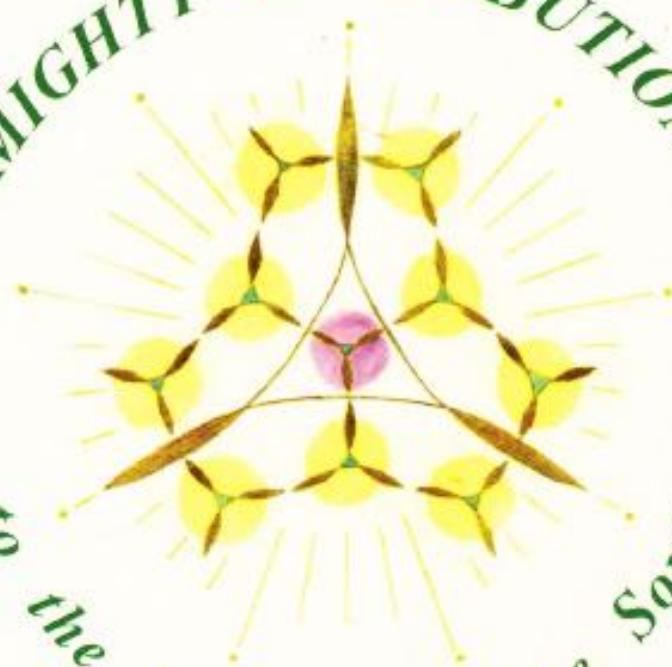


SWEDENBORG'S

MIGHTY CONTRIBUTION



to the Welfare of the Soul

Philip W. Groves

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Philip W. Groves, Ph.D., D.D. (1920-1999) was qualified in the fields of Psychology and Chemistry, having a Ph.D. in Biochemistry, doctorates in Divinity and Bio-Psychology, and a Degree in Chemistry. He also held a Diploma of Naturopathy. He had practiced as a psycho-therapist for many years and also worked in industry as a chemist and microbiologist. He taught at Nature Care College of Naturopathic and Traditional Medicine in Sydney over a long period. Under the auspices of **The Centre for Integrative Studies**, established and run by Dr. Groves, he continued to offer weekly and monthly classes, examining all the natural sciences from a spiritual perspective.

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MIGHTY CONTRIBUTION
*to the Welfare of the Soul***

Philip W. Groves

Swedenborg Centre

(formerly The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre)

Roseville, Sydney, Australia

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*Divine Harmony created and maintains the
Universe*



FOREWORD

One of the most impressive aspects immediately confronting anyone becoming familiar with the life and work of **Emanuel Swedenborg** is his intimate and expansive working knowledge of all the natural sciences of his times - from the beginnings of the cosmos to the minute workings of the brain. At the conclusion of the twentieth century, scientific knowledge is incredibly superior to that of Swedenborg's times, and increasingly so at a rate almost incomprehensible to the non-scientist.

Those who are personally acquainted with **Dr. Philip Groves** will always attest their sincere admiration of the vast understanding that he has of so many aspects of life at this level of existence. Yet, the knowledge itself pales into insignificance when he uses it to demonstrate, with crystal clarity, the workings of the Divine Creator and the true purpose of it all - to provide a framework by which individuals can work on themselves in order to spiritually regenerate their lives and reach back to the Source of all Life.

Since commencing to work with **The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre** in Australia fifteen years ago, one of my greatest privileges has been to come to know Dr. Groves, to appreciate something of his store-house of knowledge and how it is simply offered to the genuine seeker of truth as the bricks for one's own spiritual house-building.

This knowledge has been acquired by Dr. Groves from a lifetime of study in gaining his formal qualifications and pursuing fields of specialised interest such as Egyptology, Comparative Religion (in particular Buddhism and Sufism), Botany, Biology, Ancient Languages and Holistic Medicine. Esoteric Christianity, though, remains the basis and fundamental doctrine of all his teaching, the works of Emanuel Swedenborg, Gurdjieff, and Maurice Nicoll being frequently drawn upon.

Yet, in the face-to-face presence of Dr. Groves, this "facade" of great knowledge dissolves away leaving a deep connectedness with the humblest of human beings, a man who has found, and continues to find through inner struggle, peace and contentment with his life's spiritual journey.

This book, containing eight lectures presented over the past eleven years at various important occasions connected with the Swedenborg movement in Sydney, is itself a testimony to Dr. Groves' wealth of knowledge and depth in understanding of its many dimensions. The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre is proud to be a vehicle by which the teachings of Dr. Philip Groves can be made use of by a much larger audience. But readers, do not simply read the words contained herein; absorb them into your being so that they can be translated into your very life. The exquisite mandala plates created by **Rosemarie Lorenz** of Sydney, a long-time student of Dr. Groves, will, through reflection and meditation, aid this process for you.

Neville Jarvis,
Secretary/Manager,
The Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre,
Sydney, Australia, November 1997.

Postscript

This book is also dedicated to the memory of the late **Terry Elson**, consultant for **Edgar Bragg & Co**, the printers of this book, who passed into the spiritual world whilst it was in the early stages of preparation for publication. Terry co-ordinated the production of a number of our publications and his tenacious attention to detail, his most gentlemanly professionalism, his wit and practical approach to worldly concerns were particularly welcomed by this writer with little previous experience in the publishing world. Swedenborg is recorded as having gently said to his closest confidant in his latter years, **Rev. Arvid Ferelius** of the **Swedish Lutheran Church**: *When you and I meet in the spiritual world, then we shall have much to talk about!* May Terry's experience of ongoing life be a richly rewarding one for him.

Those who study Swedenborg's theological writings will find an abundance of material that will help them to alter subjective attitudes, expand their vision of spiritual possibilities, deepen their faith, arouse their spirit of charity, and encourage them to seek what is good, true, loving and beautiful.

Philip W. Groves (1987)

I admire Swedenborg as a great scientist and a great mystic at the same time.

Carl Jung (1957)

I can venture to assert that as a moralist, Swedenborg is above all praise; and that as a naturalist, psychologist and theologian, he has strong and varied claims on the gratitude of the professional and philosophical student.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1827)

ABBREVIATIONS

for Swedenborg's theological writings

AC	<i>Arcana Caelestia</i>
AE	<i>Apocalypse Explained</i>
AR	<i>Apocalypse Revealed</i>
CL	<i>Conjugial Love</i>
DLW	<i>Divine Love and Wisdom</i>
DP	<i>Divine Providence</i>
DW	<i>On the Divine Wisdom</i>
HH	<i>Heaven and Hell</i>
JD	<i>Journal of Dreams</i>
LJ	<i>Last Judgment and Babylon Destroyed</i>
SD	<i>The Spiritual Diary</i>
TCR	<i>True Christian Religion</i>

The numerals appearing alongside references to Swedenborg's theological writings are the paragraph numbers which Swedenborg himself uniquely used to identify the location of text.

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'Be wakeful', signifies that they should acquire for themselves... spiritual life. This life is meant by "wakefulness" and "being awake," because spiritual life is to moral life, apart from spiritual life, as wakefulness is to sleep, or as noonday light is to the evening, yea, to darkness. But that this is so is not known or perceived by those who are in natural life alone, neither by those who are in moral life apart from spiritual life, for this life also is natural life. They do not know or perceive this, because they are in natural lumen only, and this lumen in comparison with spiritual light is as the darkness of evening to the light of noonday. Moreover, to such the darkness of evening seems like light; for their interior sight, which is that of the thought, is adapted to that darkness, just as the sight of owls, bats, and other birds that fly by night, is adapted to the shade. Consequently they believe themselves to be in light because they are able to reason, when yet they are in darkness. That this is so is manifest from the state of such after death, when they become spirits. They then believe, when with their companions, that they are in light, because they not only see all things that are about them, but also are able to think and speak about any matter whatever; and yet their light, when the light of heaven flows in with them, is changed into darkness, and they become so blind in respect to the understanding as not to be able to think at all. Moreover, when angels who are in the heavens look down on those who are in such lumen, they see nothing there but mere darkness. That spiritual life compared with moral life apart from spiritual life is as wakefulness compared with sleep, can be further seen from this, that those who are in spiritual light are in angelic wisdom and intelligence, which is such as to be incomprehensible and ineffable to those who are in natural lumen alone, and this not only with men while living in the world, but also with the same when after death they become spirits; and when intelligence and wisdom constitute wakefulness. From this it can now be seen that "Be wakeful" here signifies that they should procure for themselves spiritual life.

To "be awake" has a similar signification in the following passage in Matthew: 'Be awake, therefore, for you know not in what hour your Lord comes' (xxiv. 42).

Swedenborg: Apocalypse Explained (from paragraph 187
dealing with **Revelation** 3:2)

SWEDENBORG'S MIGHTY CONTRIBUTION



Emanuel Swedenborg was an outstanding scholar, scientist and theologian, and a great deal has been written about his life, his attainments and his publications. A study of the various biographies written about him is important, and it enables us to see that this remarkable man is a model of moral integrity, intellectual honesty, sincerity, and with total devotion to the spiritual duty entrusted to him. In this talk we shall not dwell upon Swedenborg's attainments to any extent but will consider what it was that he was commissioned to deliver to mankind. The title page of his last book bears the announcement:

*THE TRUE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION*
by
Emanuel Swedenborg
Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ

The statement ***Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ*** is more than an expression of Swedenborg's sense of humility before the Lord: it also defines his function. A servant is one who is in truths from the good of love (AE 433²¹), and because they are in truths they act sincerely and justly in every thing (AE 478³). A servant of the Lord hearkens to and obeys the Lord God (AE 6), and is one who performs services through uses. The student should consult AR 3 for a fuller account of the term **servant**.

As the ***Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ*** Swedenborg was assigned the task of preparing the way for the coming of the New Church [Ed. a new spiritual era for humankind]. This required a long and extensive re-education of the human race into the realisation that The Word has an internal, spiritual sense, and that the internal sense immeasurably transcends the external literal sense. In order to unfold even a little of the spiritual sense a knowledge of correspondences was required, and in many parts of his theological writings Swedenborg provided

detailed explanations of the nature and functions of correspondences. The Western world had some familiarity with the concept of Symbols, but it had to come to grips with the ancient science of correspondences. Even today there are readers of Swedenborg who confuse correspondences with symbols and fail to grasp the functional nature of the former. In Middle East countries there is still an understanding of correspondences, and in Sufi communities the employment of spiritual correspondences is an essential component of inner growth.

Swedenborg clarifies the concept of Church and brought deeper meanings into its employment. In the minds of many people church is thought of as a highly structured organisation associated with buildings which are called churches, and administered by a hierarchy of clerics. Formal doctrinal teachings, rituals and participation in sacred festivals are made the core of church activity. However, all this is external and constitutes a state of religiosity.

An enormous number of persons who participate in this kind of church activity do not even suspect that there is an internal life, and it is only when *the internal* is opened to receive the Lord God that the church can really be established in them. In many ways Swedenborg sought to show the real meaning of church, and to dispel fallacious thinking about it.

Swedenborg demonstrated that Church is a reciprocal functional relationship between God and mankind. It is not a building or a priesthood but a way of life that conjoins human beings with the Lord God. He declared:

The Lord's church exists with each individual person in a state in which charity and faith received from the Lord are present. For a person is in themselves the church.

AC 8938

The realisation that the individual person is capable of becoming a church can make a tremendous impact upon those who are sensitive and receptive. The knowledge that any individual can participate in the most intimate interaction with the Lord God has a profound liberating effect upon the mind, and brings a new sense of worth and meaning into an individual's life. Swedenborg's statement that *The church is in man and not outside him* (HH 57) is equivalent to the Lord's affirmation *Behold the Kingdom of God is within you* (*Luke 17²¹*) because *The church is the Lord's Kingdom on earth* (AC 768).

However, lest superficially minded people create false interpretations for themselves regarding person as church, Swedenborg made it very clear that *only a regenerated person is a church*, (AC 246) and an *unregenerate people are not yet a church* (ibid).

Swedenborg has a great deal to say about regeneration, and throughout his theological writings there are numerous references to the process. This is one of his major contributions to mankind, and yet it is frequently overlooked by many people. People who are lazy and stupid assume that if one is familiar with Swedenborg's works, and believes them, then spiritual renewal has actually taken place. This is no different from the widespread assumption that familiarity with the words of the Bible is salvation itself. Rebirth or regeneration has always been recognised as the fundamental means whereby a natural, external person is transformed into a spiritual person. It is a huge change which many people cannot visualise, and is often compared to the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. There are many biological transformations in the natural world which illustrate the process of regeneration, and familiar examples include the metamorphosis of an aquatic tadpole into an air-breathing frog, the metamorphosis of an ugly-looking aquatic nymph into a beautiful, winged dragonfly, and the metamorphosis of a drab subterranean larva into a colourful, winged and noisy cicada. When a human being undergoes regeneration they are reconstituted and is made into a new creature. He or she is a new creation who now possesses spiritual faculties and functions, and is able to receive and comprehend the Lord God, life, good, love, truth and wisdom in a totally different way.

Regeneration is not an automatic process which just happens like puberty as one gets older. It must be sought after as the most important thing that can take place during planetary life. It involves hard work, honest self-searching, going against ego-states, and seeking to consciously receive Divine Influx. Furthermore, once the process of regeneration has been initiated one must consciously maintain the struggle against evil to the very end of terrestrial existence. Only an idiot would imagine that it is a brief, one-off process or initiation, and once it is over and done with one has become a genuine card-carrying spiritual being.

In certain high-quality Eastern esoteric schools intensive work on self-correction and self-purification is obligatory. From the most ancient times it has been recognised that spiritual growth takes place only after the defects of the lower self have been removed. The practice of honest self-observation, self-remembering, God-remembering, destroying pernicious identifications, cancelling out vain imagination, and waging unrelenting war against self-love form an important part of school work, and all this is additional to the performance of one's daily external duties. People in Western society imagine that to pursue such intensive work on oneself requires retreat from the world, and the full-time pursuit of a mystical life. This is not always the case for there are thousands of spiritually minded people who do these things and still live a normal life. People who work in this manner

know that it is the love, wisdom and power of God which enables them to struggle towards inner perfecting. They know full well that without help from God nothing can be attained. In the Western world millions of people have been taught that faith alone in Jesus Christ will guarantee a safe passage into heaven, and a spiritual life of peace and contentment. This is inadequate.

One of Swedenborg's great contributions to people's spiritual welfare is that he introduces the absolute need for work on oneself in the light of higher doctrine. In TCR 564, he states:

... anyone who has not looked into or examined themselves ends up not knowing what is the evil that damns them and the good that saves them

and also

A purely natural person can see evils and good qualities in others, and can also criticise others. But because they have not looked into and examined themselves they sees no evil in themselves

Again in TCR 5683, Swedenborg returns to the theme of self-examination when he reports a conversation between celestial angels and new arrivals from the earth. The angelic beings, acting as one person, said:

But my question is, did you ever examine your inner selves and become aware of any longings for revenge ... any longings to indulge your lusts ... any longings for fraud, and any longing for lying?

These are penetrating questions which cannot be ignored unless a person is utterly heedless of his or her spiritual welfare. Moreover they must be repeated and acted upon many times before ingrained negative states can be removed. Genuine repentance requires ongoing self-examination, fully recognising one's sins and errors, confessing them before the Lord, and making real efforts to begin a new life. As soon as the practice of repentance has been established, it becomes much easier to carry out and it is seen to be a necessary process of life. But there are many who turn away from this practice because they egotistically assume it is not required of them. Concerning this matter Swedenborg wrote:

It is extraordinary that Protestants have such a deep-seated resistance, antipathy, and aversion to real repentance. This is so strong that they cannot bring themselves to examine themselves.

TCR 567⁷

Quite often people carry within themselves psychological states which they do not recognise as being detrimental to the inner life. States of anger, depression,

anxiety, jealousy, self-love, arrogance, resentment, unjustified criticism of others, pretence, lying, avoiding difficult tasks, and assuming that one is better than others are all negative, and they are evil because they go against all the good, love, harmony, cheerfulness, hope, peace and inspiration which flow from the Lord in order to awaken and uplift mankind. It is very easy to read the Bible and the theological writings of Swedenborg with the eyes and mentation of the external self, and be unaffected by them. It requires special efforts and resolve to inwardly grasp these great communications, understand them, love them, and apply them to life. We need the fervour and intensity of those who study in Eastern Schools, and who realise that salvation is won by sincere effort and inner change. If any person genuinely seeks to change their way of life they are urged to study chapters 9 and 10 of ***True Christian Religion***. In those chapters Swedenborg presents a practical way of transformation through repentance, reformation and regeneration. This is arcane or esoteric methodology provided by the Lord God, and should be pursued eagerly and energetically. If any person declares, yes, *I have read those chapters and they are very interesting*, then no change in the inner life has taken place. Knowledge acquired by experience, conversations, reading and study are useless unless they are translated into *action*. One needs to hearken to the Lord's words:

If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

John 13¹⁷

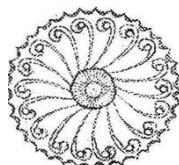
In the Greek New Testament the word translated as *happy* is μακαριος which also means *blessed*. Swedenborg describes *blessed* as a state of reception of heavenly things. *Thus while the person lives in the world they are in communion with the Angels of Heaven, for as to their spirit they are in heaven* (AR 8). He draws a distinction between blessedness and happiness in CL 69, where speaking of the deliciousness of conjugal love he says that *in the higher parts of the mind it is experienced as blessedness, and in the lower parts of the mind as happiness*. Whether blessedness or happiness is obtained depends upon the ability of a person to renounce evil ways and false ideas and become receptive to the Divine Influx.

It is different for different people. The essential thing, however, is the act of translating spiritual knowledge into deeds, and this is accomplished by loving the truths which are known and living them in accordance with the good from which they have come.

Another mighty contribution made by Swedenborg was his detailed exposition of the Lord's teaching concerning being wakeful. Throughout the Word there are many references to wakefulness, awaken, be awake and arousal and they all refer

to the spiritual condition of illumination by Divine Light. This is real consciousness, and is to be sharply distinguished from awareness which is our usual state in daily life. For more than fifty years Western psychologists and neurologists completely ignored the phenomenon of consciousness, and many specialists even denied its existence. The Behaviourists dominated Psychology for decades and deliberately ignored the internal operations of the human mind. They concentrated solely upon the external responses of human beings to external stimuli. The tide is now turning and there is growing interest in the nature and importance of consciousness. However, leading researchers admit that they know very little about it. Compare this attitude with certain Eastern cultures. Before the Chinese invaded Tibet, many Lamas undertook extensive studies in the nature and power of consciousness. Twenty years of practical and theoretical training in the properties of consciousness was regularly undertaken as an obligatory part of spiritual discipline. If candidates wished to understand the spiritual depths of their sacred scriptures they were required to have the appropriate degree of wakefulness and clarity of mind.

A few words on the differences between awareness and consciousness are necessary before we examine Swedenborg's contribution. All living things possess sensitivity which is the ability to detect and respond to stimuli. Sensitivity requires sensitive energy, and this is present in different degrees in different organisms. Plants have a definite, but low degree, of sensitivity; animals display a sharper and broader field of sensitivity; and human beings possess an abundance of sensitive energy. It is by means of sensitive energy that the external mind is able to perceive, acquire information, think, remember and experience emotional states. The operations of sensitivity in the external psyche constitute awareness. All of us live with this awareness and erroneously call it consciousness. Consciousness is an ultra fine spiritual process which comes from a higher source. Put briefly, it is the ingestions of spiritual light into an appropriately receptive mind. The light of consciousness is infinitely superior to the relatively dull illumination of awareness, and reveals worlds, realms and beings which awareness cannot even imagine. By comparison with the luminosity and clarity of consciousness, awareness is more like a state of sleep and is spiritually called *sleep*. Consciousness provides spiritual perception, but awareness can only yield the external knowledge of, or reference to, perceptions. Such external knowledges of spiritual things are known as scientifcics.



