages, hardback
The Swedenborg Society
ISBN 0 85448 143 5

Book reviews generally include a criticism of something in the production, usually after having given much praise. The criticism is perhaps what the reviewer would have personally liked to see in the book. I have absolutely no criticism whatsoever of this recently-published new biography of Swedenborg. It looks good, it even feels good, and the content is superb. For those who know that there are already very many biographies of Swedenborg and wonder if we need yet another, let me seriously point out that this biography is not just another in the line. To begin with, I have the strong feeling that everyone who took part in the production really enjoyed themselves, understood the pivotal nature of this book and joined in a united vision to bring it successfully into being.

The background to the book will help to highlight its importance. The author, Lars Bergquist, now in his mid-70s, is himself a native Swede, a long-standing writer of many books. He is a former diplomat for Sweden to many major places around the world. He is not a Swedenborgian but he has a long and deepening respect for and understanding of his fellow countryman. He seems to have had access to national archives on all kinds of related background material and the sheer volume of factual information given is astonishing but never ever dry or overwhelming. It is well-researched and documented.

Lars Bergquist's book was originally published in Swedish and it came out in 1999. Since then it has been translated into very readable English in order to be published by The Swedenborg Society for wide distribution. The Swedenborg Society have done a magnificent job in the physical presentation of the book, with an excellent spread through the pages of nearly fifty black and white photos and charts, and ten beautifully produced colour plates.

Sweden has traditionally always been a neutral country. This explains a lot about the country and its culture. It also comes through in Lars Bergquist's non-partisan approach to Swedenborg, unlike many of his other biographers who often show partiality. There is a lot of straight information of background material, but all of it is well-considered, often with a good psychological

coverage and sensible commentary. Lars Bergquist knows the history of Sweden intimately and brings all of it to bear on Swedenborg's own close involvement with the events of his time.

The spiritual greatness of Emanuel Swedenborg is equally presented; fully, positively and objectively. Lars Bergquist sees Swedenborg as a 'man of two worlds' and draws on a lot of documentary evidence to substantiate Swedenborg's own experience and belief that he lived in both worlds fully and simultaneously. The actual 'secret' is suggested both in the book's subtitle: 'The Meaning and Significance of the Word of God, the Life of the Angels, and Service to God', and the back cover quotation from the Blake-specialist, Peter Ackroyd, 'What was the secret? It is the opening of the gate. It is the sure knowledge that nature and the material world are the Vessels of Eternity.'

The chapters generally follow the historical sequence of Swedenborg's development. They are sometimes cryptically headed, for example, 'Why should we care about Poland's affairs?' There are whole chapters given over to the Dream Diary (Journal of Dreams), The Worship and Love of God, The Spiritual Diary, before ever reaching Swedenborg's greatest work, the Arcana Caelestia, or Heavenly Secrets. There are digressions into botany, clairvoyance, breathing and focused concentration, hermeneutics and Swedenborg's own lifestyle from others' observations, all given excellent commentary and context. It's all so well-crafted.

At the end of the four hundred and thirty four pages of biography there are valuable extras, such as the full endnotes of textual references, a three-column chronology showing the events in Swedenborg's own life, the dating of his writings, and Sweden's political events. After this is a detailed list of the contents in Swedenborg's own personal library, then a complete and valuable bibliography, and a final index. The inside covers – both front and back – reproduce an excellent detailed map of Europe done in 1706.

Lars Bergquist, the Swedish publishers, the translators, Kurt Nemitz and Norman Ryder, and Stephen McNeilly and The Swedenborg Society are to be congratulated on this publication which is a delight even just to hold in your hand. A Swedish reporter, Britt Dahlström, comments:

A magnificent biography. Lars Bergquist is merging daily life, work, dreams and angels into a single unity. His book will be the standard biography for the foreseeable future.

