



## West Wickham Digital Projection Facilities

( See page 15 )

*Heaven is wishing better for others than for ourselves with all our heart and serving others for the sake of their own happiness, not for any selfish goal but for love.*

**Arcana Caelestia 452**

### Lifeline

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new church

# Lifeline



*I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.*

**Genesis 9:13**

See page 9

**June 2009**  
 Number 374

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

## New Church Day

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This month we celebrate New Church Day. We thank the Lord for what we know to be true from the Book of Revelation:

*"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away; and the sea is no more. And I, John, saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

Revelation 21:1,2

Whatever truly makes the New Church is and can only be the Lord's. The New Church is the Lord's because it is His kingdom on earth. The New Church that comes down from Him out of heaven is therefore whole and perfect. In this sense we need have no fear regarding the future of the New Church.

On New Church Day we also thank the Lord for the privilege we have of being able to serve Him in an organised church which endeavours to be a part of His New Church. In this sense we do need to be concerned for the future and it is here that our responsibility begins. The Writings tell us that everyone receives exactly the same life from the Lord. What makes the difference is how we receive it and this depends on the spiritual states which the Lord has been able to cultivate within us. So it is with His New Church. The state of the New Church

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For the current issue of Lifeline, back issues and other resources visit:

[www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk](http://www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk)

## Kildwick One Day Schools 2009

There will be 2 Kildwick One Day Schools this year on Saturday 11th July and Saturday 12th September. In the first one I will attempt to compare Paul and Swedenborg. This is a very big subject and what I will do will only be a very brief survey. In the second one I will look at The Exodus from Egypt and the Wanderings in the Wilderness. The cost will be £15-00 per person per day. This includes coffee and biscuits before we start; lunch; tea and biscuits in the afternoon and tea at the end of proceedings. Payment is to be made on the day, at the school. I hope you will be able to come on one or both of the days. Booking should be made with me at the following address:

Rev G Clarkson, 22 Wimborne Drive, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD 21 2TR  
or by phone 01535 210423.

From the Keighley Newsletter

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## West Wickham Digital Projection Facilities

See picture on page 16.

Sometime ago we decided that we needed to install a 'loop system' for the hard of hearing at West Wickham. This project grew and grew as more facilities were added to list of requirements. By Christmas last year we were able to use a new sound system during services with four loudspeakers around the church, two wireless microphones and a CD player. Then, following the generous gift from the Bournemouth Church of a digital projector this was installed together with an electrically operated projection screen and all the associated wiring to enable a lap top to be plugged into the sound and vision system.

Since February the system has been used by three different worship leaders for various types of service. Using Microsoft PowerPoint on their lap tops worship leaders have used the digital projection system for hymns, meditations with music, responsive readings and thanksgivings and the text of readings as well as pictures to illustrate talks.

However the loop amplifier and the actual loop has yet to be installed!

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*Wisdom is perceiving that the things in which you are wise are scarcely anything compared with the things in which you are not.*

**Apocalypse Explained 828**

(Continued from page 13)

d] Participation in the work of national or local committees of the Church.

In extending this inclusive welcome the Ministers' Committee also urges respect for the liberty and rationality of others within the Conference. The use of our networks for the active promotion of personal, political or sexual opinions runs contrary to the ethos of our fellowship. The Ministers' Committee also affirms the church's belief in the sanctity of marriage.

The Committee is undertaking further study of the spiritual principles which inform our sexual relationships and moral behaviour. The issues of church ceremonies for same-sex unions and eligibility for ordination of those in same-sex relationships will be considered after this further study.