In many parts of his theological writings, Swedenborg shows that consciousness is the state of spiritual wakefulness and that to be spiritually awake is to have spiritual life. He demonstrates that ordinary awareness, which is centred upon one's selfhood, is a state of sleep. He wrote (AE 1006):

While a person is in life from the Lord, they are in wakefulness: but when they are in life from themselves, they are then in sleep. Or, what is the same, whilst a person is in spiritual life, they are then in wakefulness, but when they are in natural life separated from spiritual, then they are asleep.

also

Watching denotes to procure for oneself spiritual life ... by looking to the Lord, because the Lord is life itself.

In TCR 606 it is declared:

A person who is not regenerated is like someone who, seeing phantoms by night, thinks they are real people. Then when they are being regenerated they are like someone who sees at daybreak that what they saw in the night was a delusion, and later, when they have been regenerated and are in full daylight they realise that these were hallucinations. The person who has not been regenerated is like a dreamer; one who has been regenerated is like someone wide awake. In the Word, too, our earthly life is compared to a sleep and our spiritual life to wakefulness.

The wakefulness of consciousness, or spiritual illumination, has a special property which people must use. It enlightens the inner self and pours light into the whole of a person's being. This superior light and standpoint enables one to see everything in the lower and outer self. In this way all the evils, errors, sins, negativities, and iniquities in the external self are seen with great clarity. They cannot be denied or blamed on some other person. Wakefulness or consciousness compels us to accept responsibility for our active evils, and it prompts renewed repentance with much more sincerity than before. To be awake and watchful is a very big thing, and when it is functionally present it opens up new and unexpected dimensions of life.

Students of Swedenborg are earnestly urged to closely examine paragraph 187 in ***Apocalypse Explained***. There they will find a detailed exposition of the significance of being wakeful, and will encounter much practical material relating to sleep and wakefulness. In presenting this material Swedenborg has provided people with

the means of awakening from the mechanical, self-centred sleep of awareness, and being enlightened and transformed by the living truths revealed by the brilliant light of spiritual consciousness.

In the contemporary Western world are millions of people who do not know why they exist. Often they see no purpose in life because they have gullibly accepted the Darwinian or Neo-Darwinian theory of evolution, and accept it as a sound explanation of Organic Life. The several forms of this theory posit a biogenic origin of life from inorganic materials, and a long succession of biological variations due to gene mutations associated with the natural selection of genetic types which are the fittest ones to survive.

This theory insists that evolution is an automatic, mechanical and unstoppable process which operates without aim, direction or purpose. Since the life of the biosphere is supposedly without purpose, then individual organisms, including human beings, have no purpose in being alive. According to the upholders of these pernicious theories there is no future for any person: we are all products of a mechanical process and everything stops at death. Many adherents of evolution theory dogmatically declare there is no God, no heaven, no soul, and that hope for a future spiritual life is merely an *unscientific wish*.

Swedenborg's theological writings are the perfect counter to the materialistic notion that life has no meaning and that death is the end of everything. In the clearest terms he describes life in the spiritual world and assures his readers that death does not destroy the individual. As an astute scientific observer who was well trained in the observation of things, Swedenborg faithfully recorded the states of all kinds of souls in the celestial, spiritual and infernal worlds. These copious descriptions help many people to overcome their fear of death and the unknown, and to develop a more positive attitude towards life and God. More importantly Swedenborg's accounts of heaven and hell lead his readers to realise that if one lives well during earthly life, spiritual happiness follows, but an evil life can lead only to spiritual inadequacy. In the light of this great principle many individuals have learned to review their lives, have sought regeneration, and have discovered how to surrender themselves to the Lord.

Another feature of Swedenborg's work which overcomes the view that life is a meaningless, fortuitous process, is his description of our functional role in the universe. Since we are a form of use, what process does our life serve whilst still in a planetary body? Swedenborg describes this fundamental cosmic process in the ***Arcana Caelestia***:

All goods and truths descend from the Lord and ascend to Him ... Human beings have been so created that the Divine things of the Lord may descend through them down to the ultimates of nature, and from the ultimates of nature may ascend to Him; so that human beings might be a medium that unites the Divine with the world of nature, and the world of nature with the Divine; and that in this way the very ultimate of nature might live from the Divine through humans as the uniting medium.... This is the case if the people had lived according to Divine Order.

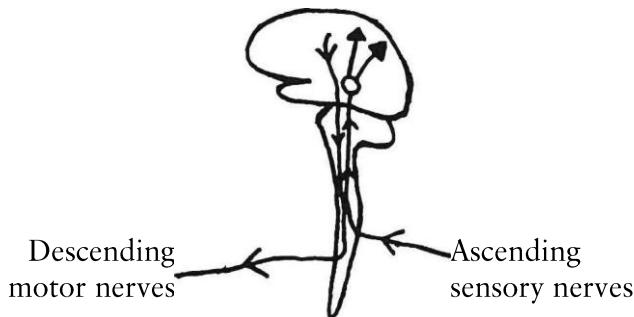
AC 3702

A little later in the same work Swedenborg adds the following:

Only through humankind is there a descent from the heavens into the world, and an ascent from the world to the heavens. It is the brain and its interiors through which the descent and ascent is effected.

AC 4042

Further references can be found elsewhere in ***Arcana Caelestia*** and in ***Divine Love and Wisdom***. The reference to the nervous system is of considerable importance.



If the mind is conscious of its utter dependence on the Lord God for life, love and good, there may arise internal perception of the descending flow of volitions which pass into external services and uses, and perception of the ascending flow of information, data and experience from the world. A truly conscious mind is spiritually awake and is aware of the correspondential nature of the real world. Whatever perceptions of natural things it enjoys, it discerns spiritual, celestial and Divine realities from them. The hand of God is seen in the whole of creation, and in the most minute details of things the meticulous love and care of the Lord is realised. In this and a thousand other ways the awakened, spiritually alive mind refines, sublimates and elevates external perceptions into realised truths and values which become part of the spontaneous worship of the Lord.

In *Heaven and Hell* 356, Swedenborg shows how the proper study of the things of the world and of science can be used to corroborate the things pertaining to faith. He said:

*It is by means of knowledges and insights that we are made spiritual.
These are also the means of becoming wise, but only with those who have acknowledged the Divine in both faith and life.*

This process of becoming wise from the study of external things in the light of goods and truths from the Lord is the means of conjoining earth with heaven and is every person's duty.

Within the limits of this short talk we have time for just one more of Swedenborg's mighty contributions to humankind. This is something of supreme importance because it concerns the nature of God. Throughout the ages human beings have formulated and adhered to a great variety of concepts about the structure, properties and powers of the Divine. They range from an infinite field of indescribable creative energy to a kind of superhuman who generates and maintains the universe, but is ultimately quite mortal. In Hinduism, God as Vishnu periodically dreams the universe into existence, allows its drama to be worked out, and then withdraws it all into himself when he enters into cosmic sleep. In Islam, God or Allah, is the Infinite and Eternal, who is immanent and transcendent, the generator of good, love, wisdom and life. He has no form and is known through His qualities and sacred names. It is the duty of the soul to surrender to God, journey towards God, and to enter into the unity of God.

Swedenborg makes it eminently clear that human beings are quite unable to connect themselves with a formless, infinite and unknown God. As finite creatures we can know God only through a definite Divine Form.

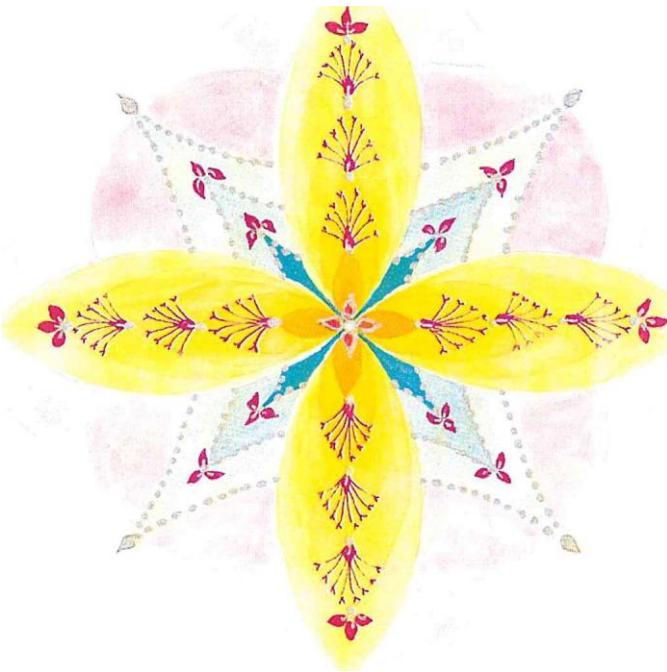
For Swedenborg it is not a question of *what is God?* but rather *who is God?* His answer is firm, crisp and clear. God, the infinite, who is known as Jehovah, is made accessible to human beings as the Lord God. The Lord God is Jesus Christ, the God-Man who is to be directly approached and worshipped. God is One and not three beings as so many Christian theologians insist.

Every person is capable of interacting with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Divine Man, and entering into the most intimate spiritual relationship with Him. Swedenborg sums it all up in the words of celestial angels:

God is Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah the Lord, the creator from Eternity, the Redeemer in time, and the Regenerator for eternity to come.

By means of this great and powerful clarification people can remove from themselves religious and philosophical doubts concerning the nature of God. In relating themselves to the *one knowable Lord God* they can be led, instructed, inspired and transformed so as to enter into conjunction with God and participate in the functions, uses and delights of heavenly life. A thorough study of Chapter 1 of ***True Christian Religion*** will help the mind that still wavers to achieve certainty and confidence in God.

o O o



Wake up; then your dreams will come true

(drawn from Michael Pfleghar)

Swedenborg's View of the Individual



For many centuries learned theologians and philosophers, together with an unknown number of ordinary persons, have accepted a literal description of us which appears in the Bible.

Psalm 8, verses 4, 5, 6 declare:

What is a human being, that you are mindful of them? ...

For you have made them a little lower than the angels ...

You made them to have dominion over the works of your hands;

You have put all things under their feet.

Taken in the external sense, these words seem to indicate that we are somehow poised between the angelic world and the material world; we are less than the angels but far superior to animals, plants and the mineral realm. Of course, the internal or spiritual sense carries a far greater meaning, yet this was not even suspected by those who read the words and formed their own interpretations of their contents. With the rise of modern science and the wide availability of a liberal education, many people have formulated a variety of theories concerning the origin of humans, our biological nature and the significance of the individual. The current scientific and so-called "official" view is that we are the biological product of an immensely long evolutionary process, and are the automatic outcome of this blind, mindless mechanism. According to current theories life started up as the result of certain fortuitous combinations of chemicals on the surface of the early earth. The "fortunate" formation of the self-replicating DNA molecule enabled countless generations of organisms to transmit their genetic patterns to their offspring. With suitable genetic variation and the operation of the relentless process of natural selection, the enormous diversity of organisms we see in the world fanned out and occupied suitable ecological niches. In this completely materialistic presentation there is no reference to God, angels, soul, spirit or even the meaning of life. Such a view tries to tell us that life is opportunistic in its operations, has no goal, and does not endow individuals with even a glimmer of hope for a continuing existence after the death of the body. It must be remembered that millions of minds surrender to the persuasion of evolution theory simply because it is scientific and, to some degree, fashionable.

Swedenborg's view of life, that humankind and the individual is not a theoretical formulation, is based upon a long and ongoing observation of the spiritual universe which was made possible by the Lord God. He wrote about what he saw and not what he imagined. The great virtue of his presentation is that he did not set out merely to explain human existence in terms of biology or psychology, but showed how we are an integral part of the entire universe and are the central actor in the cosmic drama. For Swedenborg, we are the chief dynamic instrument in the psycho-cosmological structure of reality. He insists that human beings are the functional means of maintaining a connection between higher and lower parts of the universe. Because there are discontinuities between the several principal levels of the cosmos, an instrumental means of linking them together is necessary for the preservation of functional wholeness. As Swedenborg explains, we are created to operate as a two-way connection:

Through people alone there is a descent from the heavens into the world and an ascent from the world into the heavens. It is the brain and its interiors through which the descent and ascent is effected.

AC 4042

We note with interest that the nervous system plays a crucial role in this two-way connection.

Anyone who is familiar with the elements of human anatomy knows that the brain sends descending, efferent motor fibres through the spinal cord and spinal nerves to the muscles of the body, and that ascending, afferent sensory fibres arise from sense organs in the body, rise through the spinal cord, and terminate in the brain. Since the body of people is a micro cosmos or little universe, it reflects the pathways and structures of the big universe or macro cosmos. Students should ponder these pathways in their own nervous systems and realise that in them they have a working model of how the macro cosmos operates. Earlier in the *Arcana Caelestia*, Swedenborg provided a more expanded version of the principle which is set forth in the foregoing quotation. He wrote:

For people are so created that the Divine things of the Lord may descend through them to the ultimates of nature, and from the ultimates of nature may ascend to Him; so that people might be the medium that unites the Divine with the world of nature, and the world of nature with the Divine; and that thus the very ultimate of nature might live from the Divine through people as the uniting medium; which would be the case if people had lived according to Divine order . . . Hence it is evident that there would be a descent of the Divine through people into the ultimate of nature and from the ultimate of

nature there would be an ascent to the Divine, if with faith of heart, that is, with love, people would only acknowledge the Lord as their first and last end.

AC 3702

Here we see the tremendous responsibility that is placed upon humans to help bring law, order and harmony into the world by becoming the loving, cooperative instrument of Divine Will. This is one of our huge potentials, but at the present time it is only a remote possibility because some very serious defects have arisen in the human constitution. The disease of "I", which is the narrowed down centredness of the self-loving proprium, dominates mankind and blocks the loving communication of the Lord God which seeks to flow through human beings and terminate in the world. Until people learn how to study their "I"- states and struggle against them, they will never be free from this vile and pathological obstruction to the Divine flux.

So long as people are ruled by their self-loving ego they can never be their true self. Ego-states vary from person to person: in some they are strong, belligerent and offensive; in others they are mild and less troublesome. All persons present themselves to one another through their personalities. Some individuals go to considerable lengths to cultivate personalities which are acceptable and pleasing to others. This is a form of intentional deceit because the artificial personality may conceal motives and intentions of a sinister nature. The term personality is derived from the Latin word *persona*, which means *a mask*. The Greeks used the same word. Originally the *persona* was an actual carved mask which actors in plays held before their faces to indicate the character they represented. The masks helped the audience to keep track of the theme of the play. However, for centuries people everywhere have been manufacturing their own psychological masks, and have employed them to their own advantage. Such masks are devised by the self-loving proprium.

In the modern world there is a large-scale psychological "industry" which is devoted to the cultivation of personality. It is assumed that a brand new, scintillating personality can be made to order in a client in exchange for an appropriate fee. There are hundreds of books and courses which are dedicated to the restructuring of the personality so that a person can present themselves to the world in a more effective manner. Let it be known that from the spiritual point of view the personality is the lowest and most external psychological manifestation of an individual. By artificially cultivating and strengthening this aspect of oneself, individuals automatically shut themselves off from their internal spiritual resources. The personality is not the real individual. As the external mask

which is composed of things, images and impressions borrowed from the surrounding world, personality conceals the essence, the inner being. Essence includes the internal self and the inmost, and is capable of being developed and perfected to an unlimited degree. Since people everywhere live in and through personality, and actually regard it as their whole self, they never realise their buried spiritual potentialities and often reveal no interest in their spiritual dimensions. A person who is identified with a strong, artificial personality can never become an efficient two-way conductor who brings heaven and the world into mutual cooperation and harmony.

Swedenborg had some hard things to say about people who live in a sleep-ridden, selfish and external manner. He showed that they have lost touch with the order and harmony which make up the structure of reality. He declared:

*Human order should be that one should love another as themselves:
but now every one loves themselves more than others, and thus hates
all others.*

AC 637

A little later Swedenborg pointed out that the self-centred proprium is the cause of people's pathological state of existence, and that even at the angelic level the proprium is a monstrosity:

*It has been shown me by living experience that a person and a spirit,
even an angel, in themselves regarded, that is, as to all that is of their
proprium, is but vilest excrement ... These things are their own; these
are their will ... people when born are, among all wild animals and
beasts, the vilest creature living ... Since people are such mere evil and
excrement, it is evident that they can never of themselves rule over
evil ... the Lord alone rules over evil in them and over the hell with
them.*

AC 987

This is not a flattering picture of people and, indeed, as far as their proprium is concerned, places them below the level of wild beasts. They are far removed from what they ought to be, because as was shown earlier they are created as the functional link between heaven and the world. The hardened proprium or ego and its intense self-love cause people to deviate from their proper cosmic role, and the greater the number of self-willed materialistic theories of life they force into existence, the more distantly do they remove themselves from the Creative Cause of all. Since they do not have the power to heal themselves and overcome the terrible evil of malicious self-love, people can follow but one path if they wish to improve their situation. They must learn to surrender their whole being to the Lord God and develop complete trust in His power, wisdom and love. This requires

a complete reversal of the vector-direction of their perverted love. Learning to love God above all things, and loving themselves least of all, can completely alter their life-orientation. When they can move in a new direction they can receive into themselves the most benevolent influences of Divine Love and Wisdom, and undergo regeneration whereby they can enter a new order of life. Then, and only then, can heaven be an active component of their being. When heaven becomes active in a person, its states and qualities can be relayed through them to reach the external world. That person now becomes useful to God and heaven.

People do not readily change the structure and direction of their lives. Among those who say they would welcome a change, very few make the attempt and succeed. The proprium and the personality are so deeply rooted in automatic, unconscious processes that they can be corrected only with much difficulty and in a gradual manner. In these days of living in "*the fast lane*" and always anticipating a "*quick fix*" for their ailments, not many individuals are prepared to patiently work on themselves, struggle against their pathologies and weakness, and open the way for Divine influx to enter their being. Quite a number of people are of the opinion that a daily reading of the Word and an in-depth study of Swedenborg will lead them to heavenly life. This is contrary to what is taught in the Bible and in Swedenborg's theological writings. Swedenborg insists that:

The internal person is not reformed solely by knowing, understanding, and being wise, consequently not by thinking only; but by willing what these teach. When a person knows, understands and has the wisdom to see that heaven and hell exist and that all evil is from hell and all good from heaven, and if they then do not will evil because it is from hell but good because it is from heaven, they have taken the first step in reformation and is on the threshold from hell to heaven. When they advance further and resolve to desist from evils, they are at the second step in reformation and are out of hell but not yet in heaven; this they behold above them. There must be this internal for a person to be reformed, but they are not reformed unless the external is reformed as well as the internal.