Julian Duckworth

* * N.B. See page 11 for price and ordering * *



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Summary of a talk given by **Geoff Forster**
at the Swedenborgian Association (Melbourne Group) Meeting in April 2005

There has been a recent upsurge in the study of consciousness, especially under the auspices of the UK Science and Medical Network, whose recent director, David Lorimer, has been President of the British Swedenborg Association. For instance, in 2002 a series of conferences, at eight British universities, was arranged by the Network, on Science, Consciousness and Ultimate Reality.

The crucial question is: does the brain produce consciousness or transmit it?

The former view, known variously as monism or reductionism, is prevalent, according to the Network, in Western academic circles. The idea that consciousness is merely the functioning of brain circuitry has major consequences: no basis for an afterlife; and surely no scope for freewill.

In the latter view, often known as dualism, consciousness (or mind) exists in its own right. Often associated with this is Bergson's view that the brain usually limits consciousness, on the interests of physical and social survival.

A distinction can be made between *upward* causation (physical events give rise to mental and emotional events, e.g. falling over and hurting one's leg), and *downward* causation, where mental, emotional and higher processes have physical results (Examples: psychosomatic medicine; placebos). Dualism can of course cope with the latter, but surely monism attempts unconvincingly. In psychology, there has been an interesting transition over the past century. From etymologically, the study of the soul; behaviourism (no soul, no mind); the recognition of the Freudian unconscious; the extension of this by Jung to the collective unconscious, archetypes, numinous experiences; Maslow's "peak experiences"; the human potential movement; transpersonal psychology, where a wide range of experience, including the spiritual, is accepted.

Parapsychology, or psi, presents a challenge to monism or reductionism. Parapsychology may simply be denied outright (despite the strong evidence for it), or it may be naively hoped that someday mainstream (monistic) science will accommodate it.

Special experiences adversarial to monism include: exercising decision-making or intention; near-death experiences (e.g. blind people undergoing NDE's have accurately described their physical environments); creativity and inspiration (e.g. poets, novelists, composers, artists, even scientists have reported an influx of material "out of the blue" with no direct effort on their part, except to "concretize" it in material form); transformative spiritual and mystical life-enhancing experiences. Swedenborg was an expert on non-ordinary states of consciousness - e.g. dreams, the hypnogogic state; psychic episodes; the exploration of the spiritual world. His reports of the latter are of special, indeed unique significance in view of his long period of scientific exploration and his high moral character. And of course he recognized that just to study the brain was insufficient; the exploration of the soul was essential.

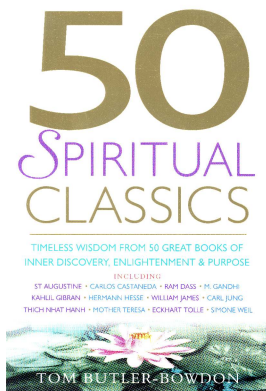
Three basic questions need confronting.

- ▶ *Who are we?*
Not just biological nor social beings, but entities capable of experiencing the divine. As Genesis puts it, we are made in the image of God.
- ▶ *How do we know?*
We do so not only as subjects confronting objects, but also as participants in an all-embracing reality. First person accounts have their place, as well as third person reports.
- ▶ *What is ultimate reality?*
"Maya" means not that the physical world is unreal, but that it is not the ultimately real. We are in fact enfolded in and encompassed by a divine milieu, but we need to meet the conditions to realize this. As Aldous Huxley put it, "knowledge is a function of being".





50 SPIRITUAL CLASSICS



by **Tom Butler-Bowdon**

320 pages, paper

Nicholas Brealey Publishing: ISBN 1 85788 349 7

This very recently published book is a compilation of *Timeless wisdom from 50 great books of inner discovery, enlightenment, and purpose*. Its author, we are told, is a recognised expert on personal development literature. This publication is the third work in a trilogy which began with *50 Self-Help Classics* (a winner of several awards) and a second titled *50 Success Classics*.

