

Hymns for PowerPoint

The online library of hymns from Songs for Worship now has 238 entries. Some hymns are words only, others have one or two pictures and some are fully illustrated. I am very grateful to Rev Rita Russell, Rev Clifford Curry and Rev Bruce Jarvis for their help in bringing together this very useful facility. To use the hymns in a PowerPoint service go to www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk and then select Resources followed by PowerPoint Resources. Then click on Hymns from Songs for Worship. When you click on an individual hymn you can open it or save it to form your own collection.

A new commandment
I give unto you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

Hymn 411



Trust is in the eyes of a tiny babe



Praise the Lord who reigns above,
and rules o'er all below;
praise the God of truth and love,
and all his goodness show;



praise him for his mighty deeds,
praise him for his matchless power,
him from whom all good proceeds,
let earth and heaven adore.

Lifeline

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new church

Lifeline



And when Jesus was baptised
... he saw the Spirit of God
descending like a dove
and coming to rest on him.
Matthew 3:16



When the day of Pentecost
arrived ... divided tongues of
fire ... rested on each of them.
And they were filled with the
Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:1-3**

May 2013
Number 421

**Our mission is to express, share and
experience with others in life an inclusive,
non-judgmental vision of God's kingdom.**

The Young Jesus

The book of Jeremiah was written by a man who was called by the Lord to speak to the people of Israel during a difficult period, when the Jewish people were controlled by powerful Babylon. Though Jeremiah spoke the Lord's Word during the reign of four Jewish kings, he was never popular and was often cast into prison for preaching the Lord's message. And yet there are passages which are extremely beautiful if we can try and place them in their proper context - of denouncement of the Jewish people who had forgotten their loyalty to their Lord Jehovah:

Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me. The Lord said, "Have I not set you free for their good? Have I not pleaded for you before the enemy in the time of trouble and in time of distress? Can one break iron, iron from the north, and bronze? . . . O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. . . . Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?"

Jeremiah 15:10-11,15-16,18

(Continued on page 3)

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www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk

So consider this: there is hardly ever a murmur about a man taking his wife by force, or vice versa, which in the thoughts of most people is an act more heinous. Yet to imagine these to be condoned, while homosexual acts are condemned, is to fail to recognise the level of operation contained in the Bible. It seems that even in the New Church, there are still areas that are a real problem. Swedenborg gives us a framework of operation, and it is for us to apply it. After all, if 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth', signifies something other than the creation of the world, why on earth should we imagine that lines that are more sensitive in their literal meaning should not be accorded the same level of symbolic reference. Should some parts be spiritually significant and other parts not? Are only selected passages spiritually deep and other parts to be taken at face value?

I often wonder to what extent this attitude to literal meaning is still prevalent in our church, and perhaps you could invite reader's comments on this issue?

Yours sincerely,

Karl Birjukov

A body of teaching has to be drawn from the Word's literal meaning and supported by it.

The reason for this is that the Lord is present, teaching and enlightening, in the Word's literal meaning. The Lord never works in an incomplete or partial way, and the literal meaning is where the Word is complete, as I have shown before. As a result, a body of teaching has to be drawn from the Word's literal meaning. You can draw a complete body of genuinely true teaching from the Word's literal meaning. In that meaning the Word is like a clothed person whose face, forearms, and hands are exposed. All the teachings that relate to our faith and life and therefore our salvation are exposed there. The other teachings are clothed. Even then, in many passages where the teachings are clothed they are still visible, as a woman with a thin piece of silk over her face can still see objects in front of her. In fact, as the truths in the Word are multiplied and organized by our love for them, they shine out and become more and more clearly evident.

True Christian Religion 229

Letter

Dear Editor,

We have hundreds of pages from Swedenborg outlining the deeper significance of Genesis, Exodus and Revelations in which the use of single words and phrases are shown to contain a complex of meanings that knit together to form a cohesive whole in which the Lord is always the main source and end of relevance. Yet when it comes to the subject of Leviticus 18:22 [see letter in April issue - Editor], the same level of depth does not seem to apply, and this verse is taken to mean, as usual and in common with all Christian churches, the condemnation of homosexuality.

