



LOGOS

Newsletter about the Swedenborg Foundation's Publications and Programs on the Spiritual Basis of Life

Eminent Dutch Scholar Authors New Swedenborg Studies Monograph

Dr. Wouter Hanegraaff, chair of the Department of Hermetic Currents at the University of Amsterdam, has written the introduction to the NEW CENTURY EDITION *Secrets of Heaven*, volume 1 of which will be published this fall. He is editor of the journal *Aries* and one of the editors of *The Dictionary of Gnosis and Hermeticism*, published by Brill.

LOGOS: In order to write the introduction to Lisa Hyatt Cooper's translation of *Arcana Coelestia*, titled *Secrets of Heaven*, for the NEW CENTURY EDITION, and your extended study of the work that we are publishing this spring, titled *Swedenborg, Oetinger and Kant: Three Perspectives on the Secrets of Heaven*, you undertook the enormous task of reading all twelve volumes of *Arcana Coelestia*. Please explain the method of interpretation revealed to, or disclosed by, Swedenborg, which he named "correspondence," and compare and contrast it to the famous hermetic axiom "As above, so below"?

WH: I was particularly fascinated by discovering the importance, to Swedenborg's exegetical enterprise, of a

small technical work from the end of his scientific period: *A Hieroglyphic Key to Natural and Spiritual Mysteries [Arcana]*, by *Way of Representations and Correspondences*. Literally, the title says that it's a "key" to spiritual "secrets," and indeed that's exactly what it is: it's an essential key to *Secrets of Heaven* as well. Swedenborg explains how realities on the divine, the human, and the physical level are not related by means of causality but by means of correspondence. Heavenly and earthly realities for Swedenborg correspond with one another, but they are nevertheless realities of a completely different order; hence, the one doesn't really "contribute to" or "influence" the other. For Swedenborg this meant, for example, that it made no sense to keep looking for the soul in physical nature: one won't find it there. The absence of the soul in "dead" nature doesn't mean it doesn't exist; it only means it can't be discovered by science. So Swedenborg abandoned his scientific projects and now had to find another way to get access to the world of the soul. The Bible for him was the obvious choice. The literal text that is physically present on the page corresponds very strictly

to a spiritual reality, but (as he explains in the very first paragraph of the *Arcana Coelestia*) nobody will ever discover that reality by reading the literal text. How then can one find the meaning of the Bible? There was only one theoretical possibility: God himself had to reveal it. And God did so to Swedenborg, according to his own testimony.

Is Swedenborg's approach similar to the hermetic axiom? In a way it is, although he gives a very rationalistic eighteenth-century twist to what is, at bottom, a Platonic concept. He does mention the macrocosm/microcosm distinction in his writings. Still, I've found no evidence that Swedenborg was significantly influenced by earlier hermetic or kabbalistic traditions: he did not continue an esoteric tradition, but created a new one.

LOGOS: Your monograph deals with the critical reception of *Arcana Coelestia* in Germany, most notably by Oetinger and Kant. While Kant is well known, at least by name, to educated Westerners, Christoph Friedrich Oetinger is almost entirely unknown. Tell us something about him?

WH: Oetinger is a fascinating character, generally considered the foremost eighteenth-century representative of the so-called Christian theosophical tradition that emerges from the work of the great seventeenth-century visionary Jacob Boehme. Like Swedenborg, Oetinger tried to bring contemporary scientific insights to bear on religious questions in a Protestant, Lutheran context. But unlike Swedenborg, Oetinger strongly believed in a strictly literal interpretation of the Bible; in fact, he is a very strange combination of a deeply esoteric theosophical thinker and what today we would call a biblical fundamentalist. He read the *Arcana Coelestia* at a time when he thought he was dying and, not surprisingly given those circumstances, was extremely impressed by the descriptions of heaven. He recovered and started publishing translations of excerpts from Swedenborg along with his own commentaries, in which he compared them with Boehme and others. Nobody has contributed as much to spreading Swedenborg's fame in Germany as Oetinger did. His interest in Swedenborg even caused a publication ban from the church authorities. Eventually, however, Oetinger discovered to his horror that he had been mistaken all along: Swedenborg did not believe in the literal text of the Bible, but defended an allegorical interpretation according to which the literal words were replaced by abstract spiritual concepts. For Oetinger, that made Swedenborg into an arch-heretic. And even worse, Swedenborg turned out to be a philosophical heir of the Idealist metaphysics of philosophers like Leibniz: for Oetinger, that kind of philosophy was very literally the Antichrist. And thus we see that, from a defender, he turns into an opponent of Swedenborg; he must have deeply regretted his own