DP 151

From this we see that Swedenborg regards the individual as a degenerate being who can easily make the mistake of hoping for salvation by faith alone. Even the highest knowledge of Divine things cannot save a person: until they will into action the truths they have acquired through knowledge, their essential being does not change. And when they learn to use their will correctly, the change takes place in stages and not all at once. It is because considerable patience and long-suffering is required that the Lord declared:

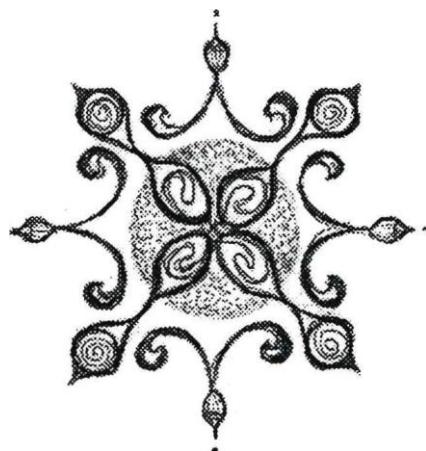
In your patience possess you your souls.

Luke 21:19

A literal translation of the original Greek text reads: *In your endurance you will gain your souls.*

Transformation or rebirth is a very big process. In essence it is the birth of a new life, spiritual life, in the individual. Unregenerate men and women of all types have before them a tremendous and pleasing destiny if they will but apply themselves to self-analysis, self-correction, and regeneration with the help of God. Every individual has a vital part to play in the building and expansion of heavenly life. The individual must wisely and lovingly devote themselves to this supreme end of the creative process for it to become real for them. Without the constant caring action of the Lord God inside a person, not a single thing of regeneration could possibly take place. But the Divine activity must be acknowledged, received, and also reinforced by the individual's will to reject all that is false and evil. The individual is the locus where the astonishing process of rebirth takes place. It does not occur automatically in large communities as though it were some sort of inevitable biological phenomenon. It is an exquisitely personal process that requires the joint activity of God and people, and the person always has the complete freedom to choose this as their way of life.

Many individuals exercise considerable power and authority in the natural world. By virtue of the positions they hold, they are able to exercise a great influence upon the lives of the people whom they employ or lead. If they are gripped by the lust of ruling, and identify with it, they fully expect to maintain such rulership in the next life. Certain of them acquire magical arts in the world of spirits and employ many methods to bring unwary souls under their control. The craving for supereminence eventually leads such beings into their corresponding hell. Leadership based on love, wisdom and charity is a completely different thing, and,



when accompanied by humility and love of God, leads to heavenly bliss. Whatever happens to any person in the next life is always the outcome of the way that person lived, acted, thought, felt and worshipped in this world.

Swedenborg has repeatedly shown that the individual is charged with the responsibility of living in harmony with Divine order. The rules are clear, direct, and readily applied. However, such is the perversion of the human mind or spirit that it savagely turns against its own Divine Source, vehemently denies the existence of God, and assumes that by the clever use of thought and personality it can successfully make its own way through life, and invent all manner of naturalistic explanations for the existence of things. This kind of outlook is very common in the western world, and it is an abuse of Divine Order. It is often affirmed that academic learning enables a person to think wisely and make clear judgements concerning the nature of things. Common opinion holds the view that highly educated, learned persons are the only ones qualified to hold positions of trust and responsibility. This, however, is an unenlightened external view which very often is incorrect. In the spiritual world Swedenborg encountered very many beings who were regarded as learned when they lived in the world. He found that a large proportion of them were quite stupid and had very little spiritual life in them. Concerning such people he recorded the following information in the *Arcana Caelestia*:

The learned believe that the more a man knows, or the more knowledge he possesses, the wiser he is. But that the case is very different has been made evident to me from those in the other life who, when they had lived in the world, had been in scientifcs only, and thereby had gained the name and reputation of being learned, for they are sometimes more stupid than those who have no such skill in scientifcs. The reason of this has been disclosed, namely, that scientifcs are indeed a means of becoming wise, but are also a means of becoming insane. To those who are in the life of good, scientifcs are a means of becoming wise; but to those who are in a life of evil, they are a means of becoming insane.

AC 4156²

It is of interest to note that the Middle English word learn, from which learned is derived, comes from the Teutonic base LIS, *to find out*. Finding out is the process of acquiring the truth of a thing, and this means to discover its origin, its properties, its functions, its uses and its meaning. If there is love of good in the enquiring mind, the search for truth and origin goes right back to the Lord God. When the inner spiritual contents and values of a thing, as well as its outer form and function, are discerned, the mind is enlightened and the understanding is

enriched. Modern academic learning does not follow this path. Instead, the contemporary process of *finding out* is confined to external phenomena only. Explaining all things in terms of other external things such as atoms, protons, electrons and electromagnetic fields is the modern mind game. It completely excludes God and the spiritual universe and bars the way to full enlightenment. There is intellectual cleverness but no wisdom in this process. Furthermore, all these purely external scientific explanations do not improve the quality of the human spirit, and cannot lead to a blessed eternal life.

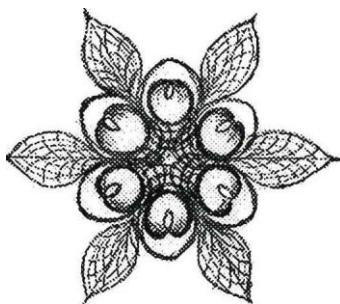
Learned materialists vehemently deny the importance of religion and declare that belief in God is mere superstition. They frequently state that the idea of God is simply an anthropomorphic image which simple-minded people have projected into the sky. Several Russian astronauts, the products of communistic atheism, triumphantly declared they had not seen God whilst they were circling the earth. All these views represent the closed and inverted nature of the proud and learned external mind. And they display complete ignorance of a universal truth which has been known to mankind since the earliest times. The truth is that we are made in the image and likeness of the Lord God. People are therefore a theomorphic representation of the Lord, and are the embodiment of an infinite range of affections, truths, principles, energies, potentials, functions and uses which were collectively drawn into their formation. The anthropomorphists who say that God has been fashioned from the image of people, put the cart before the horse; they resort to such a crude intellectual ruse because their closed, ego-bound minds will never admit that there is a Power greater than themselves. In many places throughout his theological writings, Swedenborg describes how we are a form of heaven and a reflection of the Lord God. He thereby reminds human beings of the fundamental truth regarding their own existence. During their life on the earth, the individual is identified by name, occupation and social position. And so we have, **Judge James Harrow; Mary Copeland, writer; Herbert Barrow, industrialist and millionaire, and Richard Feynman, professor and Nobel Prize winner.** Every individual has some sort of emotional attachment to their name and their position. Personality and proprium are the principal means of forming this attachment. But these are external things which are confined to human society in the material world. No animal or plant is ever impressed by a person's name or title. And in the spiritual and celestial worlds human names and honours count for nothing. Swedenborg points out that human names mentioned in the Word disappear in spiritual realms:

When the literal sense passes into the spiritual, such things as relate to person, place, and the world perish; and those that relate to the church, its state and use therein take their place.

AC 4857²

In the world we are surrounded by finite, natural things, and we think in a natural, literal manner. For us, objects, money, possessions, personality, name, respect and honour are very important, and we may seek them with much vigour. We are unmindful of the fact that inwardly we are a spiritual being who is connected with the spiritual universe. Spirit is as different from personality and the world as is a cathedral from a splinter of wood. It has utterly different dimensions, meanings and values than those which are dominant in the world. Spiritually, personality has no existence and a person is known by their charity, their uses, their love, and their faith. Universal things replace personal ones. Swedenborg explains:

The idea of a person is turned in the internal sense into the idea of a thing ... The reason of this is that in the spiritual world, or in heaven, not persons but things are the subject of reflection, for persons limit the idea, and concentrate it upon something finite; whereas things do not limit it, but extend it to the infinite, thus to the Lord. For this reason also, no person named in the Word is perceived in heaven, but in their stead the thing that is represented by that person; so also no people or nation is perceived, but only its characters ... it is not known who Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Israelitish people, and the Jewish nation were, but it is there perceived what they denote. AC 5225



The transition from planetary life to spiritual life brings about very great changes which include the disappearance of physical space, the evaporation of time, and the annihilation of personality. When any individual lives within the framework of their personality, they subsist on their own private basis. They live from themselves and for themselves. As soon as they die they no longer subsist on their own basis, but on the universal basis of the human race. That is, the individual now lives from and for others and not themselves. The spiritual world carries the major divisions of heaven and hell and one or the other comes into play soon after a person leaves this earth. Foolish people assume that people they dislike are already in hell, while those they favour are said to be in heaven. Swedenborg strongly disagrees with this view and endeavours to set forth the facts of existence. He wrote:

It is impossible for any one in the natural body to be either in heaven or in hell; wherefore in order that man may come into one or the other, it is necessary that he put off his natural body and be judged in the spiritual body.

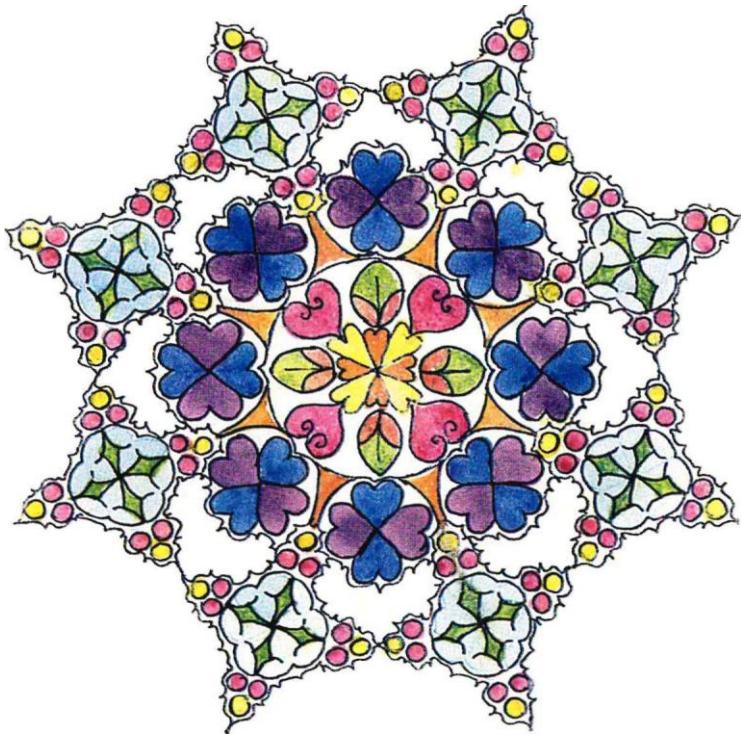
LJ 32

The ancient Egyptians, who belonged to the Ancient Church, understood this principle very clearly. They painted representations of it on the walls of tombs and on religious papyri. Scenes of the Egyptian psychostasia, or weighing of the soul in the Divine Hall of Justice abound in the ancient land. A typical scene shows a great balance in which a feather is weighed against an image of the heart of the deceased person. The ostrich feather in the balance-pan represents Maat, the Goddess who personifies truth and all the right principles which hold creation together. When the heart of the deceased is weighed against the feather of truth, we see an examination of the interiors of the deceased person and an estimation of how well their personal good and truth measure up to Divine Good and Truth. The person who is being judged stands before the balance in the presence of certain gods, and is dressed in white garments. Only a person who is in the spiritual body wears such white garments. This Egyptian scene perfectly illustrates Swedenborg's statement that a person is *judged in the spiritual body* and not whilst still in the physical body. Such a judgement is necessary because it determines the fitness of a person to blend with a community of beings with which they have inner affinity.

As a member of a spiritual community, whether of a hellish or heavenly nature, a person surrenders what they regard as their own and quite automatically expresses the collective views and opinions of the community. The person's earth name, position, and fame completely disappear in the spiritual world and they are identified by the spiritual things of charity, use, service, wisdom, love and truth. Heavenly life leaves no room for private phantasies, a selfish proprium, or irrational, self-willed impulses. Such lowly states can only serve the narrow interests and passions of an egotistic, earth-bound individual. Heavenly life is concerned with the welfare of all beings, their happiness, and their mutual harmony. The wasteful, self-centred pursuits of the person are replaced by universal principles and attitudes which concern the well-being and wholesomeness of the entire human race.

This important view of the individual, which is presented by Emanuel Swedenborg is one that we should seriously ponder, take to our hearts, cherish and apply to life: it is a valuable key to our transformation whereby we are changed from natural beings to spiritual beings, or from animals to angels.

o O o



Humans are like stained glass windows: their true beauty only shines forth when they are illuminated from inside

(drawn from Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross)

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF SWEDENBORG'S PSYCHOLOGY

Or

The Welfare Of The Soul



The study of Spiritual Psychology is an interesting and challenging pursuit which can have far-reaching consequences in our lives. Indeed, the whole course of personal life may be altered when new concepts and methods are introduced into the psyche. The opening up of the mind to high spiritual possibilities is a big undertaking, and the interested individual should learn to proceed with vigilance and reason. It is important to distinguish between what is true and false in the field of Spiritual Psychology, and to strive to make use of teachings and procedures that promote what is good, true, useful and harmonious. As we shall see later, there are various psycho-spiritual systems which promise much but provide little real help, and even deflect the enthusiastic student away from the path of growth and regeneration. There is an important way in which Spiritual Psychology differs from most contemporary schools of Clinical Psychology. It is the aim of the psychotherapist to help the client to move out of the anguish and confusion of neurosis, and return to a state of "normalcy". Therapy may involve an analytical exploration of the unconscious with the hope of uncovering and resolving conflicts, anxieties, hostilities and other maladaptive states. Facing up to and accepting these buried problems is thought to give relief from psychological difficulties. Alternatively, there may be a restructuring of behaviour patterns so that the patient may enjoy a happier relationship with the world. All too often this psychological restoration is an adaptation to the current standards of contemporary society, where the patient becomes like other people; it is to become normal or average, and that means to be mediocre.

Psychotherapy focuses upon the patient; it is often a first-aid process which patches up the person, makes them feel better, and helps them to relate to other people. The Spiritual Psychology which runs through the whole of Swedenborg's theological writings is very different from all this. It is not a person-centred system, but a God-centred reality, the Lord God. By means of sound Spiritual Psychology the individual is brought into a conscious affectionate

relationship with the Lord, and learns to see the Lord as their source and support. From this there should be no going back to the old habits and attitudes of self-centred existence.

Instead of the former somnambulistic modes of thought, feeling and behaviour, there is now available a new set of God-generated concepts and truths on which to build invigorating levels of experience, discovery, realisation and insight. This is something which most forms of clinical psychology fail to do. While modern psychology does help disturbed persons to achieve a return to normal life, there is no follow through for the sake of helping these people to awaken and develop the hidden, inner dimensions of their being - even though they may hunger and thirst for better things. There are many practising psychologists who never admit spiritual principles into their work, and even declare that concepts like soul, God or consciousness are fallacies. In a reductionist manner they interpret all mental phenomena in terms of brain cell activity, the action of neurotransmitters and the play of hormones. They refuse to concede the possibility that there may be greater realities which excitingly invite sensitive individuals to open themselves up to finer influences, and to establish new relationships with the spirit of the universe. This professional attitude is unfortunate because it discourages many people from growing into a larger life. It is likely that every living individual feels the need for a relationship with something which is stable, fulfilling, comforting and uplifting. Because of this need, some persons try to find immediate satisfaction in alcohol, drugs, sex and aberrant behaviour. Others become involved with strange cults and weird practices. These, of course, are groping attempts to fill the inner sense of void, and to procure a feeling of security. Millions of people do not know the way to integration and stability, and pass through life in an incomplete state. Those who have access to the theological writings of Swedenborg, and are thereby enabled to look into the depths of the Word of God, also have available to them a practical Spiritual Psychology which can help them to undergo a major internal transformation or rebirth.

Among the various ideas presented by Swedenborg we find a number of parallels in modern systems of thought. While still a medical student, Carl Jung made a study of the *Arcana Caelestia* and read the major part of this massive work. He was undoubtedly influenced by this contact with the theological writings because in his later works we encounter many references to regeneration, contrition and repentance. Jung's book on Psychology and Alchemy is filled with spiritual concepts, arcane truths and esoteric principles that are similar to Swedenborg's ideas. Jung's profound study of symbols, and his notion of archetypes as formative patterns in the mind which help to shape the outer life, is very close to the representations and correspondences that are so

prominent in Swedenborg's theological works. One of Jung's students, Dr. Maurice Nicoll, a very able psychiatrist, became dissatisfied with the limitations of psychology and psychiatry, and set out on a search for the meaning of life. He studied ancient philosophy and oriental religion, and then formed a long association with P. D. Ouspensky and G. Gurdjieff, two prominent exponents of esoteric psychology. During this period Nicoll encountered the *Arcana Caelestia* and was deeply affected by its contents. He wrote a number of books on psychological topics, including *The Mark* and *Living Time* which contain Swedenborg material, and his outstanding work is *The New Man* - a study of Christ's parables and miracles from the viewpoint of correspondences and psychological symbols. *The New Man* is delightful to read and certainly enhances one's appreciation of Swedenborg.

There are fringe areas of Psychology which present ideas and methods that have little in common with reformation and rebirth. Indeed, the fringe field is very big and may be described as a type of psycho-spiritual technology. It has become quite strong and exists in many parts of the world as a multi-million dollar "industry". It partly depends on the fact that all people have within themselves a homing instinct which seeks to lead them back to the Creative Source of Life; they feel the stirring of this instinct but do not know the direction in which to move. Hence they come to rely upon the fringe systems as a means of being guided towards spiritual development. Strange pursuits such as past-lives therapy to release the soul for spiritual advancement, aura reading, chakra balancing, Camelot power or the effort to develop the siddhis, are widely available.

Siddhi is a Sanskrit word which refers to mystic powers such as fulfilling all desires without opposition, assuming any shape or form, creating or annihilating things at will, and the exercise of total control over all material objects. Courses are offered for instruction in these topics, and all over the world people flock to them in great numbers with the hope that their lives will be miraculously changed. Quite often these courses are weekend workshops or seminars lasting for a few weeks. What people fail to realise is that it has taken half a life-time to reach the disorganised state in which they find themselves, and it is simply not possible to correct and overcome this state in a few easy lessons. External aims and external methods cannot change internal disorder. The emotional excitement of pursuing a new and exotic interest can never be a substitute for honest and sincere self-examination and the effort to establish conjunction with the Lord God. Humans are strange in their willingness to spend time and money on the search for miraculous and supernormal phenomena, and yet avoid the direct task of putting their own being in order. In many circumstances, people

pursue the occult, the supernatural and the psychic because they have a hidden wish to be the possessors of secret powers and rare knowledge that will give them a sense of being superior to their fellow men and women. There are some who even seek to employ thaumaturgic techniques to influence and control other people. Here, indeed, we see the proprium working at full blast in the effort to prove that "I" am better than the rest of mankind. Stupid and even sinister motives often stand behind the pursuit of these unusual teachings. There is false security in the search for power through fragmentary systems of thought.