The back cover of the book provides the author's three essential categories by which the classics have been included:

1. "Inspire and Fulfill your own potential through life-changing stories of conversion and spiritual awakening";
2. "Expand your Perception and achieve a deeper sense of purpose and peace of mind";
3. "Gain Insight into life's big questions and humanity's spiritual evolution with some of our greatest secular and spiritual thinkers".

Whilst Swedenborg so often gets 'overlooked' when it comes to contributions made on spirituality, it would be surprising indeed if he had not been included in one of these sections. And yes, he is there with his name being listed in the first category on the back page. He is in good company with St. Augustine, G.K. Chesterton, Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Paramahansa Yogananda. The second section includes *A Course in Miracles*, *Conversations with God*, *The Celestine Prophecy*, *The Prophet* and with another close Swedenborg connection, William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The third section has names like Gurdjieff, Jung, Krishnamurti, C.S. Lewis and Ken Wilber.

However, this division is not carried into the

book where each of the 50 Spiritual Classics is presented in alphabetical order by author. About six pages allotted to each.

Each chapter begins with a quotation from the Classic being examined, which Butler-Bowdon succinctly summarises as a 'nutshell'. The focus for Swedenborg is 'Heaven', from *Heaven and Hell* (1758) beginning with an un-referenced quote (actually paragraph 102) which we are told suggests "The heavenly world is as real as the mundane one." Five pages follow giving an outline of:

- ▶ the structure of heaven
- ▶ the life of angels
- ▶ the good and the true
- ▶ the rich in heaven

Finally, there is a useful, albeit very brief, summary of Swedenborg's life and some names of people he has influenced.

It is good to have yet another book, published outside the Swedenborg Movement, which gives a positive 'spin' on Emanuel Swedenborg. Sufficient to add that all the other inclusions make fascinating reading too.

Neville Jarvis



LOVE

Love is the most important ingredient of success. Without it, your life echoes emptiness. With it, your life vibrates warmth and meaning. Even in hardship, love shines through. Therefore, search for love ~ because if you don't have it, you're not really living ~ only breathing.

Author unknown

Submitted by **Rosemary Goodwin, QLD**



Creating Your Character is Like an Artist Creating a Sculpture

by **Jim Rohn**

Could creating your character be likened to an artist creating a sculpture? In my opinion, I believe that character is not something that just happens by itself, any more than a chisel can create a work of art without the hand of an artist guiding it. In both instances, a conscious decision for a specific outcome has been made. A conscious process is at work.

Character is the result of hundreds and hundreds of choices you make that gradually turn who you are, at any given moment, into who you want to be. If that decision-making process is not present, you will still be somebody. You will still be alive, but may have a personality rather than a character.

Character is not something you were born with and can't change like your fingerprint. In fact, because you weren't born with it, it is something that you must take responsibility for creating. I don't believe that adversity by itself builds character and I certainly don't think that success erodes it. Character is built by how you respond to what happens in your life. Whether it's winning every game or losing every game. Getting rich or dealing with hard times. You build character out of certain qualities that you must create and diligently nurture within yourself. Just like you would plant and water a seed or gather wood and build a campfire. You've got to look for those things in your heart and in your gut. You've got to chisel away in order to find them. Just like chiselling away the rock in order to create the sculpture that has previously existed only in your imagination.

But do you want to know the really amazing thing about character? If you are sincerely committed to making yourself into the person you want to be, you'll not only create those qualities, but you'll continually strengthen them. And you will recreate them in abundance even as you are drawing on them every day of your life. Just like the burning bush in the biblical book of Exodus, the bush burned but the flames did not consume it. Character sustains itself and nurtures itself even as it is being put to work, tested, and challenged. And once character is formed, it will serve as a solid, lasting foundation upon which to build the life you desire.

To Your Success,
Jim Rohn

new-born joys

I remembered St John
when my chains came undone,
when my heart was unfrozen
from the coolness I'd chosen
in schools for smart fools.

St John seemed to tell me
to let love overwhelm me,
to love and let love while I live.
I try it, I like it, I do it some more,
I'd never felt like this before,
I thought I'd had nothing to give.