Yet what Swedenborg supplies is a structure of correspondences which give rise to a comprehensive doctrinal form operating through influx to give a depth of meaning that can be applied to any passage from the Bible, and not just these three specific books. Swedenborg would put it something like this: whenever angels are discussing a subject, it does not filter down towards us in language but in depictions. Consequently, and in the case of this particular line, the concern is the nature of sensuality and the degree to which it actually draws away from spiritual thought. Because it does so, it is effectively a sterile experience that essentially gratifies the self in its proprial state. How can this be depicted? Since all angelic thought takes the marriage of Divine Truth and Good, or love and wisdom, as the key reference point, then that sterility is made visible in the image of a man lying with another man. Note the difference, then; this is not a line about homosexuality but about sensuality. Why should this be so? Because this whole chapter of Genesis begins with the first essential ingredient of redemption, stated as the reminder that it is the Lord who led the Israelites out of Egypt. In other words, at that point of leading out, the assumption is that something more than the natural is to become the focal point, and that its attainment lies beyond the sensual.

Secondly, when we read of whoredom and adultery, these terms always refer to the way the spiritual is bent to the service of natural inclinations, and thereby despoil the heavenly marriage. It makes no sense to see this in any other way, since some key women would be lying on their backs their whole lives as we imagine them committing whoredom with all the men of neighbouring nations.

In this chapter of Leviticus, the overall context takes the form of a whole list of condemnations regarding seeing the nakedness of various people one is related to, and by this word 'nakedness' we should understand a kind of stripping away that is the removal of all spirituality that obsessions with sensuality will lead to.

There are many similar passages in Jeremiah and one is affected by them, realising what difficulties Jeremiah faced all his life. But we may put the Bible down and think, "Well, that was a long time ago!" But let us move on in history to the time when Jesus was born; let us remember that he also lived in a very difficult period in Jewish history: Rome was the dominating power, and the foreign Herod was appointed king of the Jewish nation. That was the situation at the time of the birth of Jesus - another rather a controversial figure - a figure about whom we know very little. In the first three Gospels we have a description of the birth of Jesus, but Matthew alone describes the need for the holy family to escape to Egypt before Herod found them - to put Jesus to death. Matthew also describes the family's return to the Holy Land; but they needed to avoid Judea where the son of Herod, Archelaus, was now king. So the family settled in Nazareth, and that is all we know about the early childhood of Jesus!

Luke takes up the story later, and writes about the annual visit of the family to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. At this particular visit, we read that Jesus was twelve years old! The full story is described in Luke 2:41-52. The people from Nazareth must have been quite a large crowd, because when they were returning home from the feast, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but Mary and Joseph just supposed that he was just somewhere in the company!

So what exactly was Jesus doing? It is perhaps right at this point to say that Jewish boys celebrated reaching 'manhood' on their 13th birthday; so Jesus was therefore on the very threshold of manhood at that time. He had stayed behind in the Temple, among the rabbis and learned doctors of the Law, asking them questions, and also answering some of their questions! That was the usual way of teaching, and the rabbis were amazed at his understanding and answers.

However, Mary and Joseph were extremely worried; and they returned to Jerusalem to find young Jesus, after three days, in the Temple. Mary rebuked Jesus for what he had done to them, since they had been terribly worried as to what had happened to him. Jesus replied to her, but it is really difficult to decide how his reply sounded. It could even have been a little light-hearted: "Oh, you should not have worried about me! Do you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" The usual translations sound a bit harsh, but we must leave the reader to decide which tone they prefer.

And that is all we know about the early years of Jesus until he began to come into the open with the power to heal and to preach a new Gospel. So there are 18 years in the life of Jesus about which we know nothing - unless of course, we belong to the New Church, in which we learn that the Bible has a spiritual meaning; and that opens the possibility of understanding the spiritual activities which go on in our minds throughout our life. And this is where the book of Jeremiah can help us tremendously.