To work on oneself, in the light of sound spiritual doctrine, so as to achieve correction of defects and reorientation towards heavenly goals, is highly desirable. It takes time and ongoing effort to achieve this aim, and patience is required. Patience is very interesting, and is much more than a state of calmly enduring discomfort or suffering. It is an increased dimension of the mind which provides room for the emergence and action of Divinely aroused affections and truths, and by means of these affections and truths one is able to struggle against old mechanical thoughts, attitudes and negative habits. With additional space in the mind, one is able to more fully explore and resist what is seen to be false and to enjoy and be strengthened by the good and the true given from Above. While patience does extend through time in an outer sense, its great potency lies in the fact that as an inner dimension of the mind it opens up a path to eternity. Patience is not mere passive toleration of difficulties but an active response to the knowledge of how to live in harmony with the Divine laws of Creation. Those who are impatient and seek immediate miraculous results for their efforts never grow this greater psycho-spiritual dimension in their being. Ordinary people who drift through life, without giving a thought to the nature and wonder of existence, dwell within a very small subjective world of their own making. Since they hardly ever sense or observe the flow of life through themselves, they barely know that they are alive. They simply exist, and their existence consists largely of responses to the stimuli and pressures provided by their surroundings. For many such people, the words of language are merely terms of reference to things, events and states, and it is rare for them to ponder and seek out deeper meanings which stand behind speech. Indeed, in ordinary life most of us employ many words without really attending to their signification. When we hear such terms as *reality*, *spirit*, *soul*, *Divine* and *Lord* we nod our heads in agreement as though we fully understand what they imply. Here, we ought to challenge ourselves and ask what we truly comprehend about these key-words. Just what does divinity signify in a fuller sense; what are the inner and outer reaches of reality, and how tangible and vivid is one's experience of the soul? All too often we fail to discern the metaphorical, symbolic properties of

words, and so miss the deeper things that stand behind them. We humans are the prisoners of words, especially when we adhere to their surface meanings and connotations. We also overlook the fact that the structure of a word is very different from the subjective thought or state that caused it to be uttered. A person who is ill or has suffered a shock struggles hard to find suitable words so that they may describe their sensations and feelings to their physician. There are times when words are quite inadequate for the communication of a moving internal experience. A small, but useful, transformation can be initiated into our lives by making ourselves become more conscious of the words we employ in speech. By paying attention to each word we use, sensing its quality and appreciating its outer and inner meaning, we begin to communicate more effectively and with greater economy of speech. We say less, but in the words that are spoken there is a wealth of meaning and feeling. Swedenborg declared that on one occasion when they were praying and saying the Lord's Prayer, they began to concentrate upon the meaning of every word; an inner part of their being was opened to a great influx of meaning and they felt themselves to be elevated into a spiritual state. To a lesser degree, something like this happens to us when we give conscious attention to the words of prayer.

Conscious prayer sets up reverberations in our inner self in such a way that we telepathically communicate with the Divine. **Telepathy** is an inner function or process. Telepathy is derived from the Greek roots *tele* - far off, and *pathy* - *feeling*. It is not so much a transfer of thoughts as it is a transfer of feeling states, of affections. If prayer arises from deep, reverent affections then these inward states of love are made known to the Lord God. We cannot help but telepathically broadcast our most secret states, and therefore we ought to work on ourselves with diligence to purify our inner being and stop telling the world what fools we are. To care for the welfare of the soul is the finest form of Spiritual Psychology. Since psyche means *soul* then Psychology is properly the science of the soul, and for us this is more meaningful than the scholarly view that Psychology is the study of mental phenomena or behaviour. As living souls we require a Spiritual Psychology that is real and true, and that will help us on our way towards conjunction with the Lord. An effective Spiritual Psychology may help us to become more truly alive and conscious throughout our being, but we often have trouble with consciousness.

Under the ordinary conditions of life we take it for granted that we possess or enjoy consciousness. However, careful examination of daily life compels us to confess that we are not always as conscious as we believe. We perform many complex activities like driving a car, manipulating an instrument, or walking along a road without being fully aware of what we are doing. A remarkable

automaticity enables us to do many things without our concentrated awareness. We assume that when we awaken in the morning we are conscious. This is a false assumption. Merely opening the eyes does not flood us with consciousness, because consciousness requires attention, a sharpened state of alertness, vigilance and keenness of perception. If we are truly conscious we would not have an unconscious mind, because everything in us would be internally illuminated, seen and known. Our lack of a steady state of consciousness is illustrated by a certain minister of religion who prayed before the altar of his church each morning. He suffered from a mild form of diabetes and, in his prayers, repeatedly asked God to remove this ailment. Gradually the prayer became automatic and continued this way for a considerable length of time. One morning, during prayer, he noticed himself ask the Lord to cure his diabetes. The man stood up in a stunned state because he realised that his diabetes had cleared up two years previously! That minister was ashamed to discover the non-conscious, mechanical nature of his prayer. However, the case of the minister is not unique: we all sleep within ourselves a great deal of the time and become forgetful of our most essential being-duties. From its word-roots consciousness means *knowing together*, which is seeing and knowing everything in oneself. Do we know all of our negative states? Are we aware of evil impulses lurking in the shadowy places of the mind? Do we sense the presence of the Divine?

With the full illumination of consciousness we could experience these things, but in our usual state we do not have this inner light. Ordinarily we are quite unaware of what our kidneys are doing at any given moment, and do not know what actions the liver is performing. Putting it bluntly, in the absence of consciousness, we do not know ourselves at all. Even with our speech we do not exercise consciousness, and there are times when we hear things come out of our mouths and we think, *What on earth made me say that?*. The psychological study of speech, thought and behaviour has shown that large regions of our mental life lie outside our small patch of awareness. This shadowy region is the unconscious, and it has attracted the attention of many investigators including Freud, Jung and Ken Wilbur. It seems that we have more unconsciousness in us than consciousness. In ancient spiritual teachings people who were lacking in consciousness were said to be in a state of *sleep*. In the *Apocalypse Explained*, paragraph 1006, Swedenborg is quite specific about this. He wrote that when people are enlightened from the Lord, they are awake or conscious, but when enlightened from themselves, they are asleep or without consciousness. All this is very clear, yet we often fail to respond to the impact of the truth concerning ourselves. Now let us consider this point: in order to maintain the immense universe the Lord God exercises total consciousness to keep everything under

His survey. Total consciousness or omniscience enables the Divine to know everything taking place on all levels, in all worlds, in all forms of existence and in all finite minds. Unless total knowledge, consciousness and loving presence were there, the universe would fall into disorder. But the universe is order and is like the expression of an immense divine idea. Everything that exists is consciously planned and executed, and all things are harmonised by the persistent, gentle operations of Divine Love. Divine consciousness governs the operations of reality, but sleeping people hardly know what is happening inside and around them.

In our embodied state each of us is a miniature cosmos. Many times in the theological writings, Swedenborg points out that people are a microcosm. Just as the Lord God is conscious of the whole of His creation, the megacosmos, so we humans should be responsibly conscious of our little universe, the microcosm. Here, indeed, is a tremendous challenge to ourselves: to strive to be conscious of our life and thereby achieve a deeper, richer and more meaningful insight and state of self-understanding. Our duty is to work upon ourselves in co-operation with the Lord for the generation of a conscious soul - a fully developed spirit that can be of genuine cosmic use to God. The question is: *How do we go about this process of development?* Those who study Swedenborg's theological writings will find an abundance of material that will help them to alter subjective attitudes, expand their vision of spiritual possibilities, deepen their faith, arouse their spirit of charity, and encourage them to seek what is good, true, loving and beautiful. In addition, there are simple steps to be taken that can lead to an increase of our awareness. Following the example of Swedenborg, who employed breathing techniques during his search for the soul, we can make use of our respiratory process in a pleasant and profitable manner. This has nothing to do with the breathing techniques of Yoga where one inhales through one nostril to so many pulse beats, holds the breath for another period of pulse beats, and then exhales out of the other nostril. The method suggested here is much gentler. It simply consists of making ourselves notice the act of breathing. In daily life we rarely experience any awareness of our respiratory activities. Only when we climb stairs, walk up a steep hill, run to catch a bus or carry home a load of shopping from the supermarket do we become aware of deepened or laboured breathing. Normally, breathing is such a gentle process that we remain unaware of it. When we remind ourselves to observe and study our respiration several times a day, we start making interesting discoveries about ourselves. Gradually we begin to appreciate this quiet, beautiful flow of air into and out of the lungs, and learn to notice the subtle change-over from in-breathing to out-breathing and vice-versa. We further notice how inflowing air fills the lungs and causes them to embrace

the heart. We should think of the correspondences of the heart and lungs and feel these correspondences at work. Repeatedly noticing the breathing process leads to internal psychological changes, and many people report that their thoughts are clearer and the emotions are calmer. Learning to be conscious of breathing is a valuable step towards becoming conscious of our whole being. It is worth following up this work on breathing by searching through the Word for all references to this process. The use of a Bible concordance is helpful in tracking down these resources. The Lord God breathed the breath of life into man, the Lord breathed on His disciples, and the breath of Shaddai which gives understanding are but a few of the many correspondential utterances in the Word which concern this most important process. Learning to be active in connection with our inner lives is vital, and we ought to compel ourselves to do as well as think. Swedenborg pointed out that we should not be like people who stand passively with arms hanging down and waiting for God to do everything for them. We were created to be active and effective. We possess a marvellously arranged muscular system for movement, and a complex nervous system to integrate and harmonise our activities. There are internal organs which generate energy to be applied in a multitude of ways. We need to be fully awake, eager, dynamic and capable of useful activity as well as being able to think rationally and feel the good of life. But if forgetfulness and sleep creep into our lives, there is a terrible falling away from the abundance of creation.

The sleep that affects non-vigilant people is far more widespread than we imagine. Sleep is to be immersed in one's own affairs and to ignore or reject everything which proceeds from the Lord. To be asleep spiritually is to be unconscious of the creative loving nature of life, to be unaware of the high potentials sown in us from Above, and to be blind to the harmonious reciprocal relationships which can be developed between ourselves and everything around us. Wars are declared and waged by people in a state of inner sleep. Soldiers in a state of sleep march behind the bugle and drum to perform what they feel is their duty. Sleeping people join peace movements and sometimes become violent in their protests against war. Other people conduct business transactions, carry out research work, write books and act out political roles in a state of sleep. Mankind is in a terrible predicament because there is so little wakefulness, such a paucity of consciousness of eternal values, abiding truths and spiritual responsibilities. If this seems to be a tough analysis of human beings just recall what the Lord said to people who gathered round Him. He called them hypocrites and fools. He said that they were children of the devil and that their hearts were hardened. He declared they were dead and likened them to sepulchres filled with bones. *Why were such harsh things said?* It was because

the Lord sought to stir, shock and awaken people out of their useless state of sleep and begin to live the more abundant life He had provided for them. We too, in this present age need to be shaken into the consciousness of what life is all about, and begin to involve ourselves in the divine cosmic process of generating conscious, loving souls. Those who have the Word, and the theological writings which unfold some of the inner dynamics of the Word, have a flying start on the way to spiritual cleansing and perfecting. They have access to the knowledge and practical know-how of the activation and regeneration of the total contents of their lives. We are reminded of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of bones and how, under the power of prophecy or Divine instruction, the bones joined together, were covered with skin and received the breath of life. It is a dramatic picture of the reconstitution of human beings who were not only asleep, but spiritually dead. Moreover, it is not an image that was to be applied to a handful of Gentiles, but is a universal and timeless representation of the human situation. All of us can be so affected by these stimulating and challenging teachings that we can make real efforts to become conscious of the truths, goods, uses and potentialities which can flow into our lives. Each one of us has a unique way of receiving these things and the light of illumination from the Lord God, and that is the beauty of individuality. Despite our differences, it is the one love, life, wisdom and power which enters every individual and provides each with a sense of significance and value. The effort to awaken from the sleep state has many practical advantages which can place us in a better position of self-control. From time to time we do various things in a quite automatic way and may give vent to negative emotions. Later, when we look back in retrospect, we experience remorse for our blind and unchecked manifestations. With increased consciousness the time element can be shortened so that we see the quality of negative states at the instant of their arising within us, and not some time after they have become manifest. Immediate perception of negative risings means they can be instantly checked, and with the development of this ability a person reaches a turning point in his or her life. When we can repeatedly and consistently block the automatic arising of evil impulses and thoughts, because we have the consciousness which enables us to perceive these things, then a change enters the psyche and a new state of calmness and peace becomes evident.

The thoroughgoing Spiritual Psychology which is presented in the theological writings enables us to come to grips with, and resolve, any problem of self. The feeling of self is a subjective experience which all of us have, and it is very difficult to precisely describe it in the ordinary language of daily life. By sheer habit we refer to this self by means of the personal pronoun, "I". "I", for each

one of us, represents our identity, who and what we are, and indeed, our whole being. We employ "I" as a part of speech for the convenience of self-reference. "I" seems to be a compact summary of our whole life. When "I" is dropped from speech the personal element in communication apparently disappears.

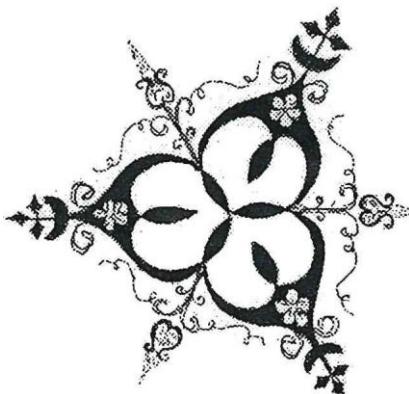
A young man who is currently overseas writes letters to me in which he tries to avoid the use of the personal pronoun. These dull letters are filled with such phrases as: *A cafe was entered and a pleasant meal was enjoyed; An awkward fall produced a pain in the right arm; and An informative lecture was attended and notes were taken*. While this man's efforts were valiant and sincere, it is not the way to overcome the tyranny of the proprium. Fresh insights and a big change in self-attitude are called for in the restructuring of our lives, and it is important to see what stands behind the term "I". Consider, first of all, the term atom. The concept has been around for a long time and has been represented by means of various models, diagrams and mathematical equations. Chemists and physicists have presented much evidence to confirm the material existence of atoms. In recent years the Field Ion Microscope has provided visual demonstration of the presence and arrangement of atoms in a number of metals. Behind the word atom stands a highly organised, objective and substantial structure. However, a similar objective structure does not stand behind the word "I". The term is not rooted in a substantial reality, and is a false image we have of ourselves. Thorough self-examination in the light of consciousness shows that at deeper psychological levels the sense of "I" is dispersed into a restless world of changing feelings, diverse impulses, a variety of moods, and a complex mixture of memories, thoughts, and sensations. The apparent identity and stability of our natural, external life, where "I" reigns supreme, sits on the shifting sands of restless psychological states. We have difficulty in locating our sense of "I". Some people feel it in the chest, others in the head, and a few declare it is outside themselves. Trying to track down the exact nature of "I"-ness is like pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp light over marshy ground, yet in daily life we treat it as being a firm and enduring part of our existence. The only real "I" that exists in the universe is the divine **I AM THAT I AM (Exodus 3:14)**. Only the Lord has the right to say "I". Whatever sense of "I"-ness we have in ourselves is borrowed from the Divine and then claimed as our own property. It is a false issue to assume that we have a substantial something in us we call "I". Careful study shows that our "I" is not stable, but is changing all the time. The "I" that feels happy is not the "I" that feels miserable; the "I" which declares *I love you* is certainly not the "I" that says, *I hate you*, and the "I" which is angry is very different from the "I" that shows pity. There is not one "I" in our makeup but a legion of them, and each one seeks to rule our being. They are

some of the components of the evil and false proprium. In the Spiritual Psychology presented by Swedenborg it is urged that we struggle against the evil proprium and dissociate ourselves from it so that a higher proprium can be generated in us by God. *How can we do this?*

By sheer force of habit we humans identify ourselves with every passing state in the psyche. When a state of psychological depression occurs, we connect ourselves with it by declaring, *I am depressed*. Later in the day we notice hunger pangs in the stomach and say, *I am hungry*. This process goes on without end and we find ourselves entangled in the automatic flow of thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately, each time we identify with a mood or emotion we become the prisoner of those states and lose power to them. This occurs without our noticing it because we lack the consciousness to see what is taking place. If we care to pay attention to our lives we can exercise a vigilance which will stop us from putting "I" into internal states, and will thereby dissolve useless identifications. Let us suppose that for some reason a state of unhappiness arises. Ordinarily, we identify with it and say, *I am unhappy*. We then suffer the unhappiness for some time and are dominated by it. This circumstance can be prevented in the following way. We must look at the unhappiness and see that it is a state of mind. As soon as we observe it we must declare *Here is a state of unhappiness. It will pass. But while it is here I shall not step into it and be overwhelmed by its negative energies. I shall simply observe the unhappiness and remain aloof from it.* To practise this process regularly increases our consciousness and releases us from the adverse effects of negative states. It can also be applied to pain, general discomfort and other sensations. There are some Yogis who live above the snow line in the Himalayas. Photographs show that they are quite naked. Without any protective clothing they walk over snow-covered slopes and live at a great height. Perhaps they have learned to avoid internal entanglement with the feeling of being cold, and even find comfort in the warmth generated by spiritually-directed affections. To be liberated from putting the sense of " I" into transient feelings is to enter into a new state of internal freedom. We are no longer bound by the mechanical bonds of the proprium in this particular manner. While we are still not free from the proprium, we are less affected by its self-concern, its demands and its habits. Identification is the process of allowing ourselves to become connected and unified with inferior and trouble-making psychological states. When we strive to not permit identification to occur, in the manner described above, we generate in ourselves more psychological space for the reception of regenerative influences and energies from the Lord. We also develop the capacity to see

ourselves more clearly and honestly, and being able to recognise what we are paves the way towards repentance and rebirth.

Swedenborg wrote at some length about repentance in his book ***True Christian Religion***. The chapter on *Repentance* is a very powerful aspect of applied Spiritual Psychology. Indeed, a great deal of the science of practical Spiritual Psychology is contained in that remarkable work. If we really read that book with consciousness and understanding, apply the teachings to ourselves, and live the truths and goods indicated as fully as possible then we have almost everything we need to bring about transformation of our lives. The section dealing with Repentance is highly significant, and Swedenborg points out that the regeneration and renewal of life cannot take place until repentance has really been lived through. We have to see our sins and false beliefs, honestly condemn ourselves on account of these sins and falsities, and then make sterling efforts to put them away forever. Behind the principle of repentance there are other related processes which are worth taking into account. In the Greek text of the New Testament the word which is translated into English as *repent* is metanoia. Greek-English lexicons tells us that metanoia means *a change of mode of thought and feeling; repentance*. From this we learn that for repentance to take place it is necessary to change the way we think and feel. This is a helpful idea, but it does not go far enough. An examination of the word-roots of metanoia helps us to grasp something deeper and more practical. Metanoia is resolved into meta - after or beyond, and nous - mind; hence metanoia in a deeper sense suggests going beyond the mind. If we understand the mind to be our ordinary, everyday mentation, then it is the external or natural mind we are talking about. This is the mind that is glued to the senses, often mechanical and automatic in its operations and habitually asleep. If we are to be transformed we must learn to go beyond this mind and find an inner process which is more rational, wiser and sensitive to the finer things of good and truth. Now we can make the effort to lift ourselves above the ordinary states that accompany daily existence by trying to sense the delight of life itself as it flows through our being. Swedenborg made it clear on many occasions that we humans are created to be recipients of life. If we believe this then we must consciously know it, feel it and be energised by it. Such an effort introduces us into new states of thought, feeling and perception, and enables us to begin to understand what we formerly accepted in a passive manner. Metanoia or repentance enables us to transcend the more superficial and error-prone sense-based mind, and discover the vivifying and illuminating qualities of the influx of life which proceeds from the Lord.



