

Candela



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

JUNE 2010

ISSUE 60

Issue Theme ~ *Look back in wonder*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear seeker of what is true and lover of what is good;

It is really great to see that a number of you contributed to this issue by reflecting on your own experiences and thoughts in response to the Candela theme invitation advertised in the last issue. Thank you for taking the time to share something of yourself with us all. Sharing often helps others in subtle and unseen ways and by doing so we also assist with providence working smoothly.

We will again be holding our Annual General Meeting on September 10th, 2010, which is a good time to reflect how the year went and to look forward to our direction in the year ahead. Our committee meetings have been most enjoyable this year and I thank all those who volunteered to take part, no matter how small your part. I would like to invite others of you to consider joining the committee or to just come to a meeting. Even if you feel inclined to participate you may be surprised at the enjoyment of being part of the joyful

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

atmosphere. Participation is often fun and you can participate to whatever extent you choose. At this year's AGM Walter Mason, our dedicated secretary, is choosing to take up some more personal projects (aren't you already doing enough, Walter?) and as a result will not take up the role next year. Walter and his wonderful energy and enthusiasm will be greatly missed on the committee but we wish him well in his other projects and I'm sure we'll continue to see him around at the Association events.

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

Next Issue – September 2010

Theme : Serenity ~ inner contentment ~ outer peace

We all need times in life when we feel at peace for a while, whether that's losing ourselves in a good book, going into a period of meditation, walking among nature's beauty or feeling good about ourselves and others. However we experience it, God's peace, which the world cannot give, is available to us and does us a lot of good.

Thank you to everyone who wrote for this issue. It was great that we had some new writers. If you are sorry that you missed out why not try a short paragraph for the next edition.

The deadline is the 25th August

Email to rduckworth@optusnet.com.au or by post to the registered office





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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, refer to page 12.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (cont)

Perhaps you, like me, sometimes feel an impulse to do something without appearing to be having a plausible reason for it. My reasoning faculty usually quickly comes to life to either try and talk me out of it because it seems unreasonable or try and offer me some plausible justification why I seek to do it. But it becomes clear after the event with the value of hindsight, perhaps much hindsight (maybe many years on) that there was a greater purpose to the event. On looking back I could see the necessity of having done it for a reason that was not only unknown to me at that time, a greater purpose which unfolded itself to me since that event. The incident may have been a necessary preparation for something later. Since I was not conscious of the real reason for it occurring when it happened, it seemed in hindsight to have been ordered by a higher intelligence, by Divine Providence in fact. This is why the Swedenborg quotation used in the invitation of our last Candela issue struck me as important. I will therefore repeat it here, leaving you to reflect on your own experiences which may

relate to it. In paragraph 187 of Divine Providence, Emanuel Swedenborg says:

"We are allowed to see divine providence from behind but not face to face, and when we are in a spiritual state, not in a materialistic state. Everyone who accepts inflow from heaven and recognizes divine providence (and especially people who have become spiritual by virtue of their reformation), on seeing events in their amazing kind of sequence, virtually sees providence from a deep recognition and confesses it."

Happy reflection. Enjoy the joyful harmony and order of Divine Providence in your life.

Joe Vandermeer



Look back in wonder

Thank you to everyone who sent in their ideas on how they have felt the Divine working in their life.

It could be argued that the years from the end of the Second World War to the dawn of the third millennium have delivered the most profound and consequential changes in technology, society and the environment since humans first began our journey from the jungle to the stars.

What a blessing it has been for anyone born as a human in the lucky country in the first and second decades of this golden age. Australian Baby Boomers were certainly in the right place at the right time. The opportunities available to us fortunate individuals far exceeded what previous generations from anywhere else on the planet could have found in their wildest dreams.

We mostly didn't appreciate our fortune at the time, but looking back I can now understand how truly blessed we were. May we Boomers never forget that fortune and may we continue to give thanks for it and to use those opportunities with gratitude.

Mike Twemlow, Sydney



Looking back now with hindsight, I can "realize" that my early trauma was my saving grace and blessing in disguise; a catalyst. Once recovered from that time in my life, I questioned reality and myself so deeply that it eventually brought me (opened me up) into spiritual appreciation and realization of the unity of all life. We are all precious and redemption is always possible no matter how tough the road becomes.