As I was reading the book of the prophet Jeremiah, I suddenly felt that I was reading a dialogue not just between God and Jeremiah, but between God and the young Jesus. Jesus needed to be enlightened about the purpose of his birth, and the tremendous task which lay before him; and the Word was the only source of his discovery and instruction. Please go back to those short extracts from Jeremiah, and think of young Jesus reading them. Did they not describe his own fears and worries as to what he was being asked to do? He was not aware at first that his birth was very special; and reading the Word was the means of communicating with his heavenly Father, and of gaining the enlightenment he was to need. Furthermore, the Psalms are also a rich treasury allowing us to be aware of the Lord's continual battles with the hells, even from his youth: "*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer*" (Psalm 19:14).

Hellish assaults on Jesus increased right to the end of his earthly life, when He was dying on the cross and called out with a loud voice: "*Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.*" And having said this he breathed his last' (Luke 23:46).

It is important for us to realise that until this last moment, the Lord was open to hellish assaults, when he felt that he was no more than a human being who is vulnerable and could possibly have given in. But giving in, in one sense, would have been a selfish act, and in his mind he had us, his children; for our sake he could not act selfishly. And when the hells were united to break his will, He could not let us down. We should not turn away from those horrifying verses when Jesus was tortured, because he did this for you and me, and all human beings, and for all eternity! He did it for your salvation and my salvation - if we too can hold on, and not get ourselves cheated by some worldly wealth and pleasures. Let us remember that we are always free to decide to turn to him; and let us remember his words to us in Jeremiah 31:3 -

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Rev Christopher Hasler

The Word in the external sense is such as it appears in the letter; this sense is natural, because it has been accommodated to the apprehension of people, for people think naturally. But the Word in the internal sense is spiritual, because it has been accommodated to the understanding of the angels in the Lord's spiritual kingdom, for these angels think spiritually. And the Word in the inmost sense is celestial, because it has been accommodated to the perception of the angels in the Lord's celestial kingdom, for the angels in this kingdom think super-spiritually.

Extract from Arcana Caelestia 10614:2

We know the commandments of God but what do we do with them?

Do we seek out every opportunity to help others? Do we respond to appeals to help the destitute? Do we spread our knowledge of the truths of religion to all those whom we meet? Alas! In my own case, NO. This parable teaches us that we have the one chance in this life to share our riches both materially and spiritually.

Let us think about our church in Derby and its position with regard to this parable. We contribute goods and money every year to a variety of charities. We open our buildings to a wide range of users who can read and pick up literature containing the truths of our church.

But we don't advertise our teachings widely at all. Is this where we are failing?

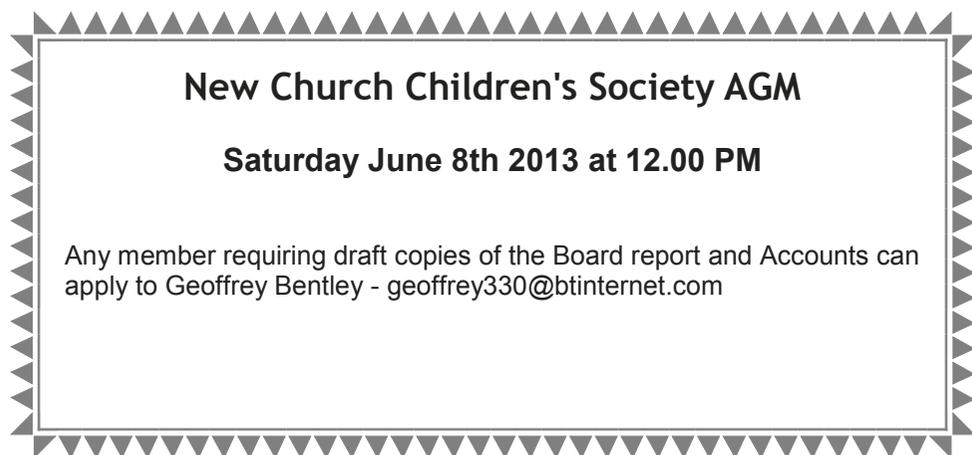
It is a tough world out there in which money and self interest dominate. There are plenty of people who think that they are rich but are spiritually very poor. We MUST try to reach them and clothe them in the garments of heavenly love and wisdom in which the rich man was dressed. There MUST be many like Lazarus, poorly clothed in fragments of the truths of the Word, yet longing to be fed.