Transformation or change of being is one of the remarkable aspects of creation. As living organisms we are not mere automata which simply exist like inflexible machines and then die. We are bundles of possibilities which the Creator has lovingly sown into our essence so that we can experience the joy of discovering new talents, skills and capacities, and thereby grow and change in all manner of exciting and useful ways. The universe is so abundantly filled with truths that not a day should pass without our enjoyment of fresh insights and the thrill of new discoveries. Every thing around us is a kind of hieroglyph whose outer form declares its nature and function, and whose internal essence displays the array of laws, principles, truths and goods which brought it into being. By looking towards and affectionately appreciating the inwardness of the things and people around us, we can change into sensitive and alert beings who inwardly gaze in wonder at the panorama of creation. How little is our appreciation of the enormous creative labour the Lord exercised in bringing forth this stupendous universe in which we dwell. To deeply contemplate this fact can change many things in us. Before the might of God we are trivial and helpless. Yet there are some people who are so smitten with egotism and vanity that they try to sweep aside all ideas of a Reality greater than themselves, and audaciously assume that their theories and equations completely "explain" how everything came to exist. These nullities, who take such pride in their mental cleverness, are totally unable to create a flea or even a grain of dust. There are others who accept the idea of God as Creator of the universe, and assume that because God is omnipotent He will fulfil every whim, wish and demand of any person. Their attitude seems to be: *If God has put me here then He can look after my needs.*

Swedenborg is very firm about this erroneous attitude and insists that we must personally struggle to make our way through life, to resist evil and to aspire to grow towards the Lord. We must do it as though from ourselves, yet inwardly recognise that it is the affirming power, the love and the wisdom of the Lord,

which makes the struggle possible. Positive action can lead to change, and a very desirable change is to be able to leave this world as a more enriched and developed soul than we entered it. The whole universe is in a state of dynamic activity so that all things can exercise their functions and uses, and we should also participate in this universal activity in order to bring our services and uses into satisfying and meaningful application. By observing arrogance, laziness, ignorance and even silliness in others we can learn to try and avoid those very things in ourselves, because they are impediments to a full and useful life. And by observing the endless activity of stellar radiation, atomic vibrations, tidal movements, the sequence of day and night, and so on, we can learn to engage ourselves in the whole cosmic process of world-building and soul-making with spontaneity, happiness and enthusiasm. The world is filled with correspondences and is like a vast three-dimensional Bible. We can learn to read these correspondences and introduce into ourselves a deeper sense of connectedness with spiritual resources. Our very bodies are veritable maps and blue-prints of the inner life and indicate the manner in which the inward Divine operation sustains life, preserves integrity and engenders new modes of transformation. Flow-charts of bio-chemical transformations outwardly proclaim the flux of spiritual energies which activate billions of cellular processes; these not only maintain the organic body, but provide energy-fields through which outer and inner things come into correspondent relationship. The histological arrangement and packing of cells, fibres and fluids, as seen under the microscope, suggest to us the orderly arrangement of living truths and vibrant goods which go to make up the body of the spirit. The intricate details of the world can reflect into our consciousness an endless continuum of revealing and uplifting spiritual truths, if we care to look.

Not infrequently we overlook the significance of things because they are commonplace and seemingly trivial. Dreams are a case in point. Dreaming is a very common process and every person dreams every night, whether aware of the process or not. Over the last 20 years scientists have become very interested in dreaming as a psycho-physiological phenomenon, and have made some fascinating discoveries. Electrodes attached to the scalp are connected with an electroencephalograph which amplifies the electrical activity of cerebral cortex cells and translates it into squiggles on a long sheet of graph paper. This enables the brain waves to be recorded and studied. States of wakefulness, relaxation, drowsiness, deep sleep and dreaming are accompanied by characteristic patterns of brain waves. It is easy to tell when a person is dreaming because the brain waves change and the eyes display rapid movement. Studies carried out with thousands of subjects show that dreaming is a necessary function of life.

Every night when we are asleep there is a period of about 90 minutes of deep dreamless sleep which is followed by approximately 30 minutes of dreaming. Then follows another period of deep sleep and a successive state of dreaming. Several distinct phases of dreaming occur to all of us each night. Because experimenters can tell when a subject is beginning to dream, they found that by awakening a person briefly at the start of each dream cycle it was possible to prevent dreaming from taking place. When this dream deprivation was continued for several days, subjects displayed nervous and physiological symptoms and signs. There were irregularities in the frequency and force of the heart-beat; appetite was disturbed; weight loss occurred in some cases, and nervous symptoms were common. These disturbances cleared up when the subjects were allowed to dream without interruption. The cycle of deep sleep and dreaming is just as important to us as the cycle of heart-beat and the cycle of breathing. Since the physiology of dreaming is an inbuilt characteristic of life, what can be said about the contents of dreams?

Those of us who have read Swedenborg's ***Journal of Dreams*** will realise that dreams were very useful to him. They provided valuable insights into the processes and problems in his psyche when he was undergoing his transformation. It was necessary for Swedenborg to examine his dreams, recognise their symbolic nature, and reach conclusions about the processes at work in his mind. The Word contains various illuminating dreams which form part of the ongoing Divine communication. Throughout the ages saintly people in all religions have described and recorded dreams which provided them with inspiration and instruction. Many Sufi teachers will make important decisions only after they have had three successive dreams about the matter under consideration. A great deal of modern psychotherapy makes extensive use of dreams as a means of uncovering inner difficulties, and Freud declared that *Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious mind*. Psychologists recognise that dreams have a hidden psychological content, and by uncovering this material and consciously working through it the mental health of the dreamer can be improved. Swedenborg uncovered psychological, spiritual and Divine components in his dreams and was able to employ them usefully in acquiring clearer self-understanding and a broader vision of reality. Now dreams can be helpful to us if we take notice of them and seek to understand their nature. By recording dreams in a note-book over a period of time, it will be found that some dreams will amplify, extend and develop the themes of earlier dreams. Other dreams may have a stimulating effect and promote feelings of encouragement and optimism.

Still others may contain self-corrective meanings. Most important of all, dreams are expressed in the language of correspondences and they have an internal content which ought to be unravelled, brought forth and applied to life. Through dreams the Divine can gently enter a person's life and indicate new pathways of thought and action, or show how certain unresolved psychological difficulties can be handled and transformed. The Lord seeks to reach every individual in as many ways as possible, and it is the duty of the individual to exercise sensitivity to the influx and then behave accordingly. Whether in the symbolism of vision and dream or through gentle indications during prayer, meditation or inner stillness, the Divine wills us to receive and enjoy the more abundant life. It is ours to experience if we are willing and able to accept it.

We shall now briefly consider two dreams drawn from psychological literature in order to indicate some of their correspondences but without going into the details of interpretation. A certain man was passing through an emotional crisis in which he was re-appraising his personal status. After experiencing a number of dreams he reported the following. He was walking over bare ground and noticed a round object some distance away. Upon approaching it he was disgusted to find that it was a human skull, and prepared himself to kick it out of the way. Just before he kicked at it, the skull suddenly changed into a beautiful woman's head. Whilst he stared at the head it changed into a magnificent red sphere which radiated light from itself. Here is a series of progressive transformations from lifeless skull (which the dreamer rejects by wanting to kick it) to a living head and then to a magnificent red sphere which beams forth light. The interested reader who has a knowledge of correspondences will find some illuminating significations in this dream.

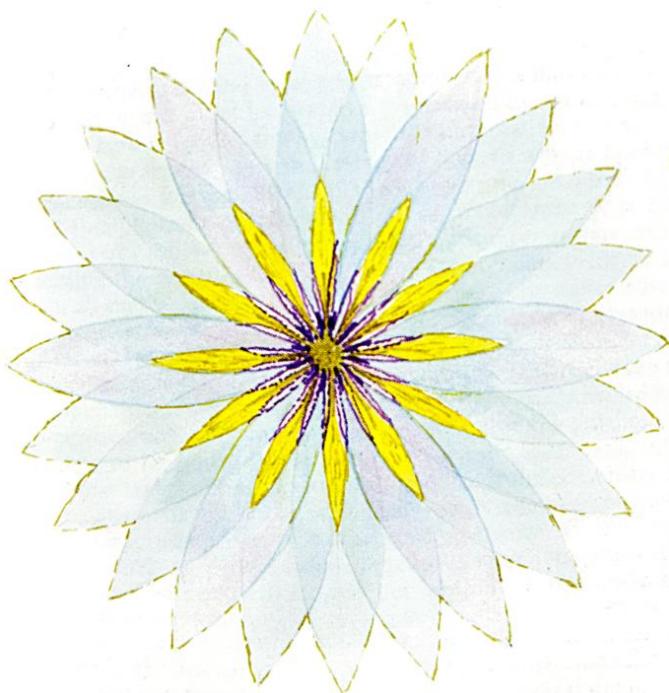
The next dream was reported by a man who was a confirmed materialist who had survived an attempt at suicide, and was undergoing psychotherapy. By his own admission he had never received any form of religious instruction in his life, and had never read the Bible. He dreamt he was at a party given in honour of the presence of Adam and Eve. It transpired that they had never died. Upon looking at them he noticed their huge size; they were both tall and majestic and had a quite unearthly appearance. He fixed his attention upon Adam and saw a mass of mossy, vegetable fibres draped over the face. He dearly wished to gaze upon Adam's face, so he approached him and lifted away the vegetation. The face he looked at filled him with fear. There was something terrible and animal like in what he saw, but at the same time there was an infinite kindness in the face. The dreamer was so affected by this experience that he began an earnest search for the meaning of life. It was the emotional impact of the archetypal correspondences of Adam and Eve which caused this man to ponder upon the

nature of human origins, the strangeness of human history, and his own involvement in the river of life.

Some dreams are precognitive, or forward-looking, and contain hints about events that may occur in the near future. Many years ago Professor J. B. Dunne was fascinated by a series of dreams which accurately portrayed events before they happened. Dunne was not involved in these events and his dreams were virtually eye-witness reports ahead of time. In one dream he saw the Flying Scotsman train crash over the bridge at the Firth of Forth and cause many people to die. Soon afterwards the event took place just as his dream had shown. In another dream he saw a volcanic island explode and cause massive loss of life and extensive damage to property. A little later this actually took place when the volcanic island of Martinique blew up and killed thousands of people. Professor Dunne experienced several other prophetic dreams which he included in his fascinating book, *An Experiment with Time*. Psychological literature contains many reports of precognitive dreams; they are of widespread occurrence in the community and are reported by people in all walks of life - housewives, soldiers, factory workers, nurses and professionals. Most people ignore these prophetic dreams, but the writer personally knows two men who heeded their prophetic dreams, changed their travel plans and saved their lives.

When we stop taking life for granted and try to stir ourselves out of mere awareness, we are able to enjoy a more conscious understanding of our situation on this planet. With an increased power of perception we begin to see just how much sacred information is transmitted to us by the Lord, for the sake of our enlightenment and growth. This flow of instruction is always present, yet we do not notice it because we automatically pay attention to external, routine matters and forget that we have an inner life which must be tended and kept active. We ought to be interested in very many things ranging from dreams to astronomy, biochemistry to Egyptian hieroglyphs, archaeology, to space travel and electron microscopy to states of conjugal love. Everything is meaningful in that it is a reflector of Divine truths and goods, and when we discover the correspondences in the objects and events in the world we are able to participate in the creative dynamics of life in a most uplifting and salubrious manner. By means of correspondences we can pass from outer forms to internal states, energies and processes, and we can directly experience these states and gain much from their positive influence. Life is far more than the entertainment of nice thoughts: it is active involvement with stupendous energies whereby the Lord God sustains and activates all organisms and the whole of existence. Swedenborg did not employ the writing of Paul to any great extent but one of Paul's statements is worth considering in the light of what has been said, and

that is: *We are workers together with God.* God labours mightily to create a universe in which life can become manifest, and we must labour consciously to become the recipients and communicators of spiritual life from God. Life is a joint enterprise in which God acts and people react in reciprocal harmony. The spiritual world can be infilled only by means of the co-operation, willingness and sincere aspiration of mankind. The universe is the cosmic instrument employed by the Lord God in bringing forth souls. On this account the universe is enormously significant and highly interesting. Souls are of special significance to the Lord and are required by Him for the detailed extension of the creative process into spiritual and celestial worlds. It is not enough to just be a soul: the soul has to become useful to God and must therefore strive to develop its potentials as fully as possible. Each one of us is important to the Creator, and we would not be here in the absence of this God-people relationship. Because we are endowed with curiosity, we seek to penetrate the mystery of existence and discover why we are here in the world. Healthy curiosity can serve to promote our inner growth. Swedenborg was a man with insatiable curiosity and a driving will to understand everything about life. We, too, need some of this drive in order to cease being biological machines. We are intended to be living, acting, productive, contributing souls. This calls for a life of conscious participation in the Divinely engendered cosmic process, and an eagerness to live with insight and meaning. A larger life of spiritual awakening is not a sombre affair, but is personal, affectionate and heart-warming. The sense of the holy is an internal state of delight because the soul is flooded with the light of Divine Wisdom and the heat of Divine Love. This can be a daily experience for us if we make efforts to reshape the dimensions of the psyche and reorientate our whole being towards the Lord. Part of the urge and aim of creation is to bring us to this wonderful experience.



*Soul of Mine, look to the Lord, the Infinite
Source of Blessings*

(drawn from Dr. Philip Groves)

MYTHS, SYMBOLS AND PARABLES



We humans are the focal points of all that is known about the world in which we live. Surrounding us is a very complex environment which contains innumerable things from grains of sand and specks of dust to a huge variety of organisms as well as distant planets, stars and galaxies. We behold this plethora of things and try to make sense of it all. Because our senses provide us with primary information concerning the world, there is an automatic tendency for us to explain all that we encounter in worldly terms. Our sense-based psychology is such that we regard the world as a material structure and so we interpret all things in a materialistic manner. A spade is seen as a material wooden handle fitted into a suitably shaped blade of material steel, and our material bodies employ it to turn over the quite material soil of the garden. It all seems to be quite simple, straight forward and clear. All people share this kind of world-view, and it has the advantage of enabling us to talk about the same things with mutual agreement and exchange useful information regarding them. Technology, which provides us with an amazing capacity to manipulate the environment, serves to reinforce our notion of the complete materiality of the world.

With the rise of modern science in the early part of the present century, discoveries were made which completely altered our view of the world. Solid objects were found to be mainly empty space partly occupied with minute atoms. Even the atoms were found to be spaces in which minute particles like protons, neutrons and electrons were distributed. The air we breathe was found to be a heterogenous collection of molecules moving at high speed, colliding with one another, and impinging upon the body to produce atmospheric pressure. None of these things could be detected by the senses, but ongoing research firmly established the reality of these findings.

The view of the world provided by science stands in sharp contrast to the well-known external view obtained by sensory impression. Commonsense declared that stones, walls, mountains, pieces of metal and fallen logs were static, opaque

masses of matter, but science proved these things to be regions of atomic oscillations, high speed electronic activity, wave motion, and interactions between energy-fields. Scientific insight has changed our world-view forever by demonstrating that the world we experience through the senses is only an appearance. In its fine structure it is enormously different from the phenomenon we perceive. What we see around us is not reality itself, but an appearance which is generated by the limited perceptions of the senses and our psychological interpretations of our impressions. Even the scientific view of the world is not reality itself but is a highly detailed, and very useful appearance of things.

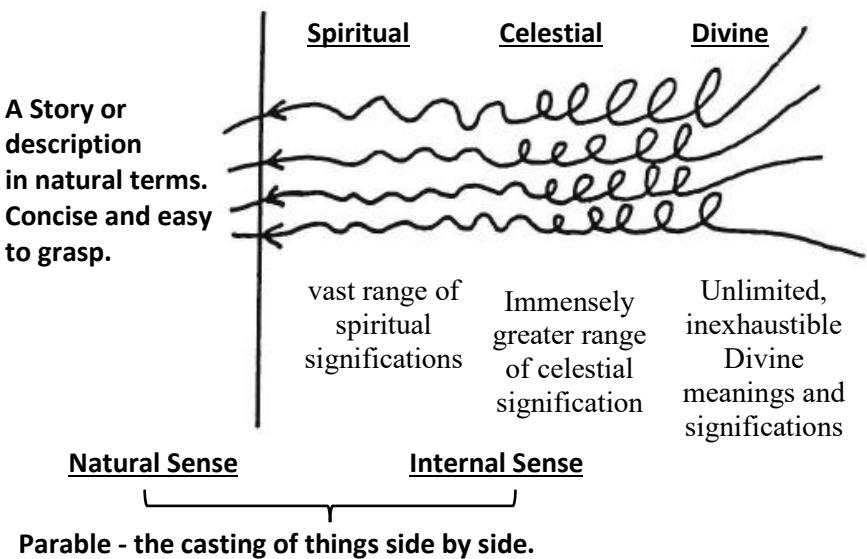
How, then, do we come to grips with what is real and true if both common sense and scientific research can reveal only appearances of the world we inhabit?

The realisation that we have an inwardness which is different from the material world provides us with a new way of approaching the reality which stands behind the appearance of things. Such is the nature of our spirit that it is able to procure an inside view of the world, and can uncover aspects of reality which are beyond the range of the bodily senses and of scientific exploration. But even here a difficulty arises because spiritual observations and insights must be expressed in human terms before they can be known.

The words and terms of language are largely, but not entirely, sense-based and therefore limited. It is not possible to compress the endless details of spiritual experience, knowledge, wisdom and energy into finite speech so that everything can be known in a few words. However, there are devices which enable some of these difficulties to be overcome, and they are correspondences, myths, symbols and parables.

A parable is an instrument of communication in which elevated instructions and meanings are intimately juxtaposed with familiar earthly images. The term parable comes from παραβολή which is composed of παρά - *near to, alongside, by the side of* and βολή - *cast, throw*. Hence, παραβολή is the casting of one thing beside another for the sake of comparison, or to indicate a relationship.

In a spiritual sense a parable is much more than a simple comparison: it is a device which points to states, processes, meanings and values which lie far beyond its literal form. Parables have their origin in spiritual things and terminate in natural forms. We may illustrate the structure of a parable with the aid of a diagram:-



In Matthew 13:33 the Lord presented a parable in which He taught, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal (flour), until the whole was leavened.* The spoken words provide a homely and understandable description of a process which leads to a heavenly state. Because the people who heard these words were familiar with bread making, they readily grasped the natural sense. But the internal sense is far-reaching and only those who ponder deeply can comprehend some of its contents. Leaven (ζυμη, zyme,) is yeast and when mixed with moist flour (meal) the cells multiply and release enzymes which bring about fermentation. There is a sequences of changes:

Starch → Maltose → Glucose → Alcohol + Carbon dioxide
(→ = Yeast enzymes)



The carbon dioxide causes the dough to rise by filling it with gas pockets.

Now fermentation signifies a state of combat in which false notions and beliefs struggle against spiritual truths. Some of these notions and beliefs may be very

attractive to the unguarded mind, and are hard to shake off. *When love of what is good and the good of charity are activated in the mind, the tide is turned and truth and good are victorious* (AC 7906^{2,3}). The person who has been through the combat of temptations has now entered a heavenly state. This is the general meaning of the parable, whereas for any given individual there are details and complications too numerous to compile. One person may have to struggle against false ideas arising from ego states; another will struggle against certain strange and misleading New Age ideas; and yet another will do battle with teachings of Oriental religion which contradict those of Christianity. Unless endless spiritual provisions were made for the unique struggle each individual must make, very few people would undergo rebirth. That is why the spiritual dimension of a parable has infinite content. And when we examine the details of the leavening or fermentation process, every enzyme and every transformation step corresponds to some psychological process, some spiritual verity.