Spencer Perdriau NSW



When Ruth asked me to write a paragraph outlining an occasion when I had noticed Divine Providence working in my life, I was faced with a bit of a dilemma. I knew there were a number of occasions when, with hindsight, I became aware this had happened, but I just could not remember any of the circumstances. This puzzled me greatly. Finally I came to the conclusion that it is not important to remember the individual occasions but to know and understand that Divine Providence is a part of all our experiences.
Alexis

Those who are in the stream of providence are all the time carried along toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means; and that those are in the stream of providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him.

Secrets of Heaven 8478

"It was December 1996 and as I opened the door to the school reception I saw a most beautiful sight as my eyes looked upon the woman that would change my life, and in doing so open many more doors to a previously unknown and unseen world. Within 6 years the woman that had instantly taken my heart and the one whom we'd shared many a serendipitous moment, had left this world for the next. Over the ensuing weeks and months my life was opened to an unfolding series of paranormal events that completely changed my understanding about life and death and the power of love. It's now 8 years since the love of my life transitioned back home and over these years I have spent many a waking hour searching for answers and understanding. It's with a clear knowing and faith that I can now accept the series of events that were put into place on that fateful day. Looking back, too many 'coincidences' occurred that not only brought us together, but hindered me from stopping her slipping away. Perhaps in this life, now that I am awake, I have other things to do and this awakening of my soul has happened by virtue of God's Divine Providence?"

Mark, Northern Australia

In trusting my own judgment in life, time and time again I fell far short of the achievable goals, yet like a growing child that constantly reaches out for new experiences, the word and the truth of God have directed me and led me to have a joyous and spirit filled life that soars beyond all expectations.
Like the plunge into icy waters that could have brought pain and suffering, that scary step was often a rewarding and enlightening moment that created a new and purpose-filled liberating direction; just like Jesus' example of life that truly sets us free.

Philip, NSW

Continued on page 10



Perspectives on Freedom

by
David Moffat

If there is anything we tend to take for granted in the West these days, it is freedom. It is no longer regarded as a luxury, but as the inalienable right of every person, irrespective of rank or status. The principle of universal freedom has overtaken over many of the former priorities and laws of society, to occupy pride of place. However, it has not always



been so jealously guarded. Slavery was commonplace in the West not so very long ago. In the past, individuals could lose their personal liberty in many ways - including through debt, for

example.

This change is marked by Steven Koke, in *Hidden Millennium: The doomsday fallacy*. (Koke, S (1998). *Hidden Millennium: The doomsday fallacy*. West Chester, Chrysalis Books, p. 60) Whilst examining the writings of the mediaeval prophet Nostradamus, he suggests that the science of astrology has changed fundamentally. For Nostradamus' contemporaries, the planets conspired to bring about earthly events with little or no human intervention. However, astrology has grown up, partly through work done by figures such as Carl Jung, who sought to use astrology as a means of understanding one's character rather than determining one's fate.

Further changes are found in humanity's other dealings with the spiritual. John Calvin's doctrine of predestination (in which God was seen to have determined one's eternal fate before birth) is largely abandoned for more humanistic theories of destiny. Similarly, our perception of God has moved from an emphasis upon the transcendent, impersonal, and objective to the immanent, personal, and subjective. In some cases, Christianity exists in a form which completely denies the transcendent, objective God. (Freeman, A (1993). *God in Us: A case for Christian humanism*. London, SCM Press)

These changes in civil law and theology apparently place us in firm control of individual freedom. But the question remains - are we actually free? In its most straightforward form, freedom is the ability to act. This ability is regarded as part and parcel of modern life. But we must recognise that it is

more complicated than that. We do not necessarily possess this ability inherently and in equal measure. We are not as free as we might like. We may not even be as free as we think.

Perhaps the most basic of all my limitations are those associated with my body. I am not as strong as I might like to be. Although I may be able to undergo physical training there will always be a finite limit on my ability to lift and move weight. And no matter how strong I am, I will never fly unaided. There are things the human body was never intended to do. This applies to a range of abilities and inabilities, but it goes much deeper.



We are fast learning the effect our genes have upon us. They do far more than define the colour of our eyes - recent scientific developments show the links to a variety of ailments, such as heart disease. Some interpret genes to be the ultimate law - determining not only our state of bodily fitness, but also our mental health, even character and personality. The idea of the "gay gene" illustrates this. Long sought by gay activists and denied by religious fundamentalists, the existence of this gene is thought to validate the gay lifestyle. If it is in one's genetic make up, the idea of choice is irrelevant. At least, that is the theory.