early role in making Swedenborg known to the German public.

LOGOS: Kant's work on Swedenborg, titled *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, was published by us in 2002. Kant's work set back interest in Swedenborg for centuries because of his great prestige. What did Kant say in this book to discourage intelligent people from giving Swedenborg a fair consideration and why did he feel the need to write such a book?

WH: *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* is the strangest book that Kant ever wrote and a very important one in his intellectual development. It is the last of his so-called pre-critical writings, and, in fact, he here reaches some conclusions that would later become basic to his *Critique of Pure Reason*. What makes the book so fascinating is that it was in the context of his confrontation with Swedenborg's work that Kant finally said goodbye to the "metaphysical dreams" that he had been pursuing in his earlier work. Like other philosophers, Kant had been trying to make positive statements about a spiritual reality. Having read Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia*, he realized that the underlying philosophy was exactly the same one that he knew very well from philosophers like Leibniz and Wolff; the shocking realization dawned on Kant that, if one pursued that kind of metaphysical philosophy, one finally had to accept a "mystical" worldview full of spirits and angels. In other words, "respectable" academic philosophy necessarily led to a "non-respectable" worldview defended by spirit-seers and mystics, with whom Enlightenment thinkers did not want to associate themselves. Kant had to admit that, if a metaphysical reality exists, it would probably look very much as Swedenborg describes it. He

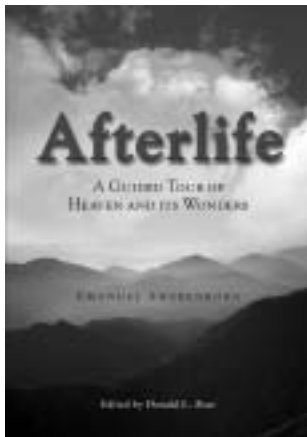
finally concludes that it might indeed exist and that, in theory, Swedenborg might be right. He added, however, that human beings are not able, and will never be able, to verify that it exists. As a result, he blamed Swedenborg not for his worldview as such (which he even called "very sublime" and felt himself personally attracted to), but for claiming that the limits set to human knowledge did not apply to him. He also made a further strange but very interesting point: assuming, for the sake of argument, that a metaphysical reality does exist and that someone receives information about it, this could only occur if there were something wrong with that person, that is to say, if he were mad. A strange argument—implying that someone could be mad and receive correct metaphysical information, whereas someone who is sane can never receive it!

In sum, Swedenborg confronted Kant with a very serious philosophical problem that was basic to his work, and in coming to terms with it, Kant laid some essential foundations for his mature philosophical synthesis. If he were seen by his colleagues as including Swedenborg in the domain of "acceptable" academic discourse, Kant ran the risk of finding himself excluded (together with Swedenborg) from that same discourse. For that reason, he hides the philosophical argument under a veil of satire, so that superficially it looks as if he doesn't take Swedenborg seriously at all. Most academic Kant specialists—up to the very present—have allowed themselves to be misled by that strategy, seeing only the surface of anti-mystical satire while missing the very serious core of the text and its importance for Kant's philosophical development. ♦