In our path to heaven, we hover between being the Rich Man and Lazarus. Let us try to help the financially poor in this country and overseas. Let us try to help the spiritually poor in this country and overseas.

If love of the neighbour was foremost in the minds of all, there would be no poor of any kind. There is a place like that. It is called heaven!

Geoffrey Bentley

From a recent address during a service at Derby New Church.



New Church Children's Society AGM

Saturday June 8th 2013 at 12.00 PM

Any member requiring draft copies of the Board report and Accounts can apply to Geoffrey Bentley - geoffrey330@btinternet.com

The Parable of the Rich Man - Luke 16:19-31

A recent tale from the financial 'City of London' quoted a man who had earned £5 million pounds last year! 'What did he do?' a friend asked. 'Discover a cure for cancer?' 'No, he's a banker!' came the reply.

My upbringing during the 2nd World War meant tight finances. Father was away in the RAF, so mother made my clothes & economised with food. Now I am wealthy compared to many! I am surprised and feel very guilty! Our Lord said "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven!" So, what chance have I got? The 'eye of a needle' may have been a narrow gate in old Jerusalem through which laden animals could just squeeze.

Our Lord does NOT decide who is rich or poor. He does NOT decide who will win the Lottery. He DOES follow with great interest what people do in their wealth or poverty.

EXTREME POVERTY halts the spiritual progress of people. They are so busy finding food and shelter that any higher aims fade away. Do they reject a God in their lot or do they plead for the Almighty to relieve their situation?

GREAT WEALTH can also halt spiritual progress. We can be so busy with self indulgence of every kind that any higher aims fade away. No thoughts about our Lord and His laws. The temptation is to think of the Almighty only if threats come to remove the wealth we have.

WE ARE ALL RICH! in comparison with the average Syrian refugee.

We are all rich in the knowledge of Spiritual truths!

The rich man - Dives - represented the Jewish church at the time of our Lord. Worshipping One God. Having the Commandments of God, the leaders rejected the love of others involved in those commandments. They rejected our Lord who was and still is the embodiment of that love

Spiritually, the Rich Man was poor. Lazarus, favoured of God, was rich! He longed for 'the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.' For the fragments of Divine Truth which might reach him.

Are we rich or poor? Some of us are rich financially, hence the guilt in my case.

ALL of us are RICH spiritually!

And then there were two

My dictionaries give the following definitions of trinity amongst others:

- The union of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit in one Godhead
- Three people considered as a unit, similar to trio, threesome, triad

These are very different from each other but can they have connections? As New Church folk, we are used to thinking of the much-discussed trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the three aspects of the One God. Swedenborg himself defined the three elements as the Divine itself, the Divine Human, and the Holy proceeding. This at first seems highly technical, but can be summarised as -

- Divine itself - the invisible, all-knowing, all-seeing, all powerful God.
- Divine Human - the visible God who lived among us and who shared our problems and fears, with whom we can associate.
- Holy proceeding - the continuous flow of the Lord's goodness and mercy that help us to stay on the path to heaven.

Coming down to our level, we all have a personal trinity -

- Soul - our inner self that we are largely unaware of, but is the channel through which the Lord communicates with us.
- Body - our outer self that the world sees and behind which we hide our true self.
- Charisma - that indefinable something that projects our individual uniqueness.

The Writings call this our spiritual sphere which interacts with other peoples spheres and determines whether or not we "get on" with them. Angels can tell whether we are good or evil by means of the sphere since its nature is determined by the things that are important to us. Finally what we do and why we do it are determined by a trinity of activity –

- Head - knowledge of the things we love and how to deal with them.
- Heart - the source of our motivation and loves.
- Hands - our means of working with the things we love.

Now we come to the second definition of trinity -

- Three people considered as a unit.

In Autumn 1997, three people in Paisley started studying with the New Church College under the tutelage of Rev Robert Gill. A more disparate group is hard to imagine, coming from three different backgrounds, three different degrees of knowledge of New Church theology and three different reasons for starting to study.

