

BOOK REVIEWS

Recently received from The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre in Sydney, Australia, are two publications.

One, by Philip W. Groves, is a 146-page book titled *Swedenborg's Mighty Contribution to the Welfare of the Soul*. It is notable for a number of reasons, among which are the background of the author, the character of the book itself, and the special insights it brings to a variety of topics.

At the outset the reader is introduced to the author: holding doctoral degrees in biochemistry, divinity, and bio-psychology, he has practiced psychotherapy for many years and worked in industry as a chemist and microbiologist. He has also established The Centre for Integrative Studies in Sydney where, says editor Neville Jarvis, "he continues to offer weekly and monthly classes, examining all the natural sciences from a spiritual perspective."

In the Foreword, Neville Jarvis informs the reader that the book consists of eight lectures given "at various important occasions connected with the Swedenborg movement in Sydney..." These are titled "Swedenborg's Mighty Contribution," "Swedenborg's View of the Individual," "Spiritual Aspects of Swedenborg's Psychology," "Myths, Symbols and Parables," "Phantasy and Reality," "Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs—Symbols of Transformation," "The Spiritual Foundations of Biology," and "Swedenborg's Vision: A Quantum Leap in Time." The work closes with a short biography of Swedenborg by Neville Jarvis.

In the opening talk, Groves says: "Swedenborg's theological writings are the perfect counter to the materialistic notion that life has no meaning and that death is the end of everything." This, in a sense, sets the stage for all the talks in which it is shown that the revelations of Swedenborg not only bring to light the hidden truths of ancient religious and philosophical thought, but also show how human life can be raised out of the dullness of mere "awareness" based solely on sense perception into the light of consciousness. "Swedenborg shows that consciousness is the state of spiritual wakefulness and that to be spiritually awake is to have spiritual life" (p. 20).

The talks provide an abundance of ideas—stimulating, informative and evocative—on a wide range of topics, as the titles indicate. Text references to books, as well as short quotations, direct the reader to Swedenborg’s and other authors’ works. The book is colorfully illustrated by Rosemarie Lorenz. (ISBN 0-949463-6-7; AUD20.00, USD12.00)

The other release from Sydney is a joint project of the Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, and the Swedenborg Lending Library. A Swedenborg Talking Book™ titled *THE HEAVENLY CITY: A Spiritual Guidebook* is a reading of Lee Woofenden’s translation of Swedenborg’s work more widely known as *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* and published in 1993. From a lay perspective and by comparison with earlier translations, the English style and contemporary vocabulary convey the meaning of the text with directness and simplicity. It also lends itself to the spoken word; read by Barry Eaton, Australian radio and television announcer and presenter, and with interlude music by Australian artist Peter Dixon, the narration conveys the truths of the work with clarity, and in a pleasing manner. I highly recommend this edition to all. (Two 90 minute cassette tapes. ISBN 0-949463-15-9; USD12.00; AUS12.00).

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For *Swedenborg’s Mighty Contribution*:

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346