Afterlife: A Guided Tour of Heaven and Its Wonders

A Review

Afterlife, a shortened version of Emanuel Swedenborg's larger work *Heaven and Hell*, was commissioned by the Swedenborg Foundation with the intent of "removing any barriers to its accessibility." In my opinion, they have succeeded very well. At last, a version of *Heaven and Hell* that teenagers and even younger children can enjoy reading! When I read about this special edition of *Heaven and Hell*, I ordered two copies for my teenage daughters with the hope that it would be a version that they could relate to. When the books arrived, we decided to read a small section aloud each night while washing dishes after supper. All three of our children were captivated by it—even our ten-year-old! This particular version has selected quotations from



the original *Heaven and Hell* rather than the complete work. The sequence has also been changed from the original. *Heaven and Hell* begins with a section on heaven, followed by a section on the state immediately after death and, finally, a section on hell. *Afterlife* begins with a section on the state immediately after death, followed by a section about heaven and hell—which is the sequence that our spirits follow after death. The sequence in *Afterlife* works well for engaging the interest of young people. The process of waking up after death is fascinating. This section immedi-

ately caught the attention of our teenagers. We thought we would need to keep the readings short so as not to lose their interest, but, often, when we stopped reading, the children would say, "No, go on; it's so interesting!"

The language in *Afterlife* is modern English with only an occasional old-fashioned word that needs explaining to young readers. The language is also gender inclusive. Pronouns such as "we" and "their" and "our" are used throughout, as well as "people" when referring to both sexes. Our teenage daughters especially appreciate this feature.

Rather than diminishing the original *Heaven and Hell* in any way, *Afterlife* brings its wonderful ideas to young minds that might otherwise feel overwhelmed by the four-hundred-plus page larger version. This version will also likely appeal to adults as well, and its light pocket-size makes it easy to share with friends. Bravo, Don Rose and the Swedenborg Foundation!

Dori Ferr
February 2007

Dori Ferr lives in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada with her husband Alan and her three children, Melody (19), Dorothy (16), and Joseph (10). "I wear many hats—wife, mother, musician, secretary, and student."

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News and Notes

Good Publicity

In February, author and board member Reverend Don Rose, whose abridged version of *Heaven and Hell* was recently published as *Afterlife*, was interviewed by a Baltimore public radio station on a program titled *Interfaith Voices*. Anybody with a computer and an online capability can click on the link below to get to the website of *Interfaith Voices*. If you scroll down, you will come to the write-up about Don's interview and can click on it to hear it or download it to an Ipod or MP3 player.
www.interfaithradio.org/audio