The three were Esther Byrne, Jack Dunion and Alan Bowie. Remarkably, two out of the three became ordained ministers in the New Church, a success rate of 66.67%.

The three students slowly bonded as a trio and grew in respect and love for each other. But it took a while for everyone to understand where the others were coming from. For example, Jack tended to give practical answers, Alan would be more theoretical, but Esther was completely different, something we eventually realised was due to her relationship with the Lord with whom she would argue and negotiate, and the fact that, as a woman, her brain was wired differently to Jack's and mine.

How does this map on to the trinity of activity and the trinity of individuals? Far be it for me to make judgment on others, but it seems to me that Esther was the heart of the activity trinity and the charisma of the personal trinity. Esther was the champion of the underdog, the downtrodden and the put-upon. She would stick up against authority on behalf of anyone she felt needed defending, especially when she thought the authority was abusing its privileged position. In this sense she was all heart, and I believe it's justifiable to call her the heart of the activity trinity. As for charisma, Esther had it in abundance but she was reluctant to use it, or perhaps she didn't believe she had it. She strongly disliked talking in front of people, and yet she could speak extemporarily to the whole of Conference and hold everyone's attention with her gentle Irish lilt.

Now she is no longer with us. Her body, weakened by a succession of illnesses finally gave out. She was aware of her situation until close to the end. The day before she passed away she was heard to whisper "Amen" when Jack had finished reading the 23rd psalm to her. She slipped away peacefully at about 7am on 13th March. And then there were two.

Those who are in heaven are continually advancing towards the springtime of life. The more thousands of years they live, the more pleasant and happy is their springtime. Women who have lived in faith in the Lord, charity towards their neighbour come more and more into the flower of growing youth and into a beauty that surpasses any notion of beauty accessible to our sight. In a word, to grow old in heaven is to grow young. (Heaven and Hell 414)

Alan Bowie

New Church House

As reported in 'Stop Press' in the April edition of 'Lifeline', New Church House Manchester is now closed. The Board members and staff regret that this had to happen, but unsolvable difficulties have led to this decision.

There is a limited stock of Baptismal certificates and Church membership forms available at the New Church College. [0161 766 2521]

Also the Kearsley society have kindly taken a quantity of the following church publications to store:

The Poets
Swedenborg Scrapbook
Living with God
I Suppose I shall Survive
Bible Activities
Songs for Worship (Hymns)
Songs for Worship (Music)
Out of this World
Aqueduct Papers
Angel Stories
Eve, the Bone of Contention
The Hopeful Year (hardback)
Exposition of Mark Footprints
The Structure of New Church Teaching
A Branching Tree
Learning to Pray
Till Death us do Part
Second Coming
The Everyday Life of an Angel



To obtain copies please contact Mrs Pauline Grimshaw. [01204 574047]

We hope that in the future the original aims of New Church House i.e. the introduction to a wider public of the insights of Swedenborg, and the spreading of our teachings, will be carried on when enthusiastic and interested people get together and feel the urge to do this. Funds, from the sale of the property, could be available to help finance this venture.

Jean Chadwick

European countries, it is not a public holiday in the once deeply Catholic countries, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

The message of Pentecost, of the coming of the Comforter, or Counsellor, is one that, divorced from ancient church rituals that no longer have the power to involve and move whole peoples, may, newly interpreted for a modern age, yet point the way to our deeper needs and help many towards that wholeness that is the goal of a spiritual approach to life.

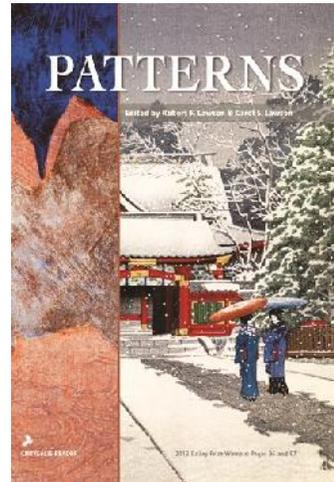
Richard Lines

Farewell Chrysalis

The Swedenborg Foundation Press, based in West Chester, Pennsylvania, has now published the last of its annual book series entitled *The Chrysalis Reader*. The first of the series, initially bearing the simple title *Chrysalis*, appeared in 1985, since when 27 more have been issued. For information regarding any of these issues, please go to www.swedenborg.com/chrysalis.