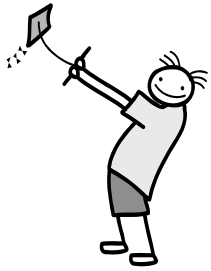
Similar attitudes prevail towards physiology (especially the way in which our natural hormones and chemicals manipulate the human body) and our environment (the way in which my experiences influence and affect me). Fear and aggression are the most clear examples - adrenalin's "fight or flight" reaction. However, longer term effects are also identified in our hormonal flow and imbalances. Obesity, anorexia, addiction, even paedophilia and a multitude of other ailments, are all attributed to any of these factors or their combination. *Cont..*

David Moffat is the honorary Pastor with the Canberra New Church. He is also a pianist and high school music teacher.



There are also many external restrictions placed upon our lives. Everyone lives with certain legal requirements. For example, a child cannot drive a car on a road. Even when she can, she can only drive on a certain side, at or below a certain speed, after successfully obtaining a licence for that vehicle. Road rules are only one example, of which there are many more.

What is fascinating about these limitations is that they actually help us - we would be poorer without them. The kite is a beautiful illustration of this idea. When in flight, it strains against the string which secures it to a fixed point, as though eager to escape and soar on its own. However, when released from this restriction, it simply falls to the ground.



It flies precisely because it cannot get away. We are able to travel safely on our roads because we apply the rules and restrictions to which we are all subject. The rules work, because they are widely accepted as beneficial to all.

Musical composition is another example of this type of law. Mastery of the musical language comes from the careful study and application of the laws of music. It is in and through these laws that beautiful music is produced. Whether we speak of a prodigy of the order of Mozart, through whom the art seems to flow effortlessly, or a Beethoven, who illustrates a greater struggle to find perfection, the principle is much the same. Each has absorbed the artistic laws of the day and their music embodies those laws.

Mozart and Beethoven did come to break contemporary musical laws, but only after the strict practice of these principles. However, they did not sever the line which tied them to their art - they merely extended it, enabling those who followed to soar higher than they might have otherwise. Perhaps only Schoenberg could be said to have broken the line of tonality (the use of major and minor scales in musical composition), which defined



music up to that time. But then, he quickly felt the need to introduce his own form of tonality (serial music - arguably stricter than tonality itself) precisely because the freedom of music without scales was actually a greater restriction to musical expression than the presence of any law (Griffiths, P (1978). *Modern Music: A concise history from Debussy to Boulez*. London, Thames and Hudson.

But these are not the only restrictions to our freedom. Neither are all constraints seen as beneficial to the well-being of the individual. Even though we live in a so-called "free society", very few of us actually feel free. Experience tells us that people have an overwhelming sense of obligation which conspires to diminish the possibility of choice and freedom. I have clear memories of my school teachers steering me towards particular careers (law and medicine) and away from others (architecture and music). Upon leaving school, we might be advised to "travel while you can" if we're lucky. Otherwise we follow the widely accepted path of a career with working hours which might kill us, a mortgage which might cripple us financially, a family which might keep us tied to the grindstone lest we fail them, and an ever rising "standard of living," just in case we were thinking of being happy in our modest family homes.

So, why do we cling so tenaciously to the idea that we are free? It is because we recognise that there are influences other than hereditary, physiology and culture at play. Let's consider fear again. The rush of adrenalin through the bloodstream brings about a bodily reaction we associate with fear. The question is whether this *causes* the fear, or whether fear triggers the adrenalin release. The fact that the adrenalin rush is not always experienced as fear, and that greater knowledge of a perceived threat lessens or eliminates that reaction, suggest that fear itself has a cause beyond the physical body.

Here is the crux of the matter: if I am nothing more than the sum total of my genes, body chemistry and circumstances, then I cannot consider myself to be truly free. But there is a whole different realm of being which gives us freedom, something within us which longs to burst our shackles, if only we will look and see. It is the Spiritual. *Cont...*

Divine providence is never acting in the same direction as our deliberate love. It is always acting against it. This is because from our own inherited evil we are constantly hungering for the deepest hell, while the Lord, through his divine providence, is constantly leading us away from it and drawing us out of it, first to some milder hell, then out of hell, and eventually to himself in heaven. This effort of divine providence is going on all the time; so if we were to see or feel vividly this carrying off and pulling away, we would be outraged. God would become our enemy, and in the evil of our self-centeredness we would deny him. So to prevent us from knowing about this, we are kept in a free state where all we can know is that we are leading ourselves. **Divine Providence 183**



It is in his work *Divine Providence* that Emanuel Swedenborg sums up the problem of human freedom in five "laws":

1. That man should act from freedom according to reason.

2. That man should as from himself remove evils as sins in the external man; and thus and not otherwise can the Lord remove evils in the internal man, and then at the same time in the external.