2004 CHRYSALIS READER *Travels to the Roof of the World*

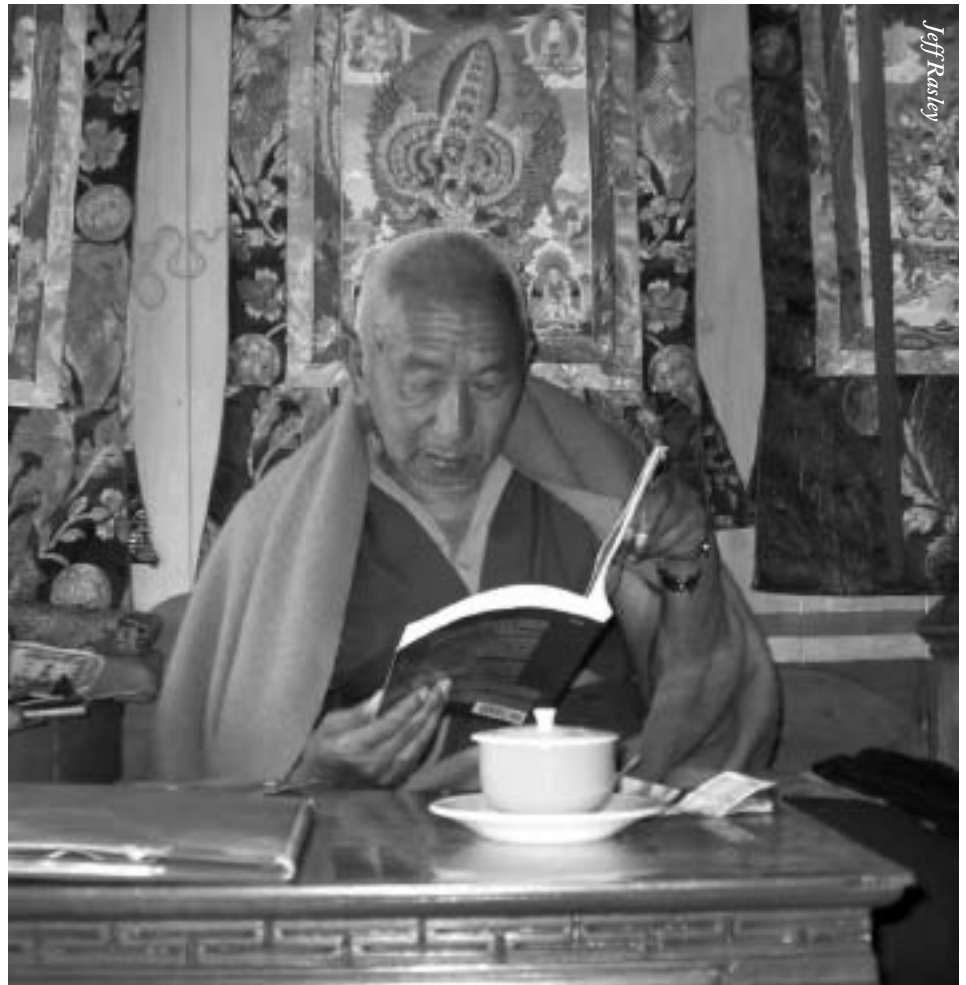
CHRYSALIS READER contributor Jeff Rasley traveled to Nepal and visited the High Lama Rimpoche Tenzing, who presides over the Tengboche Monastery and is the most revered lama of the Sherpa people. Jeff presented the high lama with a copy of *Letting Go: Living Without a Net*, the eleventh CHRYSALIS READER, published in 2004. The lama accorded Jeff an hour's conversation and, upon request by Jeff, sent the following message to friends in the U.S.: "Tell everyone to cultivate love in their hearts. Tell the truth. And promote love in the heart and truth-telling through religious discipline."

Discount Policy Change

No discounts will apply in purchasing either individual volumes of or the complete set of The Redesigned Standard Edition (RSE). The following volumes, which are running low in stock—*Conjugal Love, True Christian Religion*, vols. 1 & 2, *Divine Providence*, and *Miscellaneous Theological Works*—will no longer be sold individually, in order to preserve as many full sets of the RSE as possible until it can be replaced by the NCE.

Leon Rhodes, author of *Tunnel to Eternity* and staunch supporter of the Swedenborg Foundation over many, many years, passed into the next world on October 13, 2006.

We were fortunate to have Leon speak at the Foundation in 2005 about his experience as one of the early members of the International Association for Near-Death Studies. He is survived by his wife Judy and twelve children, thirty-seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. The Swedenborg Foundation will miss him. ♦



Lama Tenzing reading the CHRYSALIS READER

Ghana Gets Green Thirty— Heavenly Doctrine Goes to the Most Receptive

In heaven, the Africans are the most loved of all Gentiles; they receive the goods and truths of heaven more easily than the rest.

The Africans are more receptive of the Heavenly Doctrine than any others on this earth. They are of a celestial nature.

—Emanuel Swedenborg

Customer service representative Estelle Porter's long-time interest in responding to the innumerable requests from individuals in Ghana for books caused her to persist in searching out a viable way to make it happen. Finally this connection was facilitated by the Rev. David Lindrooth of the General Church Outreach office, whose article on Ghana appeared in the previous LOGOS. His office found a non-profit group to underwrite this large shipment of books to the point of embarkation and oversaw the shipping details.