In view of the importance and potency of parables we are in a position to appreciate more fully the following words from **Matthew** 13:34:

All this Jesus said to the crowd in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world!".

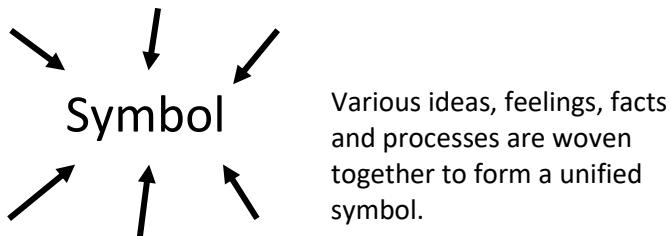
The Spiritual Diary contains several descriptions of Swedenborg's spiritual observations in which he noticed that the thoughts and speech of angelic beings passed quite naturally into parables. He recorded that on some occasions he himself spoke in the mode of parable in order to fully express his ideas to angels.

Here is a parable from the *Koran* to contemplate and explore.

And God sets forth a parable of two men: One of them dumb and controlling nothing, and he is a burden to his master; where ever he sends him, he brings no good. Is he equal with him who enjoins justice, and is the one who is on the right path?

Deep in the psyche is the mythopoietic process. It works independently of our ordinary thoughts and will. It has the power to generate symbols and employ them for the education and reformation of the mind. Symbols are psycho-spiritual constructions which concentrate a great deal of information into a small space or form, and when introduced into the stream of thought they may initiate important changes in a person's mental life. The word symbol is from the Greek σύμβολον - to throw together, and is to be contrasted with parable which means to throw side by side. A symbol is the best possible synthesis of a number of independent

components, and gives expression to them without modifying their qualities. Symbols are very frequently encountered in dreams, fantasies, visions, ancient philosophical writings, sacred scriptures and religious teachings. Symbols are not constructed by intellectual thought-processes, but are generated outside ordinary awareness.



A symbol may be a geometrical pattern, a human figure in a certain posture, an animal or plant, an architectural form or a unique combination or sequence of musical notes. Symbols make up the natural language of dreams, and people are unable to understand their dreams because they have never bothered to learn this symbolic language.

Let us examine the following short dream for its symbolic content. The dreamer was a Nobel Laureate in Physics, but was a man with an alcohol problem that seriously affected his family life and broke up long-standing friendships.

He had been undergoing Jungian psychotherapy for a short time before the dream occurred.

I stand rooted to the ground like a tree, and a snake has described a circle around my feet.

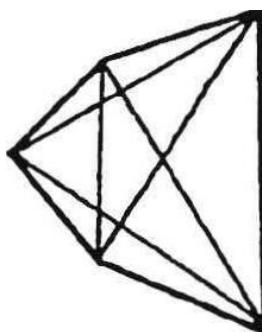
Right up to the time of this dream the patient was afraid of confronting his own mysterious unconscious mind. He intuitively knew that the causes of his troubles were buried in the unconscious, and he was terrified by the prospect of what other horrors might be uncovered as the analysis proceeded. He wished fervently to run away from the situation. The dream symbols showed him that he must not run, for then there would be no cure. The hidden wisdom of the dream process caused him to become like a tree, and, being rooted to the ground he could not, indeed must not, run away. The circular form of the snake traced out a mandala, a magic circle which symbolised protection from evil. The circular form of the snake had

marked out a temenos, a sacred space where he could safely meet and deal with dangerous unconscious impulses without suffering harm. After experiencing this dream the patient reported a remarkable state of inward calmness, and realised he could successfully handle the forces of his own psyche.

A certain middle-aged woman dreamed that she and her husband were being chased by a man with a knife. Suddenly both of them flew through the air and landed in the church where they had been married 20 years previously. Then she flew alone and landed in her childhood home and found herself dressed in lovely soft children's clothes.

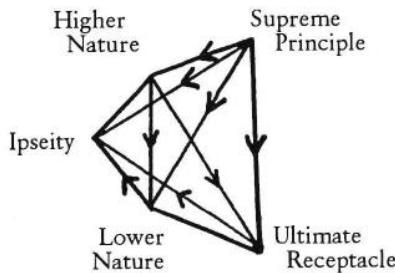
The entire dream is a symbol which expresses the wish to be young again. The threatening man with the knife is Old Father Time bearing his scythe. Flying symbolises getting above the problems of the present moment. The return to the church where she was married indicates a regression to an earlier age when she was radiantly happy. Going back to her childhood symbolises the yearning to be young again and to be without care or worry: to relive the "lost paradise" of her pre-adolescent years.

Sometimes symbols of great significance emerge from tightly-knit groups of people who are working towards a common goal. This is seen in certain monasteries in Bhutan, Ladakh and other places where a small group of Tibetan monks will collectively make a marvellous mandala out of coloured sand without the aid of a drawing or pre-set plan. Shortly after the Renaissance small, dedicated groups of mystics and seekers of truth spontaneously generated a number of symbols which expressed important ideas. One of them is shown as follows:-



There is no doubt that Swedenborg was familiar with this symbol because it appears in the writings of Dr. Robert Fludd which were intensely studied by

Swedenborg during his early years in England. At first sight it does not mean very much, but when appropriately labelled it spells out important connections.



If we set the Lord God as the Supreme Principle, the Natural World as Ultimate Receptacle, Inner Spiritual Self as Higher Nature, outer Psychological Self as Lower Nature, and What I am as the Ipseity, we can discern many illuminating details which reveal our inner constitution. Carefully note the interconnections between the components of this system.

A symbol has a powerful effectual charge which can touch and influence us if we open our emotional life to it. The pure intellectual appraisal of any symbol is quite inadequate and provides only a mere shell of meaning. Emotions convey deeper meanings and insights and enable the mind to feel the value and inner quality of things. When the above symbol is explored with the emotions as well as the thoughts a whole new world of life, sensitivity, meaning and visions enters the individual. Let us start at the left hand side of the symbol and declare, *I am here now*. Then try to feel the reality to which we belong in the following manner:-

Through my higher or inner nature I feel, have and take delight in the Lord God, the Supreme Principle, at the same time as I feel, through the instrumentality of the outer self, the incredible richness and wonder of the created world.

If you feel it all you are in it as a living participant, but if you merely intellectualise about it you separate yourself from the spirit.

Myths are of great interest because they have a rich symbolic content, and some of them contain true spiritual correspondences. Myths are generated by the mythopoietic process which is present in the psyche and is the function which translates timeless truths into stories, dramas and rituals that convey meanings to

the external mind. Some myths are fragmentary remnants of ancient spiritual teachings, while others are new risings which help to bring order and comprehension into human life. In its usual sense myth indicates a *fable*, a mere fanciful story or an invented explanation of things. The original Greek term μύθος signifies *word* or *speech* as well as a *tale*, and thus may have a deeper meaning than is generally suspected. Inside many myths are spiritual treasures which can enrich our understanding when we take the trouble to explore their contents. Myths, the dreams of mankind, can sometimes act as bridges whereby we can cross the gap that separates the world of appearance from the real, eternal world.

There are many creation myths among the various tribes of Australian Aboriginal peoples, and the following one from Central Australia clearly contains correspondential elements.

The Great Spirit, the supreme creative power, was the Mother who contained all life, love, wisdom and potentiality. She manifested her active powers through an aspect of herself known as Baiame, the All-Father. Baiame translated his active affirmations into actual deeds by that which proceeded from himself and was personified as Punjel. At first the earth was enveloped in darkness and working in this darkness Baiame created huge birds and animals. These creatures groped their way through the world in search of food, and severely competed with each other. It was bitterly cold throughout heaven and earth, and Punjel was given the task of building a huge pile of wood so that a fire could be lit. But fire was not granted just then since the creative work of refining and perfecting animal forms was not complete. Baiame told Punjel that fire would come from the earth in due time. The pile of firewood grew until it reached an enormous size. Punjel noticed a violent struggle between Eagle-Hawk and Emu over an animal carcass.



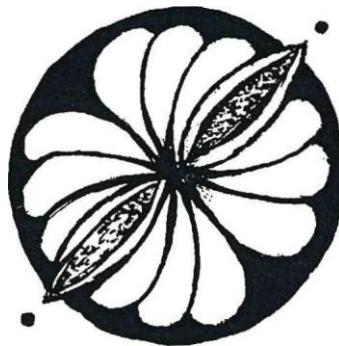
Emu snatched the body and ran away, and Eagle-Hawk followed in pursuit, dragging feathers out of Emu's tail.



Eagle-Hawk gave up the chase and retraced his steps. He stumbled over Emu's nest where there were several eggs. He picked one up in his claw and hurled it into the sky where it smashed against the wood pile and ignited it. Sky and earth were illuminated by the fire, warmth spread into all things, and Punjel gasped with amazement as he beheld the wonder and beauty of things that had been created by Baiame. Gradually the fire died down, cold returned and Punjel became alarmed. He complained to Baiame that things would be as cold as before and darkness would obscure the world. Baiame replied that the return of these conditions was actually a blessing because they served to remind people of earlier, incomplete states. Furthermore, the cold served to refresh bodies that were exposed to the heat of the day, and the darkness revealed the majesty of the stars of heaven. Punjel asked, *How will the fire return? Now we have only embers of the great wood pile.* Baiame said, *Your task will be to gather fire-wood each night and in the morning I shall touch it. Light and heat will appear, and people will call it the sun.* But Punjel was puzzled and wanted to know what humans and animals would do when darkness was upon them. Baiame explained how they would sleep, and how bodies and minds would be refreshed in this semi-alive state. Punjel wanted to know how they would awaken if their eyes were closed, and was told that a loud sound would be provided. Punjel found that Kookaburra awoke at dawn and filled the air with loud laughter, and this stirred all things out of their sleep.



Men and women of the *thinking* New Church (Ed. The new spiritual era for humankind) will readily see the correspondences in this remarkable myth, and from the correspondences they will discern a consistent psycho-spiritual description of fundamental processes in their own lives.



Briefly, the salient points are outlined as follows (the fine details you should add by your own insights):

The initial darkness portrays lack of consciousness, the deadly sleep of mankind, in which there is no perception of Reality at all.

The battle between the birds is a conflict of beliefs, ideologies and concepts; the flightless emu portrays earth bound, sense-based concepts and the Eagle-Hawk which can fly signifies the capacity for more elevated concepts.

The egg, which was thrown upon the huge woodpile, corresponds to newness of soul and the proliferation of good and truth, and the wood itself relates to the potential for good.

The great fire which warmed and illuminated the world is the good of love which transforms the mind, brings it out of ignorance and hypnotic sleep, and reveals the wonders of creation in which all things are harmoniously interwoven by the threads of love.

Last of all, the awakening to conscious life by the call of the kookaburra is another form of cock-crowing at dawn, (AE 187²) and

this corresponds to the initiation of states of charity, love of truth, and renewal of one's being by means of truth.

Most people are ignorant of the fact that we are very complex beings who are sustained by many grades of cosmic energy. Some energies are ultra fine and Divine while others are heavy, coarse and dense. In an esoteric sense a person is defined or characterised by the principal energy upon which he feeds, and the rule is that it is one's inward state which determines the grade of energy which is received. An Eskimo myth from Alaska illustrates this principle very clearly.

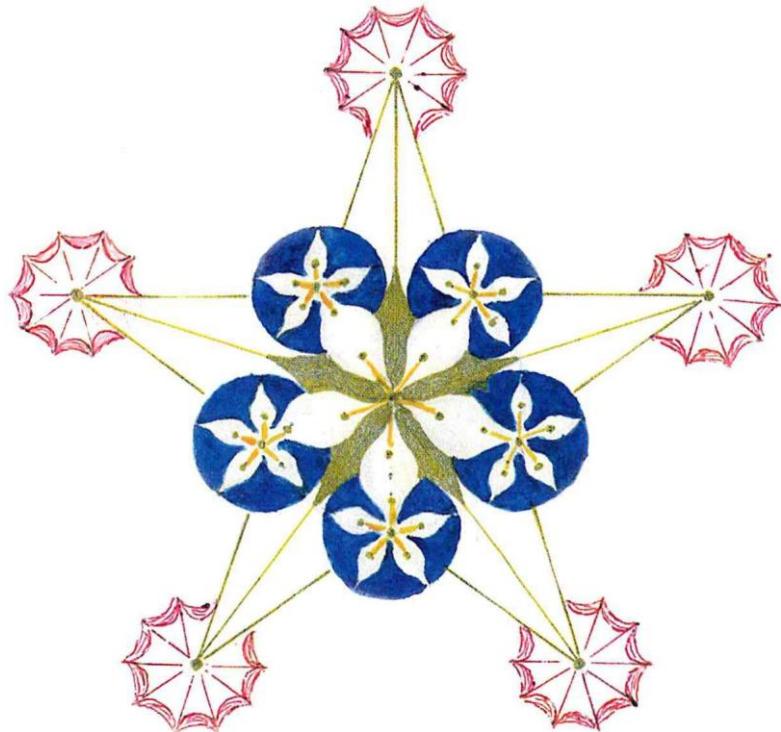
There was a tribe of spirits called the Shining People. They looked like humans but had narrow eyes and never slept. They once adopted a human child, but each time the child wanted to sleep they picked him up and shook him. Because they were not familiar with sleep they thought the child was about to die. The Shining People would not let him sleep, and eventually he did die --- of fatigue.

The myth points to different grades of cosmic energy and to different levels of beings who make use of those energies corresponding to their type. Ultra-fine spiritual energies are inexhaustible and enable perpetual action to take place. Such energies never pass into states of psychological sleep or death. There are much lower energies of a limited and exhaustible kind, such as the energies of the food we eat, and they must be periodically renewed from external sources. Minds that feed upon heavy, dense, sluggish energies have completely different styles of life from minds which feed upon very fine energies which proceed from Above. People with narrow minds, limited interests, heavy emotions and a dull outlook are fuelled by coarse natural energies and are virtually lifeless. Those with bright, penetrating inner perceptions who feed on truth, love, good and charity are inwardly alive and are fuelled by celestial energies. The myth shows that the Shining People were energised by deathless powers which never rested and always operated in the performance of uses. The human figure in the myth portrays ordinary, untransformed human beings who are insensitive to the untiring powers of Higher Life, and are unable to receive into themselves those potencies which preserve a continuous conjunction with the Lord God. This is true wakefulness.

In the limited time we have available to us it is possible to briefly examine only a small number of examples of myths, symbols and parables. But enough has been said to indicate that these things are components of the language of spiritual life. This language is present in the Word, in many ancient writings, in visions, and in all the things of the world. Correspondences link us with spiritual meanings and values, and arouse the interest and attention of the inner life. We need to learn

this language and, above all, to practically pursue its indications. A mere knowledge of correspondences is insufficient: loving and doing the good and truthful things indicated by correspondential language is everything. Before each of us stands an infinite realm of wonderful knowledges and wisdom, of love and good, and we can gain access to it by proceeding beyond the appearance of things and discovering the reality that sustains them. The language of spirit helps us to attain this insight.

o O o



*We humans are always searching for something,
yet this something has found us all along*

(drawn from Emanuel Swedenborg)

PHANTASY AND REALITY



The term phantasy (fantasy) is simply the longer form of fancy. Both words are derived from the ancient Greek word φανταζεῖν which means *to render visible, to display*. Phantazein in turn comes from the more ancient Indo-European word-root BHA - *to shine*. Originally, these ancient words referred to the process of causing unseen or unknown things to be rendered visible and knowable, and to be seen and displayed. These significations are important and we shall return to them later in the talk. In modern dictionaries the meanings of fantasy are listed as:

1. The mental apprehension of an object of perception.
2. A spectral apparition or illusory appearance.
3. Delusory imagination, hallucination.
4. A supposition resting on no solid grounds.

Swedenborg has a great deal to say about phantasy, and useful material is found in *The Spiritual Diary, Arcana Caelestia* and *Conjugial Love*. In describing the nefarious state of low-grade spirits he says that with them *phantasies alone reign* (SD 389). If you ponder upon this statement you will come to see the enormity of the spiritual situation, because it means that such spiritual beings can never see what is real, true, good, loving or useful. Their phantasies separate them from everything that is genuine and wholesome.

Indeed, to be so completely caught up in subjective illusions, mental distortions, false visions and vain imagination that the real world is never known, would be a most terrible state to endure. This is one of the things we must struggle against most vigorously throughout our planetary lives because phantasy is always with us and is not consistently noticed.

Very few people develop the art of self-observation whereby they learn to study the many processes taking place in mind and body. They have the egotistic notion that they understand themselves, and have no need of systematic self-examination. Lack of insight into one's being leads to a serious consequence: there arises an inability to distinguish phantasy from reality, and imagination

from reason. This is not a strange quirk which distinguishes people of sound mentality from those with poor insight and lack of personal integration. It is a universal characteristic of the human mind. Phantasy is an automatic and mechanical operation of the mind which is best known to us as day-dreaming. People everywhere become spontaneously involved with the imagery of day-dreaming, and may identify themselves with certain dramas which are enacted in the psyche. It is a quite common occurrence for them to be the central actors in their day-dreams. Any person who declares that he or she never indulges in day-dreaming or phantasy is a liar.

A statement of this kind is a confession of the person's ineptitude to observe oneself and detect the operation of what is often a harmful process.

The unguarded mind is activated by imagination, and this flows in incessantly. Spiritual beings can introduce images into the flux of human imagination and produce representations of people, things and scenery. These things are accepted by undiscerning people as spiritual visions, and they believe in them and act upon them without ever discovering their illusory nature (SD 1752). Such subjection to phantasy continues in the spiritual world after death, and can be ruinous to his or her welfare. The pernicious habit of clinging to phantasies and regarding them as real things, makes it impossible for a person to undergo metanoia and regeneration. In the SD 4360, Swedenborg describes how certain spirits are completely ruled by their phantasies and imagine themselves to be important people dressed in gorgeous clothes. He states:

The cause of this is that they are themselves but mere phantasies, and their life consists of nothing else; they live from phantasies, because they can live only from falsities.

The sages of Indian religious philosophy long ago comprehended the nature of phantasy, and saw it as a veil which stood between the finite, error-filled human mind and the Lord God. Illusion or phantasy is associated with the Sanskrit word māyā. However, māyā means *the power of thought that produces form*. The forms we see in the world are transient and hence unreal compared with the Eternal Divine Reality. Transient, impermanent forms and the thought processes that produce them are regarded as illusory, hence they are māyā.

Through our five senses we are aware of the end-effects of creation and are enormously influenced by their appearance. Without a high degree of inner awakening we can never be freed from the illusion (māyā) of material existence. That gem of spiritual wisdom, the **Bhagavad Gita**, puts it this way:

This divine illusion (Māyā) of Mine, consisting of the three modes (gunas) of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered to Me can easily cross beyond it.

The evil-doing, the deluded, the vilest men, they come not to Me, they whose wisdom is destroyed by illusion, who have atheistically embraced the nature of demons.

Gita 7: 14-15

Here we must understand that māyā is not a deceitful trick perpetrated by God for the sake of concealing His real nature. Māyā comes from the root Mā - to measure out, to shape, and refers to the creation of the material universe.