**Mary Duckworth** [Senior Minister]

**Robert A Gill** [Ministers' Committee Secretary]

January 2009

## News from the Churches ...

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### Derby

Community through the Sacrament of the Holy Supper

Beginning in the month of April, there will be changes in the order of the Sacrament Service. These changes have been designed to help foster a greater sense of community around the Sacrament. The full Sacrament of the Holy Supper will be performed at the beginning of the service for all to partake in. Immediately following the children's time, which includes the sacrament for children, the congregation will move into the Holy Supper portion of the service. The elements will be consecrated and the community will be invited to come and partake in the Sacrament. There is a request that Sunday school teachers, youth and those heading for classes be allowed to come to the rail first. There will not be a break in the service and those heading for Sunday school classes will quietly exit at an appropriate point in the service. The Sacrament will continue in the usual manner until all have been served. Following the Holy Supper, the service of worship will continue in the usual manner.

From the Derby Newsletter

varies with each person according to how they have chosen to and been able to receive it into their minds. This applies to people individually and for those societies of people who come together in New Church organisations and churches. As we work on our regeneration in our daily lives, shunning evils as sins and learning new truths from the Word to live, the Lord can open our spiritual mind. This means we will be able to receive His New Church into our minds and lives in deeper and fuller ways. In turn we will be able to love and serve Him and His New Church more and more effectively. This is true church growth and it needs to be the starting place and the inner life of our need to engage in evangelisation.

Our individual and society church life is very important. Our worship, going to the Word, reflection and prayer should be the best we can make them. This being not primarily for what we get from the church but so that we can express our love to the Lord and to the neighbour in the greatest use of living in the light and life of His New Church. With the New Church quality counts; that is quality of life and quality of doctrine. It always must do because ultimately only the best we can offer is good enough for the Lord and His New Church.

*The name of church is given where the Lord is acknowledged and where the Word is known. For the essential elements of the church are love and faith directed to the Lord and coming from the Lord; and the Word teaches how a person must live, in order to receive love and faith from the Lord.* New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 242

*For a church to exist, there must be teaching from the Word, since the Word is not intelligible without teaching. But it is not teaching alone that makes the church in the case of a person, but living in accordance with that teaching.* New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine 243

### Rev Alan Lewin

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### The New Jerusalem

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit.

Revelation 22:1,2

# United Search for Divine Providence

## Session 8



**There is no such thing as our own prudence, it only appears that there is, and this appearance is important for us.**

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**Divine Providence is universal because it is in the least particulars**  
(DP 191-213)

Since Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis (1856-1939), many neurological schools of thought have sprung up, but invariably they are materialistic in outlook, since they do not have an insight into the human psyche, which is spiritual. Yet in 14 pages of this Session we are given a unique revelation from the Lord. His presence within the core of our personality is constant. Without understanding this universal presence of Providence within us, we cannot know how our mind and the inner self function. These 14 pages are your key to understanding how you can cooperate with the Lord's Providence within you. This is a unique privilege, and perhaps this is the most important and practical chapter in the book.

Please read Isaiah 40:25-31 and let these majestic words soak into your consciousness as you consider and feel the Lord's creative and constant presence within each one of us.

**191–192 Conflict and contradiction.** That is what we are warned about: to our senses our bodies appear solid and real. Yet we also know that matter is not really as solid as it appears, because at the level of sub-atomic particles it is much more complex and full of energy and unimaginable speeds. To understand the reality of things and of ourselves is something only the Lord can reveal to us. We have to learn to distinguish the appearance from the reality.

**192-197** Sit quietly for a few moments and think about the 'secret' inner you, as well as your own uniqueness. You were created to be yourself, but where do your thoughts come from? They can only come from your affections or the love

affirms the maintaining of love and compassion towards all people, but the importance of teaching about conjugal love also comes out strongly in these principles. Some of these discussions have also drawn on the work of the Personal Morality Study Group, which has been of use in our deliberations.

The working group has been asked to share something of recent discussions at the Annual Meeting of Conference, but it was thought that it might be useful to start this process with an article in Lifeline before this point. Grappling with these issues is not without its rewards, but it does at times feel like an enormous struggle. At times we have been comforted by the sense that this "wrestling" can lead to unexpected or even unwanted examples of needing to keep oneself open to hear a point of view different from one's own and to be able to acknowledge something of the validity of another's point of view. We hope that this spirit can continue to pervade any wider discussion of these issues as we move together as a church to come to understand our faith and relate it to the world in which we live.