As a result, a total of 2,727 books are on their way to Ghana. The Swedenborg Foundation has donated 2,452 volumes of the old Standard Edition or "Green Thirty" to Ghana as well as two hundred copies of the paperback *Arcana Coelestia*, seventy of

the old paperback *Divine Providence*, and five of an old version of *Married Love*. The total retail value of these books comes to \$20,761.

Mr. George Dzipkor, a theological student who works for the Ghanaian Port Authority, was pivotal in making this possible. His official capacity as a government worker for the Port Authority will ensure a smooth processing of our shipment through customs. Mr. Dzipkor has access to a distribution center that will provide adequate storage facilities to warehouse and ship out books. The requests Estelle has been accumulating from Ghanaians have been transferred to Mr. Dzipkor, who will make every effort to have the books reach those who made the requests. So it is a win-win-win arrangement. Mr. Dzipkor promises to keep us apprised of how the distribution goes. ♦

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Some Thoughts on Translating

by George F. Dole (with a little help from his friends)

Was there ever a poem shorter than its title? Yes, at least one: Ogden Nash's "Lines Written on the Antiquity of Microbes." The entire poem:

Adam
had 'em.

I suspect it would be simple to translate this into just about any language on earth in a way that would accurately convey its meaning, and just about impossible to translate it in a way that conveyed Nash's intent. He intended it to be fun, and the fun is in the rhyme, the sound. The meaning is almost incidental. As a contrasting example, we might think of trying to translate the instructions for defusing live explosives. Here meaning is absolutely paramount, while sound is utterly irrelevant—and no fun intended.

Most of our communications fall somewhere between these two extremes. What's more, meaning and sound are just two of the features that a translator has to consider. Which features to focus on and which features to sacrifice—the translator is constantly faced with those decisions.

As translator of three of the NEW CENTURY EDITION volumes now in print, I do get occasional critical questions about my choices, and there is a recurrent theme in my responses. It is to say first of all that NEW CENTURY EDITION policy requires me to translate everything in the Latin text. This is a welcome requirement and one that is in fact impossible. For example, the outward appearance of words has to be given up. Traditional translations look much "closer to the Latin," when they

translate the Latin verb *existere* as "to exist." The trouble is that *existere* doesn't mean "to exist." It means "to arise, to come forth." *Recipere*, which has often been translated "receive" because it looks like that English word, actually means "to accept," and *accipere*, though it looks like "accept," means "to receive." We are obliged to sacrifice the quality of a Latin word that we believe to be least important; and using an English word that looks like the Latin one is surely less important than using an English word that means what the Latin means.

Decisions, decisions—and they all have to add up to a single version. The translator does not have the luxury of offering alternative readings in the middle of things. Here, however, we do not have that limitation—we can explore some of the potential alternatives that can be found in a text.



Perhaps you are familiar with interlinear translations of the Bible, translations in which every Hebrew or Greek word has its English equivalent over it. If we were to supply an

interlinear translation of section 11 of *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teachings*, for example, we would come up with something like the text in the blue box at the bottom of this page.

There is, of course, much more contained or at least implied in the Latin than that, but that is how a strict, interlinear rendering might come out.

The Standard Edition of the Works of Swedenborg, published by the Swedenborg Foundation a century ago, moves this kind of literalism a long way in the direction of intelligibility:

All things in the universe, which are according to Divine order, have relation to good and truth. There is nothing in heaven, and nothing in the world, which has not relation to these two; the reason is, because both good and truth proceed from the Divine from Whom all things are.