The visible world is enormously different in its qualities and states from the Divine and spiritual levels of Reality. Unawakened human beings do not have the consciousness to see the Reality behind the appearances, and on the basis of what they see, they build their incredible phantasies. Little wonder that the **Gita** 7:27 declares:

... all beings walk this world wholly deluded.

Throughout Swedenborg's theological writings we find repeated invitations to transcend the literal sense of the Word, and go beyond the mere surface appearance of things, by attending to the correspondences they contain. He frequently points out that if we can detach ourselves from the illusory nature of surface appearances and elevate our thoughts towards God, we shall be able to see and experience the Real World where good and truth reign supreme. Before this is possible we must learn to cope with our phantasies, and this is not always an easy process. We cannot eliminate phantasy by ignoring it or pretending that it is no longer present. Firm meaningful activity of the mind is required before the automatic machinations of unbridled imagination can be brought under control. The **Philokalia**, a treasury of the wisdom of the Eastern church, provides the following formula for overcoming phantasy:

Spiritual conversation (discourse) with God always keeps the soul free from self-esteem... and keeps the mind free from phantasy, transfusing it completely with the love of God.

In ancient times, before the dynasties of Egypt and Babylonia came into being, certain people of celestial disposition possessed innocent and receptive minds which were not plagued by phantasy or wild theories. They penetrated the veil of misleading sensory experience and perceived the living reality which fashioned existence. They were able to communicate with celestial beings, received instruction from God, and saw the correspondences in all things. The people of later ages were not able to do these things because the centre of gravity of their mental lives was displaced into the external and sensual modes of operation, and the ego had become the focus of thought, feeling and interpretation. The quotation from the *Philokalia*, which is given above, is one of the practical ways of moving in the direction of celestial perception, and is worth pursuing with affection and diligence. Incidentally, that Philokalia instruction was written about 460 AD.

All people experience phantasies very frequently but, incredibly, few people deal with them in a practical way. The spiritual adepts of the early Christian Church knew that sensuality, self love and phantasy were diametrically opposed to a wholesome spiritual life, and they developed a number of disciplines for overcoming these destructive tyrants of the mind. One widely known discipline was the employment of the Jesus prayer. This simply declared:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.

The prayer was consciously repeated 5,000, 8,000 or 10,000 times a day until it worked automatically in the psyche. By means of visualisation and mental effort the self-sustaining prayer was moved from the head into the heart, then into the liver, kidneys, intestines, spleen, genitals, lungs, etc, and finally back into the head. When the adept sensed the power of the prayer, felt its holy inner quality, and concentrated upon the meanings of the words, he experienced a flood of salubrious energy which brought a blessed state of peace and harmony to his whole being. No longer was he troubled by the automatic phantasies of the mind.



If we carefully study our phantasies we find that they can be analysed like dreams, and useful materials can be retrieved from them. Sometimes psychological and psychosomatic disorders can be cured by carefully studying, analysing and processing a patient's phantasies. The following case history illustrates the process.

A boy of 15 suffered from nocturnal enuresis, or bed-wetting, and experienced accidents of this kind several times a week. He was referred to a psychologist, but remained mute and uncooperative. One winter's day the psychologist observed that the boy was staring at the electric radiator and seemed to be lost in thought. He spoke to the boy and firmly said, Tell me what you are thinking about at this moment. The boy then verbalised the following phantasy. He said, *I can see the radiator burning a hole through the floor and falling into the room below. There it sets fire to the apartment and the whole building is in*

danger of being destroyed. I see myself rushing down stairs and putting out the fire by urinating on it.

The phantasy provided the psychologist with all the clues required for a successful analysis. Using word-association tests he elicited from the boy the meaning of the radiator and the fire. For the boy the heat of the radiator represented his own adolescent sexual drives. However, these had been deflected into incestuous lust for his own eldest sister, to whom he was greatly attracted. He was afraid that his incestuous passions would invade his life to such an extent that the entire house of his being might be burned to ashes.

Because the passions tortured him continuously, he felt compelled to put out the flames by urinating upon them. His nightly act of bed-wetting was simply the symbol of his immature attempt to deal with his problem.

By means of emotional re-education and the establishment of new values and aims, the boy was cured of the bed-wetting, and overcame the unhealthy attachment to his sister. But it was through the analysis of his phantasy that he was brought back to reality.

Dr. Carl Jung is one of the greatest psychologists in the history of the world. He made more contributions to the understanding of the unconscious mind, the unravelling of psychological symbols, the decipherment of myths, and the nature of religious psychology than all of his contemporary fellow-psychologists put together. In his earlier years he made an intensive study of Swedenborg's **Arcana Caelestia**. Jung obtained clear insight into the mind by exploring his own psyche. Indeed, the thoroughness of his self-examination certainly equals the insearching carried out by Christian Spiritual adepts, Sufi saints and devoted Mahayana Buddhists who pursue the esoteric pathway of development.

Together with other practising medical psychologists, Jung affirmed the following:

Present day medical psychology... knows only too well what dire disturbances of the bodily functions and what devastating psychic consequences can flow from "mere" fantasies. 'Fantasies' are the natural expressions of the life of the unconscious. But since the unconscious is the psyche of all the body's autonomous functional complexes, its 'fantasies' have an aetiological significance that is not to be despised... Fantasies are, medically, real things with which psychotherapy must deal rigidly.

Jung explored the depths of his own mind with admirable thoroughness, and discovered that many phantasies were useless automatisms while others were helpful. Some of the better phantasies became visible to his mental vision, and he was able to analyse their contents and even interact with them. Jung reports:

Another fantasy figure arose out of the unconscious. I called him Philemon: he brought with him an Egypto-Hellenic atmosphere... I first saw him as a winged being sailing across the sky - he had the wings of a king-fisher and held a bunch of four keys.

Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversation with him and he said things which I had not consciously thought. He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself. It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche... Psychologically, Philemon represented superior insight. He was a mysterious figure to me.

Memories, Dreams, Reflections - pp 207-8

Jung's Philemon seems to belong to the higher-order fantasies or hallucinations described by Dr. Van Dusen in the chapter *The Presence of Spirits in Madness* contained in his book *The Presence of Other Worlds*. Another interesting fact concerning Philemon is that in the 6th century A.D. there lived an Abba Philemon or Philimon. He was a Christian priest who resided in Egypt and became an anchorite so that he could devote his life to the worship of God and the perfecting of the soul. He established the standard form of the Jesus prayer. Some of his teachings are included in *Philokalia*.

We should examine the phantasies that occur in our lives and estimate their quality. Many are merely mental rubbish and are to be vigorously rejected. Some are worthy of close examination and analysis, because they may reveal an aspect of oneself which has been concealed for a long time. If we remember that the Greek word phantazein means to display or render visible, then we can employ certain phantasies as devices which reveal hidden or repressed aspects of our internal life. We must learn to categorise our phantasies and separate them into groups which include loose imagination and idle wishes, powerful emotional wants, egotistic yearnings, symbolic solutions to problems, representations of psychological states, and, more rarely, symbolic dramatisations of spiritual states. They should be looked at rationally and objectively, and dealt with according to their quality and content.

There are massive phantasies which infest millions of minds and create a completely false picture of reality. Some of these phantasies are supported by

much intellectual reasoning, and innumerable minds then accept such phantasies as proven and well-established truths. The philosophy of materialism is one such phantasy which has spread far and wide throughout the modern world, and is given the stamp of approval by various governments and major educational institutes.

This very elaborate phantasy insists that the whole universe is a self-generated material system which arose from the explosion or sudden expansion of a minute corpuscle of energy. Out of this expanding energy-field atoms, molecules, galaxies, stars and planets are supposed to arise through the operation of quite mechanical, mindless laws of nature. On the planet Earth, the fortuitous combination of solar radiation, moisture, gases and mineral substances supposedly gave rise to the first self-sustaining and self-multiplying organisms.

Through an enormously long series of DNA modifications, environmental influences, and cosmic impacts, profound genetic changes took place, and vast numbers of new species of plant and animal organisms came into being.

Eventually the human organism was supposed to evolve out of earlier animal types. In this systematic phantasy, sensitivity, consciousness and complex behaviour are imagined to be the epiphenomenal outcome of complex neural circuits in the brain and nervous system, and are the expression of enzymes, proteins, fatty compounds and other biochemical substances at work. The phantasy insists that the whole of existence, life, mind, thought, belief, feeling and behaviour come from interacting material forces and substances.

The phantasy concludes that human existence is a fleeting experience, is an automatic consequence of a huge material process, and has no meaning or significance. Death terminates the life of the individual, and beyond death there is nothing. This is the official view of the scientific community, and it lies at the core of modern western education.

Because the phantasy has the appearance of a systematic, logical system it is gullibly accepted as being real and true. Young minds accept this highly organised phantasy as being the only sound system of "explaining" the nature of the world in which we exist. This phantasy is a product of the external or outer mind which depends upon the flow of sense-data for its information. The outer mind and its elaborate phantasy form a vicious, enclosed circle, and it is extremely difficult for minds which are conditioned by this phantasy to even begin to consider other views of reality. Moreover, this pernicious phantasy is self-defending, and maliciously attacks other kinds of human experience, such as

religious ecstasy, mystical experience, intuition and non-sensory perception as pathological states which are to be avoided. Minds gripped by this persuasive phantasy are themselves pathological because they are ruled by self-love, and refuse to acknowledge any power or process which is greater than themselves. Self-loving and sense-based minds which are ruled by a powerful proprium imagine that their self-generated "explanations" of things are the only ones that count. Their theories are even regarded as being more important than the reality they seek to explain.

If you personally feel the reality and tangibility of God, count yourself as being blessed and fortunate, for you are protected from the malicious and destructive influences of the massive phantasy we have discussed. In *The Spiritual Diary*, Swedenborg gives many descriptions of souls in the spiritual world who are unable to shake off their earth-bound fantasies. Those things we fervently build into ourselves during planetary life remain with us after death, and we carry our unredeemed fantasies into eternal existence.

To avoid the dire consequences of this unhealthy situation it is imperative to work on ourselves throughout life, examine our assumptions and belief systems, and very carefully analyse our inevitable fantasies. Swedenborg strongly recommends that all persons should review their lives and beliefs at periodic intervals, and take active steps to correct faulty attitudes and incorrect beliefs. Chapters 9 and 10 of *True Christian Religion* contain much useful material which we can beneficially apply to ourselves.

We cannot help having fantasies because they are normal products of the mind. Fantasies and day-dreams are the daytime equivalents of nocturnal dreams. Fantasies are often clearer and more complete than nocturnal dreams since they occur in the waking state and not during sleep.

Through self-training we can learn to observe ourselves and distinguish fantasies from other mental processes such as reflection, analytic thought, memory recall or planning ahead. Once we can distinguish phantasy from reality-thinking we must strive to distinguish useless and harmful fantasies from useful ones. Swedenborg provides us with some helpful diagnostic characteristics that distinguish the different kinds of fantasies:

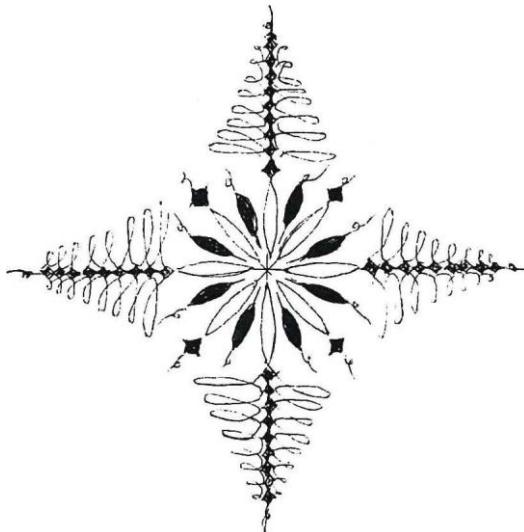
Because everything evil is turned by God Messiah into good, so likewise is it with fantasies; namely, the fantasies of filthy and disgusting little animals are afterwards turned into human images of diverse beauty.

That is, following the process of inner regeneration poor quality phantasies are replaced by phantasies which are representations of higher things that are good, true and beautiful.

Angelic representations are imaginations or representative imaginations, signifying celestial and spiritual truths, and are thus exhibited to angels and angelic spirits. Wherefore, they are not (ordinary) phantasies, for they feel them, and are intimately delighted by them.

SD 3173

Here, Swedenborg indicates that higher creative imagination, which stems from good, love, wisdom and truth, is composed of representations that produce felicity, happiness and joy in those who perceive them. The reality of such splendid things is *felt* as well as mentally perceived.



Writing about the myriads of spiritual beings whose *life consists entirely of phantasies*, Swedenborg wrote the following:

It is accordingly provided by the Lord that their phantasies should appear to them altogether as realities. With those who are in faith from the Lord the case is entirely different; to them there are no phantasies, but appearances attended with all pleasantness and felicity.

SD 4360

Phantasies persist in people who never examine them in order to understand their nature. They passively accept their misleading mental pictures and visions as images of the real world, and do not attempt to analyse their phantasies in the search for truth. Other people are chronically gripped by phantasies which arise from powerful passions which they refuse to abandon. Self-love and the false assumption that one is a separate and independent unit of life, generate grotesque phantasies which plunge a person into a world of make-believe from which there is no escape.

People in all places and all ages fall into these hopeless states because they have no regard for God, and they have not the slightest inclination to study the miracle of existence and explore its possibilities. Plato understood the futility of this outlook when he declared:

The unexamined life is no life for man.

Automatic unguided imagination or phantasy operates in every person without exception. Because it is always present many people accept it as a normal part of mental life. Unless a special effort is made, it becomes very difficult to distinguish phantasy from ordinary thought. It is so very easy to lose sight of what is real and true by foolishly succumbing to the deceptions of unbridled, meaningless imagination.

For example, there are people in the community who claim to be Christians, and yet are clearly lacking in certain Christian virtues. Should they be challenged about this, they may vociferously defend themselves and describe their baptism, confirmation, regular church-going and attendance at Bible classes. However, their daily speech and behaviour make it clear that they do not live a Christian life. Such people are caught up in the phantasy that they are true Christians, and are important individuals in society. They fail to realise that there are several categories of Christians, and certainly do not see the category to which they belong. The categories are -

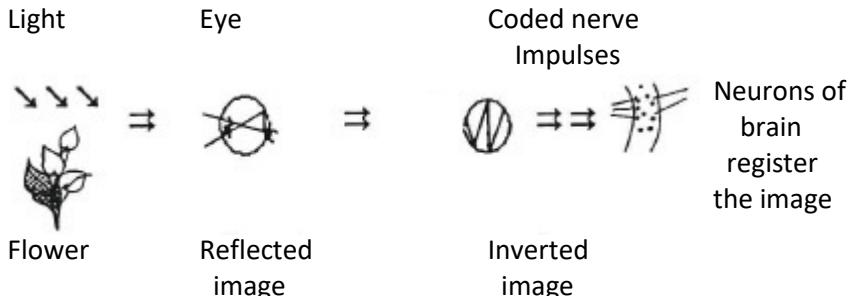
1. Those who *call* themselves Christians.
2. Those who *wish* to be Christians and make genuine efforts to become enlightened and purified.
3. Those who are Christians and not only *know* the precepts of Christ, but *love* them dearly, and *live* them fully.

The deceptive phantasy of being a Christian is often found among those who belong to the first category. This principle applies to whatever religious faith a person may follow - Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Shinto, Islam, Swedenborgianism, etc. Either one truly and energetically knows, feels and lives the truths, goods and golden rules of their religion, or ignores these things and is immersed in the phantasy of being a noble and righteous person. With those in whom such a phantasy is present self-love is often clearly evident. It is always our duty to ascertain the sincerity and depth of our faith, because there is no end to our self-cleansing and self-perfecting.

It is always a matter of great interest to challenge our view of the world, and endeavour to ascertain whether we are truly related to reality or not. In fact, this has been a major problem for scientists, philosophers and religionists throughout history. *What is the real world like, and how does it differ from the appearance of the world?* is a burning question which taxes the minds of many contemporary thinkers. An elementary study of sense perception soon shows that by means of our bodily organs we can never come to grips with the real world. Our experience of things is always modified by the dynamics of the sensory mechanism. Consider vision.

One looks at a blue flower. The flower can be seen only because light is reflected from its surface into the eyes. The reflected light, which is not the flower itself, passes through the transparent tissues and lens of the eye and is projected upon the light-sensitive retina as an inverted image of the flower. In the retina numerous electrochemical processes are initiated and coded nerve impulses are transmitted through the optic nerves, the optic chiasma, the lateral geniculate bodies of the thalamus, and through the optic tract to the occipital lobe of the brain where the image of the flower is perceived in its correct upright spatial orientation.

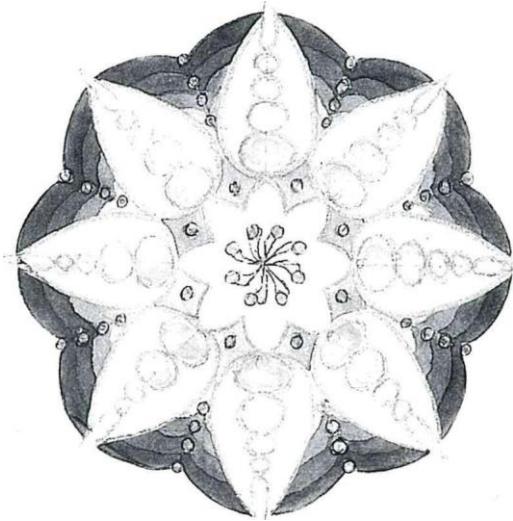
Now look at the sequence of events.



And then our consciousness reaches into the neural image and perceives the flower. We never come into direct contact with the substance, life, vibratory pattern or essence of the flower itself. We experience its appearance, never its real nature. This is how we go through the world, interacting with appearances yet blind to the underlying reality. All of us live on the surface of things, and many people do not even suspect that behind the appearance is something of a very different nature. Our sensory experience of the world is a kind of phantasmagoria, and it is the stuff out of which mental fantasies are constructed.

But what is the reality behind the appearance of the plant which bears the blue flower? We can analyse the physical form of the plant into its various tissues such as parenchyma, epidermis, pericycle, endodermis, phloem, xylem and cambium. We can further analyse it into delicate cellular structures and then, with the electron microscope observe ultrafine details that we could never imagine.

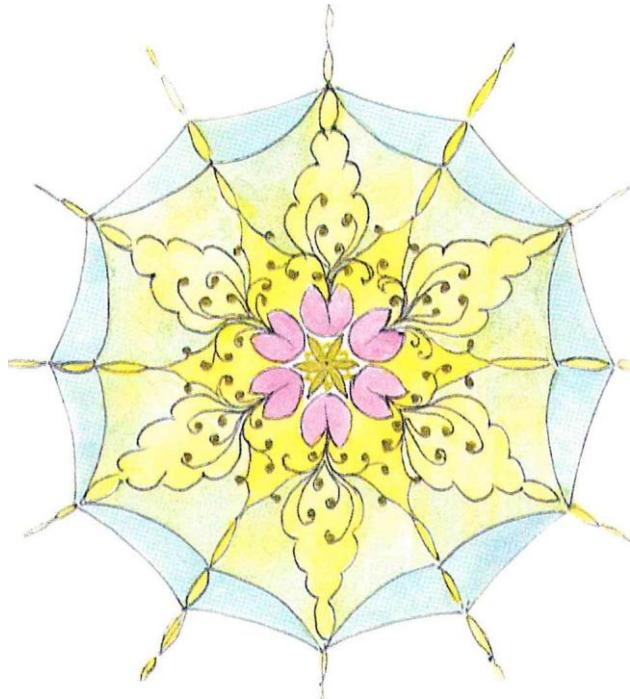
The biochemical exploration of plants takes us into realms our senses do not ordinarily perceive, but these are still appearances or end-effects of the creative process. Inside the physical form of the plant is its spiritual essence, which Swedenborg describes as an *affection* and the operation of the infinite conatus of the Divine. The form and function of the plant correspond to the kind of affection and the ruling spiritual dynamics which brought it into existence. These internal processes, hidden from sensory perception are the reality behind the appearance. The reality can be seen spiritually when one's own essence has been opened by the Lord God.