3. That man should not be compelled by external means to think and will, and thus to believe and love, the things of religion, but should persuade and at times compel himself to do so.

4. That man should be led and taught by the Lord from heaven by means of the Word, and doctrine and preaching from the Word, and this to all appearance as of himself.

5. That man should not perceive and feel anything of the operation of the Divine Providence, but still that he should know and acknowledge it.

What do they tell us about the nature of this "spiritual freedom"? I will share my own thoughts and feelings, acknowledging there are probably others.

Firstly, Swedenborg suggests that the spiritual is, by its very nature, hidden from our eyes. Yet it is this level of life that ought to lead. Spirituality is not a set of rituals or beliefs. It is a reality of being, and one which is denied all too often. Unless we acknowledge the spiritual and live from it we are slaves - slaves to all the rules, limitations and obligations present in our natural experience of life, slaves to the genes and the hormones.

The only way out of this slavery is through effort. Swedenborg writes that one ought to "compel oneself," and that this is the "very exercise of freedom". Many Christian churches call it "obedience," but it amounts to the same thing - listening to a voice higher than our own, defining our personality in measures beyond the details of our bodily make-up.

For Swedenborg, the necessity of practicing this obedience is because of our "hereditary

tendencies toward evil." In short, we like the way we are. Now, whilst many of the problems we now blame upon bodily factors are not likely to be called evil in the widely understood sense (that of causing harm to another), we need only look at the justifications we tend to use when convicted of evil - "He made me do it", "I had no choice", "It's only natural", "It's just a part of my make-up". When we excuse our *choices* on the basis that something is "only natural", then we are less free than we were created to be. This heredity binds the consciousness to the natural plane, focusing our attention upon it, and leaving us with an overwhelming sense of inevitability and helplessness. Thus we become slaves to our physicality, without any consciousness of alternatives or higher purposes. From here, acts of evil, and our need to justify them, are as simple as getting out of the wrong side of bed in the morning. The greatest freedom is that of the human spirit, which is capable of defeating even the greatest imprisonment (note that defeat here doesn't necessarily mean removal). On the other hand, natural freedom without the spiritual freedom to realise its potential is meaningless. Even on a natural level we can see that this is true. Who are the men and women history recognises as great? They are those who overcame their limitations to find that freedom which beckons from the heart. Mozart, Picasso, Einstein, Mother Teresa, and many others are great because they faced and exceeded their bodily and environmental limitations. The merely natural mind looks to the limitations placed upon it by the physical body, and there it defines itself. The Spiritual mind looks beyond the body and, sensing the greater reality, strives to overcome the merely natural obstacles placed in its path.

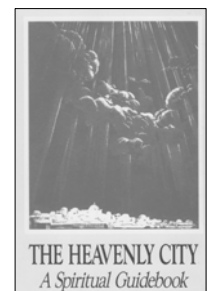
Overview of Swedenborg's Spiritual Philosophy

This is a home-based course consisting of 11 sections using chapters from Swedenborg's work *The Heavenly City*.

Course material can either be provided by mail or email.

Each section requires specified reading and the completion of straightforward tasks. There is a \$40 fee for expenses.

Contact the Swedenborg Centre (02 9888 1066 or saa@swedenborg.com.au) for an information leaflet and application form.





ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Secretary's Report

At our last committee meeting we watched the DVD that we have produced as part of our submission to the Swedenborg Publishers' Conference, and I was once again reminded of how willing our Association is to engage with new technologies, new ways of expressing and new methods of communication. We are constantly experimenting, and it is this willingness to grow in new directions that assures me that Swedenborg's unique message will be carried into the twenty-first century and beyond. The advent of "social media" and the ways in which new technologies are developing means that, more and more, members of the Association across Australia can provide valuable information and actively participate in our work. An Association can only ever be what its members make of it, so if you have any ideas or anything you'd like to try please don't hesitate to contact us.