This rendering involves supplying definite articles and a verb where English syntax expects them; interpreting *se referre*, which literally means "bear oneself back," as broadly as possible; and following the rules of English, rather than Latin, word order and dic-

Interlinear Translation of

The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Teachings §11 (Excerpt)

All things in universe, which are following divine order, themselves
Omnia in Universo, quae sunt secundum Divinum Ordinem, se

refer to good and true. Nothing is given in heaven, and nothing in
referunt ad bonum et verum; Nihil datur in Coelo, & nihil in

world, that not to two these itself refers; cause is because each,
mundo, quod non ad duo illa se refert: causa est, quia utrumque,

as much good as true, proceeds from Divine, from which all.
tam bonum quam verum, procedit a Divino, a Quo omnia.

tion. It does not go so far as to correct the ungrammatical “the reason is because” (the more recent Redesigned Standard Edition does correct this); and its use of “good” (Latin *bonum*) as a noun without any article or modifier may be confusing to readers.

In one recent version of *New Jerusalem*, titled *Heavenly City: A Spiritual Guidebook*, translator Lee Woofenden deals with this last problem by translating *bonum* as “goodness.” His translation also conveys the cause-effect relationship between the last two statements of the passage in question by putting the sentence expressing the cause *before* the one expressing the effect.

Everything in the universe that is in harmony with the divine plan relates to goodness and truth. Goodness and truth come from the divine, which is the source of everything. This means that there cannot be anything in heaven or on earth that does not relate to these two things.

The rearrangement of sentences does follow more closely the usual logic of English prose. Rendering *bonum* as “goodness,” however, leaves something to be desired.

Let me explain. Technically, *bonum* does not mean goodness. It is what grammarians call a “substantive adjective”; it is Latin’s way of saying “a particular thing that is good.” It has a concreteness that is hard to convey in simple, clear English. We could try: “Everything relates to what is good and what is true.” Or maybe it would help to interpret *se referunt* less broadly: “Everything goes back to what is good and what is true.”

That is still rather elusive. Let’s try: *Everything in the universe that is in accord with the divine design must have two fundamental characteristics: it must be good and it must be true. There is nothing in heaven and nothing in the world to which these fundamental criteria do not apply,*

because everything good, like everything true, comes from the Deity who is the source of everything.

Though this strays beyond the policies of the NEW CENTURY EDITION, it has the merit of turning attention toward the “things” that have the qualities. Nevertheless, it still teeters on the brink of abstraction and does not bring home the full impact of the Latin. If, as I search for the personal import and application of these words, I fill in the generalizations of “something good” and “something true” with specifics from my own experience, I get at least a glimpse of the intended concreteness. I can do this most readily by recognizing that love of the neighbor is “something good” and that seeing things in the Lord’s light is “something true.” Working these substitutions into the paragraph might yield the following.

My whole being, to the extent that I am living as the Lord intends me to, comes down to caring about others and seeing them clearly. Everything in my soul and in my body bears some relationship to these two functions because they both come from the Deity who is the source of everything.

Then I test this personal reading on other passages in the same chapter of *New Jerusalem*. When I do, the Standard Edition’s

Because the conjunction of good and truth is an image of marriage, it is plain that good loves truth, and truth, in its turn, loves good, and that one desires to be conjoined with the other.

comes out as

Because the relationship between my caring about others and my perception of them is a kind of marriage, I can see that when I care about others I truly want to understand them, and that the more clearly I understand, the more deeply I care. Each motion of my being feels incomplete if it is separated from the other.

I find both of these statements powerful and practical. They give me something I can work toward in my day-to-day life. Nevertheless, these renderings are obviously more of an adaptation than a translation of the Latin. What they have gained in concreteness, they have lost in universality. I may be a microcosm, but I am definitely not “everything in the universe.” The principles that are laid out in the Latin apply not just to humans, but to everything else, too—animals, plants, and minerals. This universality is too precious to disregard.

THE NEW CENTURY EDITION has a commitment to preserve and include as much as possible of the intent of the original Latin. That is why its oversight committee has opted for a relatively conservative approach to translation. But what are translators to do when they glimpse the depth and the urgency of the meaning contained in Swedenborg’s Latin sentence *Omnia in Universo, quae sunt secundum Divinum Ordinem, se referunt ad bonum et verum?* Sadly, much is lost in “All things in the universe, which are according to Divine order, have relation to good and truth.” And yet, it seems the only way to “put more in” is to take something else out. Language is a finite container, after all.