**David Lomax**  
(on behalf of the working group)

## The General Conference of the New Church Ministers' Committee

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### Policy Statement On Sexual Orientation

Mindful of God's love for all His people, the Ministers' Committee affirms its vision of The General Conference of the New Church as an inclusive fellowship that extends a warm welcome to others regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

In particular the Committee affirms its welcome of gay and lesbian people to:-

- a] Membership of The General Conference of the New Church and of any congregation or group under its banner;
- b] The Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Supper, including the sharing of the common cup;
- c] Work with children, young people and the vulnerable, subject to the normal checks and procedures required of all who undertake such work;

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Addressing the Subject of Homosexuality

In 2005, a study group consisting of both lay and ordained people within the church was convened, at the instigation of the Ministers' Committee and with the approval of Governing Council, to look at the issue of homosexuality in relation to the church. This group produced an interim report late in 2006 and a further report early in 2007, which was then considered by the Ministers' Committee.

The report highlighted many areas of potential or indeed actual disagreement without these being able to be resolved. After much discussion, the Ministers' Committee felt that it was not suitable for general circulation as it would not help discussion. Since then, the Committee has been endeavouring to find a way forward in relation to this issue. This has been a slow process, not least because it is a challenge to address what are often difficult or even contentious and emotive matters without lengthy face-to-face contact. (This was one of the problems also faced by the original study group).

One result of these reflections has been a statement circulated throughout the church early in 2009, welcoming the participation of people who are homosexual in the life of the church in various ways. The statement follows at the end of this article (see page 13). As was also mentioned in this statement, the Committee still feels a need to consider the particular questions of the ordination of homosexual people and the performance of any ceremony in church to acknowledge a relationship between two homosexual people. A list of spiritual principles relevant to these questions has been drawn up to aid this process.

Latterly, over the last few months, these questions have been being considered by a small working group and the thoughts of this working group were shared with the recent Ministers' Committee AGM.

At that meeting someone used the concept of an "impasse". This observation was made because there are sincere, deeply-held and prayerfully-weighed views which come at these issues from very different perspectives. For some people, the Word and Swedenborg's Writings provide clear guidance in this area, but for others they yield teaching only by implication or through interpretation. Looking at an example of how this could come out, for some members of the Committee, any form of "blessing" a homosexual relationship would undermine the church's teaching on conjugal love specifically and on morality generally. At the same time, there may also be a feeling that, in taking a stance which excludes this possibility, the church may miss out on opportunities to deepen our understanding of how such teaching can apply in "real life" situations and the ways in which it can therefore be of use to people in this respect. Similarly, one of the spiritual principles in the list mentioned above

within you. That is their real source. But where does that love, your energy, come from? That can only come from the Lord's love, the real source of everything in creation. We are not just close to it, we are within it: it is our life!

**Note 193:2** There are two principles of life in us, one natural, the other spiritual; yet what would life be without affections, delights and pleasures? The only problem is that because of hellish interference we may easily develop selfish and evil inclinations in order to enjoy our pleasures. This is a constantly repeated message: we stand half way between heaven and hell!

**197-200** These affections of our life's love are however known to the Lord, and to Him alone. This is a merciful provision for our own protection so that the Lord can gradually lead us to higher and more angelic affections and delights which, in short, are to love and serve our neighbour. We can then be more in tune with the Lord's love and wisdom and receive them, though we can never claim them as our own. They are the 'holy riches' which you can increase by giving them to others so that they too can be blessed. Thus you become the living channel of His love. The parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21 is a clear illustration of the riches we can receive and share. You can read it right now and discuss whether we are gathering the true riches. These paragraphs really are about the very core of your life. No psychologist could explain so much about your inner self.