The final issue, entitled *Patterns*, consists of essays, short stories, poems, and other pieces, about 75 in all, which in one way or another have been 'inspired by the concepts of Emanuel Swedenborg', though only a few of the contributors, to judge from the brief descriptions of their life and work, seem to be connected with any Swedenborgian institutions. But one who does have such a connection is Richard Lines, member of West Wickham New Church in South London, Secretary of the Swedenborg Society, and author of articles which have appeared in *Lifeline*. His contribution is entitled *Two New-Church Patterns*, with a subtitle - *Hindmarsh versus Clowes* - which indicates the nature of these patterns, past, present, and probably future. The two patterns may be termed Separatist Swedenborgianism and Non-Separatist. Both Robert Hindmarsh and his fairly older contemporary John Clowes devoted themselves, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to translating and publishing the religious works of Emanuel Swedenborg, but the former was instrumental in establishing worship distinct and separate from that of the established Church, whereas the latter was opposed to any such move into separatism. I found Richard's description of the two Swedenborgian or New-Church patterns 'a good read' and I'm sure others will do so too.

Rev John Elliott



Rev Esther Bryne

It was a wonderful and inspiring occasion on 18th September 2004 to be present in Dumbarton for Esther Byrne's ordination ceremony. We had watched her over many years responding to the Lord's call, she inspired us by her vision and determination, and we admired her dedication to her people, both within and without the organised New Church. So it was a considerable irony and frustration to her and to us that health problems gradually weakened her body, and restricted what she could do.

When her colleagues heard of Esther's death we were in committee at Purley Chase. The news brought with it a profound sense of loss, as it always does when any of our fraternity leaves us for the spiritual world. But any grief was balanced by feelings of joy that her spirit was now released into the freedom and joy of the next life.

Friday 22nd March 2013 was an altogether different occasion from that previous Dumbarton gathering, when many of Esther's friends and admirers gathered to say farewell at her resurrection service. Having been present when she committed herself to the Lord's service 8 or so years earlier, I felt privileged to be there when we formally handed Esther into the Lord's safe keeping. The only representative of our Church from south of the border able to attend, I also had a sense of how delighted the Paisley folk were to have me among them.

The ceremony at Cardross Crematorium, a few miles beyond Dumbarton, was conducted by the present Minister of Paisley New Jerusalem Church, Esther's colleague and friend, the Rev Jack Dunion, and he was assisted by Esther's mentor and friend, the former Minister, the Rev Robert Gill. What a fine service they led, combining warm tributes to Esther with a clear presentation of our Church's teaching on what lies ahead for Esther and for us all. The chapel was well-filled by members of the Paisley congregation and a large number of her Dumbarton fellowship, as well, of course, as her mother and step-father and other members of Esther's family from Northern Ireland.

It was a wintry March day, with a stiff, chilly wind, snow in the air, and occasional weak sunshine. For me it was also a long day, though the journey was considerably eased by Jack meeting me at Glasgow Central Station, and Robert returning me there after the reception. But the warmth and joy and sense of thanksgiving for Esther's earthly life more than compensated for any natural inconvenience.

Thanks be to God for Esther, a loyal and devoted servant.

Rev Bruce Jarvis

Pentecost

But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26

The word 'counsellor', spelt with an 's' and an 'e', not with a 'c' and 'i', simply means an adviser, one who gives advice or 'counsel', to use an old-fashioned phrase. We are used to the expression 'marriage-guidance counsellor' and the West Wickham church has its 'counsellors', appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting. The word 'counsel' is another name for a barrister. If a solicitor tells his client he will need to seek counsel's opinion, it means seeking the advice of a barrister, usually someone expert in a particular aspect of the law who can argue the case in the higher courts if necessary. But note that a counsellor is an adviser. He or she, however expert, has no power to compel the person seeking advice to accept it. A counsellor has no power to compel. Here we come to something that is at the very heart of New Church teaching. God compels no one. In a famous passage in Arcana Coelestia (7290) Swedenborg tells us that the reason why no miracles are performed at the present day is that they would compel belief, a teaching echoed by Robert Browning in his poem 'A Death in the Desert':