I do take comfort in the sheer mass of the theological works, though. If no individual sentence can be translated in a way that is completely self-explanatory or readily applicable on the personal level, there are always more sentences coming. After all, the deeper levels of our minds are opened not by simply reading a text, but by “leading the life that leads to heaven.” This means that the translator’s responsibility is shared by the reader. Perhaps the most translators can do is to remove as many obstacles to comprehension as they can. ♦

Thief Deterred at Foundation in Flagrante Delicto

Thanks to Providential Synchronicity

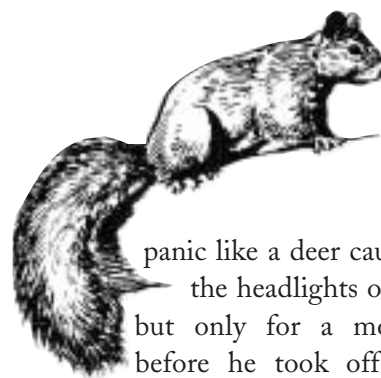
As some long-time members and readers of LOGOS may remember, in 2000, the year of our sesquicentennial celebration, the Swedenborg Foundation planted two seedlings on the grounds of what is now the Swedenborg Foundation property, grafted from the last extant, authenticated apple tree that Johnny “Appleseed” Chapman himself planted.

In our last issue, Fall/Winter 2006, we published a picture of the first apple produced by one of these trees, which are now standing proudly at about nine-to-ten feet tall.

Well, hereby hangs a tale, or perhaps a tail, that Johnny himself would have loved, we think! The staff had deliberately decided to leave the apple on the tree so that the Executive Committee of our board of directors, meeting at the Swedenborg Foundation on November 11, could see the

historic fruit *in situ*, alive and on the tree. However, with all the important business on our agenda, the executive director had almost forgotten to show it to them. After the meeting, while the committee members were putting on jackets and coats to leave and heading for their cars in the parking lot, she was suddenly brought to mind of the plan to show off the first apple, and she excitedly shepherded the directors out to the parking lot and led the way toward the tree.

Suddenly the directors were astonished and perplexed to see the executive director running toward an offender, whom they could not see, shouting loudly to “put down that apple. That’s our apple! Put it down, I tell you.” In a flash, the thief became visible. Low to the ground, a bushy-tailed squirrel carrying the full-size apple in its mouth had stopped in



panic like a deer caught in the headlights of a car, but only for a moment, before he took off again toward the other side of the fence with his sweet prize in his mouth. But the executive director was not to be deterred. Like a mother who sees her child in danger, she mustered all the authority within her and commanded the squirrel to “drop that fruit now, you thief! Drop it!” Cowed into submission and fearing the consequences of disobedience, the squirrel who had actually managed to put a fence between itself and the present threat, nevertheless dropped the fruit and went off on its way. Astonishment at the split-second timing of this thief’s apprehension caused peals of laughter to break out among all present. ♦



Now Available!

The True Story of Johnny Appleseed by Ophia D. Smith, with forty-six line-art drawings. The Swedenborg Foundation has chosen to publish this biographical essay as a separate work to dispel the surprisingly prevalent misconception that Johnny Appleseed, like Paul Bunyan, is a mere fictional folkloric figure and to disseminate factual biographical information about this amazing individual, who loved to share what he loved most. ♦

THE TRUE STORY OF
Johnny Appleseed



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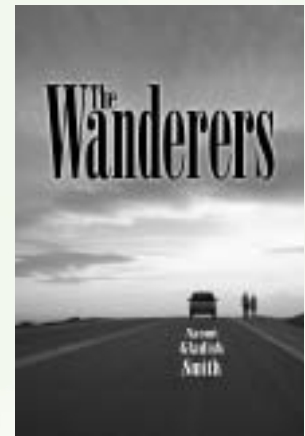
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