As I neared the crest
of the hill where my best
would be tested, I rested less,
desperately hoping, opening and
groping from Rip van Winkle dozing,
supposing it's so late, the gates
of heaven could be closing!

*Show me a way! a path! I'd cried;
I'll walk it, I'll crawl it, I'll hitch a ride!
What kind of God that you make it so hard
to be found by the likes of me?*

Show me that you never break your word!

Then the answer came instantly:
*There are only two things required for your labour:
You know them: Love God, and love your
neighbour.*

To my blind mind's eye's surprise,
my soul bursts through its shell,
as I rise in the sky from my hell
to this point where I'm poised
with my new-born joys
hoisted in seven heavens!
... Loving! ...
And loved full well!

James Baillie. 23 June 2005

Submitted by **Rosemary Goodwin, QLD**

(Excerpted from
Cultivating an Unshakable Character)



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If you order the following titles in the January to March 2006 Quarter, you will receive approx. 25% off the retail price (see the discounted price and postage on the form below)

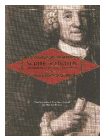
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Swedenborg's Secret: A Biography by Lars Berquist **RRP \$55.00**
 516 pages, hardback. See **Review** on page 7. *Will make a super Christmas present!*



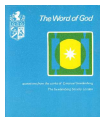
Observing Spirit by Peter Rhodes **RRP \$25.00**
 250 pages, paper

In this new work, Peter Rhodes, a spiritual counsellor, stresses personal responsibility for overcoming negative traits and explains how we can realise our true spiritual potential by cultivating awareness of our baser reactions. He joins the tools of Gurdjieff's spiritual method ("The Work") with Swedenborg's vision of the afterlife as the means by which we can allow the Lord to do His work through us. Each chapter has weekly tasks and helpful meditations. *A MUST!*



Scribe of Heaven. Editor: Jonathan Rose **RRP \$25.00**
 590 pages, paper

If you are interested in all the dimensions of the Swedenborg phenomenon (biographical, spiritual teaching, cultural, social and bibliographical), this excellent volume covers it all. There are also essays on Swedenborg's influence in various parts of the world (not in Australia though!). It has some most positive commendations from a range of well qualified individuals. *A most useful library addition.*



The Word of God. Quotations from Swedenborg's writings on the Bible **RRP \$2.00**
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WHAT'S HAPPENING



For Group activities, contact your nearest Group Convenor

- Brisbane (Ian Arnold on (07) 3369 0054; email: iaarnold@ozemail.com.au)
- Gold Coast (Kevin Attwater on (07) 5545 2401 and Jack Benson on (07) 5545 4115);
- Melbourne (Chris Skinner on (03) 9432 0322; email: cskinner9@optusnet.com.au);
- Perth (Trevor Moffat on (08) 9470 9775; email: trevorm@ic-net.com.au;)
- Sydney region (Michael Chester on (02) 9913 2421; email: mchester@accsoft.com.au);

It would be good to see additional viable Groups established in new areas. If you can help contact Michael Chester.

Details of programmes will be advised by leaflet as soon as they are known. Our website is updated when new information comes available - www.swedenborg.com.au

Brisbane: New Church Hall, 21 Agars Street, Rosalie. 4th Wednesdays commencing at 1 pm
2006 Programme for 2006 being determined

Melbourne: The New Church Hall, 426 High Street Road, Mount Waverley. Usually last Fridays
2006 commencing 8pm

Programme for 2006 being determined

Perth: Petros Lifeskills Bookshop, 281 Albany Highway, Victoria Park usually last Fridays
2006 commencing 8pm

Programme for 2006 being determined

Sydney: Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde. Usually 4th Fridays commencing 7.45pm.
2006 24th February ~ Video: *Shining Soul: Helen Keller's Spiritual Life and Legacy*
March ~ *Any Questions* Evening (see page 6 for details)

Why a Swedenborg Association?

To promote Emanuel Swedenborg, the man and his message, throughout Australia by personal contact, meetings, etc.

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