But another very important insight and warning is given to us: Whatever we like, we automatically call 'good'. You can see the danger in this. Hitler thought that it was a 'good thing' to get rid of the Jews. How essential it is to be warned of this! We should not fall into the same trap. We must always get to the basics and start with the Ten Commandments. They alone tell us in very clear terms what is good and what is evil. This is something we cannot decide for ourselves! Mercifully, our life's real delight is, is known to the Lord alone at every moment of our life. He is constantly trying to moderate it and introduce higher and worthier alternatives which will lead us to greater and purer happiness.

**201-204** Here we get a strong reminder, if we need one, that Divine Providence is universal in every minute detail of our love and thought. What this is telling us is that it is not just a general and distant oversight - as someone who might tap the barometer to see if it is still working! No, this is immediate and constant and very individual. You could reply, "Yes, and to me as well as to everyone else. He is present in fullness with His infinite Love. Aren't we all very blessed?" That is so: He singles everyone of us for His full attention. He is universally and fully present everywhere. You may like to talk about the implication of what is written in Zechariah 4:6-10.

There is also a marvellous paragraph in 201:3 about creationism in scientific

*(Continued on page 6)*

terms. It is an impossibility. Things, including all living things, just cannot govern and organise themselves. Every cell in our body is under that universal and constant Providence of the Lord.

**205-209 A very interesting discourse on atheism.** But please do not decide who is or is not an atheist. Many religions see others who have beliefs different from their own as atheists. And there are many people, apparently atheists, who simply cannot accept Christian dogma of three divine persons, or that God sacrificed His Son on the cross before He could forgive humanity. Real atheists are those who acknowledge nature alone as self-created and do not accept the possibility that there may be any sort of intelligent creator. The root of their difficulty is that they see themselves as wise and powerful, who do not need any help from 'above'. This is a wonderful insight into atheism. Make sure you read up to 209. It is very sad, but also true.

**210-211** Providence could effect nothing within us unless we felt and thought that we ourselves decide and dispose all things in our life. Unless we felt and believed this wholeheartedly, we would simply give up, loose all pleasure in life and resign ourselves and wait for influx. "It's all in God's hands, and I have no say in anything!" The great danger is that the hells might use such an opportunity to invade our minds and begin to influence them and then we really would lose any control of our lives and of our true liberty and rationality. We are advised: "Use prudence as a servant who faithfully dispenses his Master's goods and fulfils his orders." But we need to do it 'as of ourselves'. It may be difficult for us to come to terms with this inner conflict – that the Lord knows and foresees our whole life, when and what we shall decide, but He still allows us our choice. Free will is essential to our humanity. The decisions we are making are never meaningless. We ought to learn this by experience because we have to live with the consequences for ever! That surely must be clear to us. Everything we do is 'as of ourselves', yet under the watchful eye of Providence.

**212-213** I do feel these two paragraphs are among the most astounding Swedenborg ever wrote. They ask, "Is there such a thing as 'Fortune' or 'Misfortune'? And the answer is, "Yes, because nothing happens without Providence." But why do good people have misfortune sometimes? Answer: Because they might come to believe that the Lord is rewarding them by seeing they are better than others! This would lead them into selfish opportunism and they would get puffed up and feel, "The Lord is on my side. I can't go wrong." We must never 'challenge' the Lord and say to Him: "You can let me win if you want to!" We must learn to trust the Lord in all things, but never put Him to the test. Read Luke 12:22-34 – every moment of our lives we are choosing between heaven and hell. What an exciting challenge the Lord puts before us!

only appears when light and raindrops happen to combine in just the right way, producing this beautiful natural picture of a bow in the sky. In AC1043 Swedenborg states: "... To speak comparatively, it is the same in spiritual things. The darkness in this case is the proprium [that is the awareness of his life as his own] of man's intellectual part, or falsity; and the blackness is the proprium of his will part, or evil; which absorb and extinguish the rays of light. But the lightness and whiteness is the truth and good that the man supposes he does of himself, which reflects and throws back from itself the rays of light. The rays of light that fall upon these, and as it were modify them, are from the Lord, as from the Sun of wisdom and intelligence; for rays of spiritual light are no other and from no other source."