You may not be aware that our website has a whole host of free information that you might find valuable on your journey. One of the freebies that has been receiving a lot of comment and praise recently is the audio recording of *The Heavenly City*. That's right, the entire book is available to listen to gratis on the SAA website! This is a wonderful spiritual gift, and is well worth listening to – the perfect accompaniment to housework! Several people have mentioned what a fantastic resource this is, and some have already listened to it many times over. We hope in the future to have more audio material up on the website available free to anyone who wants to learn more about the writings of Swedenborg.

Our Annual General Meeting is set for the 10th of September – please remember to keep this evening free if you are in Sydney. All members will receive voting forms etc. in good time before that date. Because of the increasing demands of my professional commitments I will be retiring from the Committee at this AGM. We are looking for new blood on the Committee, so please do consider offering your service. With the help of technology we can have Committee members participate from all over Australia, so the positions really are open to everyone.

With Blessings,

Walter Mason

Secretary

Melbourne Group News

In March Neville Jarvis came from Sydney to give a presentation on our own spiritual growth and how it relates to the world around us. (14 present including 5 members)

Our speaker in April was Geoff Forster who spoke on the challenges to Neo Darwinian theory of evolution citing academics who had partially differing views and references were made to Swedenborg in his talk. Geoff always provides a very interesting talk which stimulated discussion.

(16 present including 7 members)



Sydney Group News

There have been four very different presentations this year at North Ryde. The year got off to an exciting start with Walter Mason speaking on

"Vietnam: A Spiritual Journey." Walter is a great speaker and we were privileged to be the first of many illustrated presentations he has made about his book in libraries and on the media. We were also able to buy autographed copies of his book before the official publication date! Collector's items!

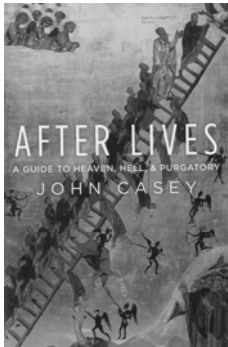
In March Wayne Kasmar's presentation was entitled, "Are we on the verge of seeing Swedenborg's Writings receiving widespread acceptance?" Wayne certainly felt that we are, mainly due to the current changes taking place in society, in religious views and peoples' lifestyles in the last fifty years. A long and lively discussion followed.

Guy Patching spoke about "Ancient Egyptian Correspondences" in April. This was very well attended and he had a fascinating collection of items that were on display at the centre for a month. Guy has made a large collection of Egyptian masks and we were able to enact some of the Ancient Egyptian myths.

In May Martine Negro's talk was "Towards inner and outer harmony – Health and Correspondences." Martine is a skilled healer who uses acupuncture, Bowen, energetic healing and tapping and she spoke about how we need to listen to our bodies, which are showing us what events in our past need releasing or dealing with. Once we can do this healing follows on so easily.



BOOK REVIEWS



AFTER LIVES

by **John Casey**

Oxford University Press

10/2009

ISBN 978-0-19-509295-0

Hardback, 480 pages

The number of publications tracing ideas about an existence after physical death continues to grow.

Some take a broad-brush approach while others focus more specifically on aspects of beliefs or within particular cultures. The author of *After Lives* was educated by the Irish Christian Brothers in "an austere, puritanical, Augustinian version of Catholicism" which undoubtedly forms a backdrop to some aspects in this book. His theme centres on concepts of eternal punishment and eternal bliss resulting from sinning on the one hand and grace on the other being found to some degree within belief structures through the ages of humankind. Rather than taking the usual religious anthropology method, John Casey's stated purpose is to focus on beliefs in post-mortem existence which interrelate with one another in some way and that have produced works of art, literature and religious speculation involving ethics. He certainly has an amazing knowledge on a wide range of writers and material, from ancient Egypt (the first culture in which can be found evidence for good and evil in this world systematically connected to ideas of the afterlife) to modern day beliefs. Christianity takes up the major share of the book because, along with Islam, it has most vividly portrayed heavenly joys and, in counter-measure, most powerfully enforced the fear of hell.