*I say, that miracle was duly wrought,
When, save for it, no faith was possible.*

*So faith grew, making void more miracles
Because too much: they would compel, not help.*

How do we react to advice? Sometimes it is immediately helpful. Our counsellor can tell us something we did not know, can show us how to proceed in a particular situation. I am sure we have all had the experience of getting lost somewhere. We need to find a particular street or house and just cannot find it. Then we ask a helpful stranger who points us in the right direction. If the advice is sound we feel gratitude and relief. Perhaps you have also had the experience the other way round, of giving directions in London to a foreigner, as I am often asked to do. It gives a feeling of pleasure to show someone the way, and the thanks one receives from the recipient of the advice is a wonderful reward. But the situations in which we seek or are asked for advice are not always so simple. The advice given by a barrister to a client may be quite unpalatable. I am sure we can all think of situations in our everyday lives when we have advice from a parent, from a teacher, or a boss at work that is not easy to accept. It may be that we have got something completely wrong, or that we have been proceeding on totally false assumptions. We may be asked to give up cherished habits or practices. It is not nice to be told one is in the wrong about something. It can be

hurtful. We can be stubborn about things that are dear to us. That is a good trait if we are in the right, but if we are in the wrong, stubbornness can be destructive.

I think there is much greater understanding today about the role of the counsellor. It is not just a matter of dishing out correct advice, but of being sensitive to the needs and emotions of the person who is being advised. 'Truth never hurt the teller' is another quotation from Browning and I think that even if we are not familiar with it we can recognize the truth of the poet's remark. To become a marriage counsellor, or any other kind of counsellor, requires training and that training involves the consideration of the emotional needs of the client.

Now the Authorized Version does not use the word 'Counsellor', but what seems to be a very different word, 'Comforter'. The word 'comforter' has immediate connotations with warmth, and indeed the word used to be used in English to describe a woollen scarf and in the United States it means a warm quilt. Whereas 'counsellor' has associations with truth, 'comforter' has associations with love. The Greek word in John's Gospel which is translated both as 'Counsellor' and as 'Comforter', is 'Parakleitos' or 'Paraclete', which means literally 'called in aid'. We would not use the same word to describe both a comfort blanket and a barrister, but the Greek word used in the New Testament could be used to describe either or both. 'Paraclete' is an alien word to us, associated only with religion and theology and easily ignored in other contexts. 'Counsellor' and 'comforter' are much more familiar words. We can quite readily envisage their use in lots of everyday circumstances. We do not necessarily expect a counsellor to be a comforter, although it is wonderful when he or she is, and we do not expect a comfort blanket to advise us, but to envisage a counsellor who is also a comforter takes one on to higher plane immediately. Our teachings tell us that God is divine love and divine wisdom. In the concept of the Holy Spirit as counsellor and comforter one has, not a 'third person' of the Trinity, but a wonderfully graphic picture of divine activity in the human sphere.

To many people today religion appears to be just a comfort blanket and I think by that they mean something that is essentially childish, something of which rational and grown-up men and women have no need. That seems to me to be a superficial and wrong-headed view. It seems to rest on a very poor understanding of human nature, of our emotions that play a far larger part than our purely rational side. If we can envisage humans as psychological beings with hidden depths and very much in need of both comfort (love) and 'counsel' or advice (truth), the concept of a Comforter, whether we see it as a psychological projection, or as the divine immanent within us, makes great sense. Formal religion and regular church-going have been in decline, at least in Great Britain and Europe, for many years, but this does not mean that humankind's spiritual needs have gone away. That is far from being the case. The ancient Christian festival of Pentecost, or Whitsun, has disappeared from our national cultural calendar with the substitution of the purely secular Late Spring Bank Holiday in the UK for the traditional Whit Monday. While the Monday following Pentecost is still a public holiday in many