I understand this to mean, for us, that our false ideas and selfish desires are represented by the clouds which obscure the light of truth from the Lord but, insofar as we live according to our conscience, formed from those truths we have learnt and accepted, we are capable of picking up and reflecting some of the light of truth from the Lord in all its variegated colours. The more we can put His truth into practice in our lives, the stronger will be our conjunction with the Lord and the more beautiful will be the appearance of our spiritual rainbow. have the potential to grow closer and closer to God and perhaps even to achieve that blissful state, known by the celestial man, when we are capable of perceiving truth intuitively – though probably not in this world.

**Marian Kidd**

## New Ordination Student

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We are delighted to announce that Helen Newton has been accepted for training for ordination. Since December 2006 Helen has done excellent innovative work as Training and Development Officer for The General Conference. She will continue in this post to the end of her contract in November this year.

Because of her desire to deepen her knowledge of the teachings of the New Church, Helen reduced her working hours to allow her to study SOLCe modules. Helen will continue to study part-time until January 2010 when she will become a full-time ordination student.

**Mary Duckworth**  
Senior Minister

**Michael Hindley**  
Chief Executive

*(Continued from page 9)*

Lord in charity (the sign of the covenant) with the regenerate spiritual man (Noah, his sons and their seed) and all those qualities of his intellect and will that have been regenerated (the fowl, the beast and every wild animal of the earth). This passage follows the story of the flood and the building of the ark, and indicates a changed relationship between God and mankind. To understand why this change was necessary, we need to have some idea of the spiritual meaning of the flood and the building of the ark. I've tried to give a very brief summary of this as follows:

In the celestial man (that is the man of the Most Ancient Church, represented by Adam) the will and the understanding were united and acted as one. In his innocent goodness the celestial man was able to perceive the truth intuitively from his surroundings. He didn't need to learn it. This must have been paradise – never having to engage in an internal battle, unsure of one's motives and the truth of one's beliefs but close enough to God to see things clearly illuminated by the light of truth flowing from Him. But there was a problem. When the love of self began to dominate the will of the celestial man, it permeated the whole person. As he turned away from God both will **and** understanding became more and more degenerate and he eventually brought about his own destruction. There was no mechanism by which he could be regenerated and he was "drowned in the flood". There had to be a change. This change the Lord accomplished by forming a new Church from the remnant of the Most Ancient Church. This was what we know as the Ancient Church (represented by Noah). The man of this church was a new **spiritual** man in whom the will and the understanding were separate (represented by the building of the ark). It now became possible for the corrupt (or selfish) will of man to be regenerated through the building up of a conscience in the understanding or intellectual part of man by the Lord. There also needed to be a medium through which man, having lost the intuitive ability to perceive truth, could learn the spiritual truths from which his conscience could be built up. It was for this purpose that the Ancient Word was begun, written in the correspondential style of the Adamic people. Subsequently, of course, this was continued through succeeding generations to form the Word as we know it.

So the new covenant, of which the rainbow was to be the sign, is with this new spiritual man and his regeneration is effected by means of the truths from the Lord, which can be found hidden in the clouds of the sense of the letter of the Word. This promise was made to all mankind for ever, so it applies to us and we in the New Church, through the writings of Swedenborg, have the added advantage (and responsibility) of possessing a key to help us find and interpret that hidden meaning.

A rainbow is formed when the sun's light shining through drops of rainwater from the clouds is modified and appears to us as bands of its component colours. It

## Meditation and Prayers without words

Having completed the 5 Laws of DP last month, we have now started delving into the very depths of our psyche to discover its limitations as well as the reassurance that the Lord is always fully present with us by means of His Providence. This is such a tremendous revelation that ought to leave us speechless! So I suggest you simply 'float', allowing yourself to savour the safety of the stream of His Providence (see DP 186) as you read these verses from the Word, which, if you wish, you can divide into shorter portions. They serve to reassure us in these very troubled times: Isaiah 32-33, Psalm 46, Mark 4:35-46.