The book has three parts - *Dark Futures*; a short interlude on *Purgatory (Rome's Happiest Inspiration?)*; and *Heaven*. A prologue sets the scene via an analysis of a James Joyce novel *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* in which the book's hero Stephen Dedalus has the fear of hell instilled during a Catholic schooling but is released from its power on becoming an artist and casting off traditional beliefs. John Casey returns to themes from Joyce's novel regularly. In both main sections, the book provides fascinating insights into various beliefs and their wider cultural effects. While broadly chronological, earlier and later ideas become interwoven. At the end of *Dark Futures*, we are briefly introduced to 15th century ideas of a more spiritual kind of hell. Surely, Swedenborg must shortly be brought into the mix but alas no. The section ends quite abruptly on the basis that the English tradition of free religious

enquiry had by then reached the point of no return.

As the section on heaven begins to move into the last 300 years, the works and thinking of William Blake are referred to. Not surprisingly, the next chapter of 19 pages is devoted to *Heaven Heard and Seen: Swedenborg (The Seer)*. One thing I particularly like about this book is the ability of the author to offer beliefs and ideas without challenging or ridiculing them (but not without occasional humour). Overall, this is certainly the case with his treatment of Swedenborg - on heaven (which along with hell, we are told, is real but related to spiritual or psychological states), life on other worlds, correspondences, the useful life and conjugal love (spelt correctly). One or two items could have been expressed differently, though. The next chapter introduces Spiritualism and shows how its beginnings were in Swedenborgian understanding, even the idea that an eternity spent praising God would be unutterably boring.

The jacket image is a delightful 12th century Byzantine illustration of good monks climbing a 30 step ladder heavenward while bad monks are dragged from the ladder by black devils to hell. Angels watch on while more monks await their turn.

James Casey is a Cambridge (UK) academic and in many ways the book has that scholarly feel. It does have limitations in its scope but if the topic appeals, it is a worthwhile read and certainly an important independent volume for spreading Swedenborg's teachings. The final sentence of the book reads: "Our image of heaven and hell is finally an image of how we judge ourselves." What better way to end.

Neville Jarvis

Fame

*I walked along the sand at ebb-tide.
And bending down, I wrote a line upon the sand.
And in that line I wrote what my mind thought
And what my soul desired*

*And when the tide was high,
I returned to that very shore.
And of that which I had written I found naught.
I only found the staff-marks on one who had walked
blindly.*

Kahlil Gibran



Spiritual Foundations

by Dr Philip Groves

A very special book has just been published - *Spiritual Foundations* by Dr Philip Groves. The book has a clarity which is remarkable. Here are some details taken from the Preface (by Maery O'Connell).

Spiritual Foundations is a detailed exploration of the ways in which a person is spiritually connected with the cosmos, and how the physical world contains spiritually significant and meaningful patterns and values which can both assist us in understanding greater Reality, and act as a link with the spiritual world. An extensive study of the language of correspondences provides insight into the meanings of the natural world, and clarifies our relationship with the Whole.

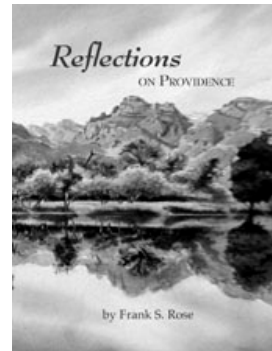
Students of the works of Emanuel Swedenborg will, however, readily identify the key concepts of Divine Good and Truth at play in the world, the correspondential nature of the material world including the human body, the necessity and use of a careful and non-literal study of the Word, and the wonderful possibility of spiritual regeneration, if only we are willing to work on ourselves.

As Dr Groves noted, the vast body of work produced by Swedenborg requires many years of intense reading and pondering to comprehend fully, but one important principle can be stated clearly. In a previous publication, *The Garden of the Mind*, Dr Groves asserts that 'No person has an independent, separate life of their own. There is only one life in the whole of Reality, and that is the Divine.' Moreover, everything in the natural world is a kind of hieroglyph which incorporates and represents all the processes and creative activities of the spiritual worlds. Part of our spiritual education is to learn the fundamentals of the universal language of correspondences and this current work seeks to assist us with this.

Copies can be obtained from the Swedenborg Centre (02) 9888 1066 or orders@swedenborg.com.au. Cost is \$35 (Free postage included for this Candela Special).

Reflections on Providence

New Book on order at the Swedenborg Centre



How does God take care of us throughout our lives?

This little paperback is a wonderful overview of main points from Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*. Using everyday language, sample dialogues, and real life examples Frank

Rose offers a clear discussion on how it is that God guides our lives, and what our own role is. Eighteen short chapters each start with a relevant quote from *Divine Providence*, which is then brought all the more to life by Rose's compassionate, easy manner. Reading this can leave you feeling peaceful in the thought that we are always thought of, and always cared about. God always allows us our freedom, yet does all that is possible to guide us to happiness. To give you an idea of the contents here is a list of the chapter titles.

1. What Is Providence?
2. Unity: the Main Goal of Providence
3. Why Did God Create?
4. Knowing the Way
5. Freedom and Rationality
6. Resisting Evil Actions
7. People Must Not Be Compelled
8. We Must Be Taught By the Lord
9. We See Providence Only in Retrospect
10. Providence Never Sleeps
11. Providence Takes the Long View
12. The Divine Ratchet
13. The Tolerance of God
14. Waking Up
15. Providence Takes Care of Everyone
16. We Are Vessels That Receive Life
17. Our Destiny
18. Providence Is Always Working

Contact the Swedenborg Centre for information about when it is available.

'Remains' are the truths and forms of good that are stored away by the Lord in our interiors. They shine forth together with what is good, yet they are only brought out in us so far as they contribute to some useful purpose in life. This is the Lord's providential care, in fact, His constant care, although we may not know anything about it and may not even want to know. We don't readily recognize the existence of providence in every event of life, when in fact it is there in the smallest details of all from the earliest time in our lives through to the last, and for ever after that. The streams of providence coming together at any one point in each person's life are more than any number you can think of. This I know from heaven.

Arcana Caelestia 5893



Look back in wonder continued

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

From a teenager living in a small English village to a retiree in Sydney – how did that come about? By a whole series of circumstances, which I didn't have much control in creating, but with choices I did have to make. Looking back, I can certainly sense something of the divine leading in all this especially from the time of taking my first major decision in teenage years – accepting a university place 200 miles from home rather than working locally which I could have done. In my mind's eye, I can virtually plot how things have come about since then. Yes, the Lord was with me through all this but not moving me around like a chess piece on the board of life. I could have made a different decision at anytime sending my journey in a completely different direction.

Why didn't I? Perhaps too deep to contemplate but what I do know and can feel is each point of my external route providing the Lord with opportunities to encourage and help me in transforming my desires and thinking - the divine leading operating fully within me – to become a more useful, caring person, closer to him. And that would have been the same whatever my outward circumstances.

How am I doing with this inner leading? – too personal to comment on but a work in progress, thankful to all those who have helped me in small and large measure along the way, and still appreciating the nudges the Lord keeps giving me when straying off the path.

An afterthought - Why am I now an Australian? Getting to know an Australian Swedenborgian Minister and his wife well during my university years with whom I continued to correspond after he returned home (now living in Brisbane); having a cousin move to Melbourne; a home town friend emigrating to Melbourne (still there and on the Swedenborg Association committee!); and my brother marrying a girl from Perth - all within a relatively short time before I was free to travel the world, and where better to make my first stop-over than Melbourne. Then meeting my wife-to-be within a few days of arriving. Random events or synchronicity at work?

Neville Jarvis

In January 1988, I was desperate for aid and support. I prayed to God and He responded. Despite illness, I managed to keep myself moving in a better way through a maze of events leading to hospitalization for eight weeks and subsequent recovery period. I began a long process of making major change in my life. I found a church, resumed regular Bible reading, learned from mistakes and managed to maintain a working life as a musician. Ten years ago I moved into a small unit where I am still living as an independent person. There are friends and the blessing of solitude. Music continues to be the most important element, yet God is always there, nudging me into action, protecting me from others - or from myself! I see that Divine Providence has jealously guarded and guided me all my life, even when in my mother's womb.

I look forward with confidence to yet more life developments, in which I will be challenged, spurred on, given succour and made to rest if necessary, before picking up my staff and continuing on my journey - even after life on earth.

Lillian, NSW

Having asked you to think about the stream of Providence in your lives, I thought that I should do a similar exercise. It is strange that in general I feel I am the same person but when I look back and think about what I was like when I was younger I realize that quite a lot has changed. I have tried to change the things I do and say because my conscience told me that they were wrong. This of course is not a one-off event; I have to keep stopping myself. But when I look back I can see that some of those things I was working on have gradually been taken away from me and I don't even think about them now. Life goes on: I still have to keep working on myself but perhaps the changes are more subtle now.

Ruth



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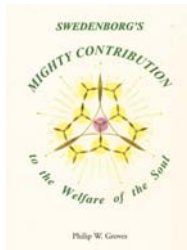
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