## Christopher Hasler

This session is part of a complete course being published in Lifeline for use by individuals and groups. It is also available online as a leaflet which can be downloaded and easily printed.

To find out more go to: [www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk](http://www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk)

Click on Resources and then United Search for Divine Providence. You will find an Introduction and Invitation to the course and the Session notes as they become available.

## Ordination Students Helen Brown and Jack Dunion

Helen and Jack are on target for ordination at Conference at the end of July.

### Helen Brown

Post ordination Helen will be self-employed, working from home in Surrey. Her focus will be on making contact with seekers mainly through workshops and follow-up groups and networking. Some of this work might be done in conjunction with the London churches, which are within easy reach; some with churches further afield from time to time; some at Purley Chase and some within Helen's local area or worldwide through the internet.



Helen is available to take occasional services in the London area as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

She will no doubt be involved in developing courses for groups, modules for the Swedenborg Open Learning Centre and in providing material for New Church websites.

Helen is drawn to offering counselling and spiritual direction on a one to one basis.

Being self-employed she will be paid fees by Conference for work within Conference, rather than receiving a stipend as an employed minister. This decision was made by the Governing Council due to current financial restraints.

### Jack Dunion

Post ordination Jack will become a full-time minister at Paisley New Church from September 1<sup>st</sup>. He will assist the Rev Robert Gill with the present congregation during his first year. This will be a transitional year allowing both Jack and the congregation to become accustomed to his new ministerial role rather than being a member of the congregation undergoing training for ordination. Robert will partly retire at the end of July but will continue to be minister at Paisley part-time for a further year.



Jack will be leader of a new project working within the community, with youth, marginalised and disadvantaged people in the area around the church, and networking with other organisations and churches.

He will work from a base in the lower ground floor of the Paisley Church premises and this floor, comprising hall, kitchen and smaller rooms will be for the use of the community.

A central office in these premises could also provide a 'Swedenborg Centre', a point of contact for people in Scotland interested in the writings of Swedenborg.

The Rev Esther Byrne will assist in the new project and also with the current congregation. The three ministers will work together in a new team ministry.

**Mary Duckworth**  
Senior Minister

**Michael Hindley**  
Chief Executive

## Worship Leaders' Weekend 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009

For the recent Worship Leaders' Weekend, those attending were asked to prepare an address on a passage from the Old Testament. The following address was prepared by Marian Kidd and it was suggested by others that it might be suitable for inclusion in Lifeline.

### Old Testament Address

Genesis 9:12-15

*And God said, This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living soul that is with you, for the generations of an age: I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living soul of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.*

It's a lovely image, isn't it, the beautiful colours of the rainbow against the clouds. I particularly remember an occasion a few years ago being driven along an open country road and seeing a double rainbow which seemed to remain visible for longer than any previous rainbows I'd seen. It was an uplifting experience. Of course, that's the nature of rainbows; lovely though they are they're never visible for long because they need very specific conditions to appear to us. The sun's light and the rain from the clouds have to combine in just the right way to produce this beautiful natural picture.

So, what can we learn from this passage in the Bible about our own personal relationship with the Lord. What is meant by the covenant of which the bow is a sign? In The Concise Oxford Dictionary a covenant is defined as a compact or bargain but in AC1038 Swedenborg tells us that "every covenant is for the sake of conjunction, that is, for the sake of living in mutual friendship or love" - thus marriage is described as a covenant. Since man can only be conjoined with the Lord when he has within him something of the image and likeness of the Lord, (that is when he is in a state of love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbour), the covenant can only be with the regenerate man or the man capable of being regenerated.

God was speaking to Noah and his sons, so the covenant is established with them. Swedenborg tells us that this signifies an indication of the presence of the