The Real World is the Lord's heavenly kingdom, the spiritual universe, and it is quite different from the outer physical world of sense-perception and appearance. Mere verbal descriptions of the Real World are totally inadequate because they have to be expressed in the limited forms of natural language. And human beings have the incredible capacity to take the things they hear and see, and build them into unreal phantasies with which they are well pleased.

If we wish to approach and experience some of the aspects of the infinite Real World, we must compel ourselves to carry out sincere self-observation, undergo thorough self-cleansing, draw closer to God through love and worship, and analyse our phantasies. As we have already said, most

phantasies obscure our view of what is real, good and true, but some phantasies, like dreams, contain useful representations that may help us to better understand ourselves and our world.



*Only our heart can see clearly.
Reality is invisible to the eye*

(drawn from Antoine de Saint Exupéry)

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHYS

SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION



Transformation is change of being or rebirth. Being is all that we are and includes the body, inheritance, physiological capacities, understanding, states of affection, energy-generating capacity and spiritual potential. All people alive on this planet are only fractionally developed and have a grossly incomplete being. From the earliest times it has been known that humans are sown upon the earth like seeds, and have the responsibility of developing their potentials, evolving or perfecting their being, and establishing conjunction with the Lord God. The Biblical injunction, *Be thou whole* is a challenge which should spur on the individual to complete his or her self-development. An incomplete person never automatically grows into a fully mature and enlightened being simply by being alive on this planet. At birth the physical body is given to us as a highly efficient instrument, and when it is mature it serves us in many ways to aid our development. In contrast to the body our internals - mind and soul - are incomplete and must be enriched, shaped and brought fully to life by means of efforts we make in association with Divine action. It is required of us that we become fully functional souls who are useful to God and are able to perform cosmic uses in higher spiritual worlds.

When people learn to work on themselves so as to undergo transformation and procure a conscious soul, they generally discover the two sides to themselves which must undergo regeneration. These are the personal side and the cosmological side. The personal side includes one's thoughts, emotions, loves, memories, habits, attitudes, beliefs, identifications, ego states, negativities, evils, false assumptions and spiritual blindness. The cosmological side includes Divine Influx, mediated influx, influences from celestial, spiritual and infernal realms, connections with the earth and its biosphere, and interaction with or understanding of the vast universe.

As part of our cosmological duty we have to take certain fine substances with us into the spiritual world. In TCR 103, Swedenborg describes how the spiritual soul enters the next life with a limbus composed of the purest things of nature. He did not describe how those very fine substances were accumulated because the

method of doing it has been known from the most ancient times. In the Western world it is hardly known at all. The principle is this: in this world we are created to assimilate three foods - organic food, air and impressions. Organic food is digested and refined in the stomach and the intestines, and in its fine state is carried by the blood to the liver for further processing. Oxygen, from the air, is drawn into the lungs and is carried by the blood to the tissues where it oxidises the refined food to release energy and still finer substances. These are carried to the brain where they mingle with sensory impressions received from the world.

If people receive impressions passively they simply pass unchanged into the memory, but when people process their impressions consciously with awakened minds different things happen. The digestion of impressions leads to the release of ultrafine substances which pass to the heart and then reach the genital organs. When even traces of conjugal love are present in a person, the ultrafine substances stored in the genitals flow around the developing spiritual body and form the required nimbus.

The ancient Egyptians were well aware of this process, and when they mummified the bodies of important persons they removed the stomach, intestines, liver and lungs, treated them with preservatives and stored them in canopic jars. Each jar was presided over by one of the four sons of Horus - Imset, Duamutef, Hapi, and Qebehsunef. This was a recognition and respect for some of the vital organs which played an important role in the production of the finest substances of nature, and required for the formation of the nimbus. Each son of Horus who presided over a particular organ was also associated with a particular cosmic direction.

<u>Deity</u>	<u>Organ</u>	<u>Direction</u>
Imset	Liver	West
Duamutef	Stomach	North
Hapi	Lungs	East
Qebehsunef	Intestine	South

The correspondences of these directions are expounded in Swedenborg's book ***Heaven and Hell***.

The heart *ib* was left in the body and over it was placed a scarab of stone bearing sacred inscriptions. The scarab was carved in the shape of a scarab beetle Kheprer and this represented *transformation* or *coming-into-being*. This procedure corresponded to the whole cycle of man's regeneration.

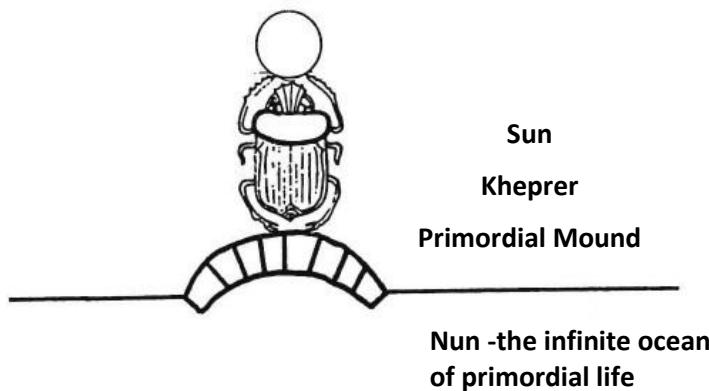
Scarabs are found in great numbers in the sands and burial sites of Egypt. Some are found on signet rings, others occur on pendants, and still others were carried as talismans. They were made of hard stone, glazed steatite, limestone or faience. Large heart-scarabs were flanked with falcon's wings and bore an inscription which said:



O my heart, the most intimate part of my being! Do not stand up against me as a witness before the tribunal... For you are the god who is in my body, my creator who maintains my limbs.

The scarab beetle, *Scarabaeus sacer*, was selected as a sacred symbol because of its habit of taking a mass of animal dung and moulding it into a ball much larger than itself.

It rolls the ball along with its hind legs and pushes on the ground with its front legs. The ball is then buried in a hole and eaten. The process is repeated many times. In the breeding season an egg is laid in the buried ball, and the hole is loosely filled with soil. After hatching, feeding, and pupating the young beetle digs its way to the surface. The Egyptians changed the beetle behaviour slightly to make it into a representation of a fundamental spiritual process. They showed the scarab pushing the sun into the heavens with its front legs.



Here the word undergoes a change to become -

Khepri - The One who comes into being.

Of Him it is said

Kheper - djes -f (He came into being of Himself).

A Coffin Text describes creation as follows:

I fulfilled all My desires when I was alone. I assumed form as that great soul wherein I started being creative while still in the Primeval Waters (Nun) in a state of inertness, before I had found anywhere to stand.

I considered in My heart, I planned in My head how I should make every shape.

I planned in my heart how I should create other beings - the myriad forms of Khepri - and that there should come into being their children and theirs.

Khepri also means the rising sun and in creation myths it is the first sunrise, the dawning of Divine Light in the universe. In the spiritual rebirth of a person this process of creation is reenacted, and the dawning of spiritual light indicates that transformation is well under way.

The expression *yer khepru m* means *be transformed* or transform oneself into... Khepru is the word for change of form or state, transformation, become a new being, rebirth, and stands for the whole process of being brought to life as a spiritual being through the lengthy process of regeneration. This is the central theme of life which should concern every living person today.

The Being of any individual is his or her state of inner togetherness and is derived from its eternal pattern or Divine Idea. The becoming (Khepri) of a person is their transformation from a state of incompleteness to a fuller realisation of their ideal state. Regeneration or transformation is a major theme in Swedenborg's theological writings and the Index to **Arcana Caelestia** contains nine pages of references to the topic, **True Christian Religion** has an entire chapter on *Reformation* and *Regeneration*. It is a key process in life and is a matter of urgent concern to every person. The ancient Egyptians were fully aware of the cosmic need for rebirth and wrote about it extensively in the **Pyramid Texts**, the **Coffin Texts** and the **Book of the Dead**. Most people who read translations of the texts are unable to understand them for they are pure correspondences of a subtle and complex nature. For example, one pyramid text says the aspirant must lasso the gods, kill them, cook them and eat them. Some Egyptologists and anthropologists assume this to be a carry over from primitive African practices, but they are taking a literal view and fail to see the inner significations. Since gods represent celestial things relating to good and truth and *cooking* or *boiling* signifies preparation for conjunction, the final process of *eating* is the actual conjunction of the individual with divine and celestial things. No person of sound reason can afford to neglect these invitations to new birth and new life. The celestial state should be sought after as the ideal condition of eternal life, and that requires one to detect and reject negativities and evils, and

to feed upon and assimilate the fine energies, loves, wisdom and consciousness of this higher world. It is essential to be nourished and affected by influences from Above.

The universe is an immense energy-system and contains many grades of energy. Cosmic energies include gravitational energy, thermonuclear energy, chemical energy, kinetic energy, heat energy, vital energy, neural energy and the energy of will to mention but a few. All are derived ultimately from Divine Energy. Every object in the universe is a device for transforming one type of energy into another type. The Egyptians understood the principles of energy transformation and dramatised it in one of their great myths concerning the destruction of mankind. The myth tells how people conspired against God soon after the beginning of time. Evil had entered human hearts and people everywhere cursed God and refused to obey His laws. God, represented as Rē, sent his eye *yeret*, in the form of the lioness-goddess *Sekhmet shmt*, to chastise the upstarts. Sekhmet wrought havoc and the fields were deep with the blood of the slain. Sekhmet hungrily consumed the blood. Rē saw that Sekhmet was out of control and, having pity for the human race, decided to halt the destruction. During the night Rē arranged to have the fields flooded with beer which contained a red dye. Sekhmet thought it was blood, consumed it, became drunk and fell asleep. All this drama took place far to the south of Egypt. The god Thoth brought the lioness-headed goddess back into Egypt, and when the two arrived at Aswan he plunged her into the water. This act transformed the violent lioness into the gentle cat Bastet. Many statuettes of Bastet were made and they had the form of a woman's body bearing the head of a cat. The cat-goddess was regarded as representing friendship, quietness, gentleness and happiness.

Now look at the transformation which took place.

Sekhmet	→	Bastet
Powerful, destructive energy	→	Calm, gentle, benevolent, energy

The name Sekhmet is derived from *sekhem* - *power, powerful, have power*. Sekhmet, the lion-goddess, is the power-carrier and represents a very great energy which can be applied in a katabolic or destructive way. But what is it that is to be destroyed? The myth plainly states that the *evil of men* has to be crushed. Considerable energy is required to overcome the evil, and the energy comes from the Lord God. As soon as the evil is corrected the energy is modulated and becomes the power to promote peace and happiness. There is

no longer the need for a 'powerful force to bring about correction, chastisement and the destruction of evil. Symbolically, the powerful lioness is transformed into the peaceful cat, Bastet. The change is not automatic but is effected by the influence of Thoth, the personification of Wisdom-in-action. One of the lessons in this for us is that we ought to subject ourselves to the dynamic action of Truth received from Divine Wisdom, if we seek renewal and transformation. Life is enriched and refined by means of actual energies, and not merely by a collection of thoughts. We must learn to become recipients and handlers of fine energy in order to procure soul-growth. Truth is incisive and cuts through the roots of falsity and evil. This may cause suffering to those individuals who are still emotionally bound to their negativities, and it may hurt them to see the death of various things in themselves which they formerly regarded as precious and important.

In this phase of transformation the power of Truth can be likened to the vigorous destructiveness of Sekhmet. With the eradication of false, misleading notions, Truth acts more gently as the radiant illuminator and instructor of the soul, and this is represented by the transformation of the fierce lioness into a gentle cat.

The ***Book of the Dead***, whose proper name is *peret in heru - Coming Forth by Day*, contains several chapters which deal with transformation. There are ten of these chapters and they bear titles which seem very strange to us. They include *Chapter of Making the Transformation into a Hawk of Gold*, *Chapter of Making the Transformation into the Serpent Sata*, *Chapter of Making the Transformation into the Benu Bird*, and so on. Remember that we are dealing here with modes of ancient thought in which correspondences, spiritual symbols, mythological themes and representations were used prolifically. The animals and forms selected as patterns of transformation symbolise *states of being* and *stages of inner development*. For the Egyptians each of these creatures represents an attainable level of psychospiritual experience in which new states of consciousness, inner perception, feeling and volition could be enjoyed and applied.

Let us briefly examine Chapter 83 which bears the title *Chapter of Being changed into the Benu Bird*. It reads, in part, as follows:

I flew up as the Primeval God and assumed forms. I grew in the seed and concealed myself like the tortoise. I am the essence of every god. I am the Great One who gives light from his body. I come as day...

At the end of the Chapter is a rubric which, among other things, states:

He who knows this chapter will come forth pure by day after his death... and no evil thing shall have dominion over him.

The benu bird *bnw* is the grey heron, *Ardea cinerea*. It has a long straight beak and the head is adorned with a double crest. At dawn the bird is seen as a glistening shape skimming over the water. This sight reminded the Egyptians of one of the great creation stories of the past.

Before the world came into being there was the infinite, unbounded ocean of Divine Life called Nun. A divine bird formed itself in the ocean and flew up out of its depths. It settled on the Primeval Mound and uttered a cry which broke the eternal silence. As a result of the cry, the whole creation came forth. The divine bird is the benu bird, a representation of the Lord God, and its cry portrays the *λογος*, the Divine Word. The heron or benu is a form of God and is self-created.

This is similar in principle to Swedenborg's declaration that the Lord in the world is His own Son (SD 5927).

The benu bird is the principle of life and is the constant Divine power which brings forth myriads of things and sustains them. To be transformed into a benu bird means to enter into conscious, loving conjunction with the eternal spirit of life, and to continue an active life of uses in eternal realms.

The Greeks changed the name benu into phoenix and, because they never understood the spiritual symbolism of the benu, they invented a ridiculous story. The phoenix was said to consume itself in flames and arise reborn out of the ashes every 500 or 1,000 years. Herodotus tells an even more impossible story, but that does not concern us here.

A very subtle and almost completely neglected aspect of Egyptian spirituality concerns the shadow in the human psyche. The Egyptian word *shewit* means *shadow* or *shade* and the ancients regarded it as an essential component of the human makeup. The shadow accompanied the soul through death and played a role in spiritual life. It was known that evil souls and shadows could be restrained and imprisoned in the next world. Chapter 92 of The ***Book of the Dead*** declares:

Ye shall not hold captive my soul. You shall not keep my shadow imprisoned.

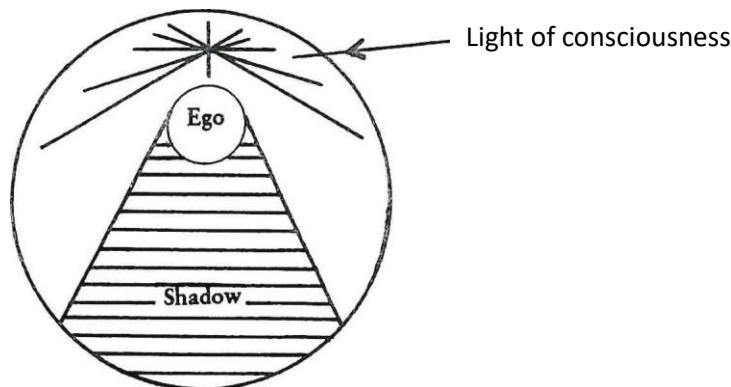
If a person had lived well during life then, after death he could joyfully say:

... is open a way to my soul and to my shadow.

And once the way is open the soul can see God.

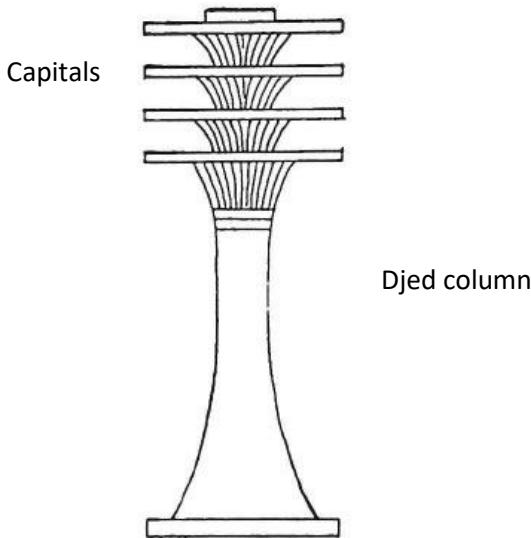
But what precisely is the shewit or shadow? The Egyptians knew that a mysterious dark something existed inside them which was composed of heavy, negative states. If it persisted as a mass of evil it would work against a person in the spiritual world. But it could be redeemed and refined to become a useful soul-function. The statement that *a way is open to the soul and shadow* indicates that a transformation is possible.

It may come as a surprise to many people to hear that they have a shadow or shewit in their being. Indeed, it is universally present in all people. Wherever a proprium or ego exists it blocks the light of consciousness and casts a shadow into one's interiors.



From the diagram we can easily see that the bigger the ego becomes the larger will be the shadow. There is no light in the shadow and one cannot see what it conceals. When people learn to work on themselves honestly and sincerely they can diminish the ego, allow more consciousness to penetrate their interiors, and see what the shadow contains. All the evils and falsities of life are there and include buried anger, hatred for others, fears and above all, *illusions*. The illusions of self-importance, of having great knowledge and power, and the illusion that one knows oneself, are all part of the shadow. The dark, internal shadow also conceals useful functions and undeveloped potentials, and as long as they are hidden they are unavailable for use.

A very interesting and enigmatic symbol of transformation or rebirth is the djed column. This is a wooden column bearing four capitals at the top end and often painted with bright colours. Quite often eyes were drawn on it, feathers were attached, and even a linen skirt was draped around its base.



The word Djed means *stable, enduring* and in the upright position indicated to be spiritually alive with eternal endurance.

Traditionally the djed column was associated with the ritualistic re-enactment of the death and resurrection of Osiris, who is the representation of God-Man. Research shows that the djed column is an object brought over from prehistoric times and is of very ancient origin. Nothing is known of its early use and symbolism. In the Osirian ritual the djed column was placed on the ground in a horizontal position to indicate the death of the god. The raising of the column into the vertical position represented the resurrection of Osiris and his entry into the spiritual world.

For all people who participated in the ritual, or even watched it, they empathically felt the renewal of life and were annually reminded of the soul's triumph over death. For the Egyptians the rising of the Osiris soul was the central fact of reality, and gave the promise of immortality to those who fashioned their lives on the pattern of the god. The upright position of the djed-column illustrates the importance of moral rectitude in human beings. To be mentally and spiritually upright is to function as a pillar in the temple of cosmic life. The vertical djed column symbolised the spiritual transformation of human beings, and their right to enter heavenly realms.

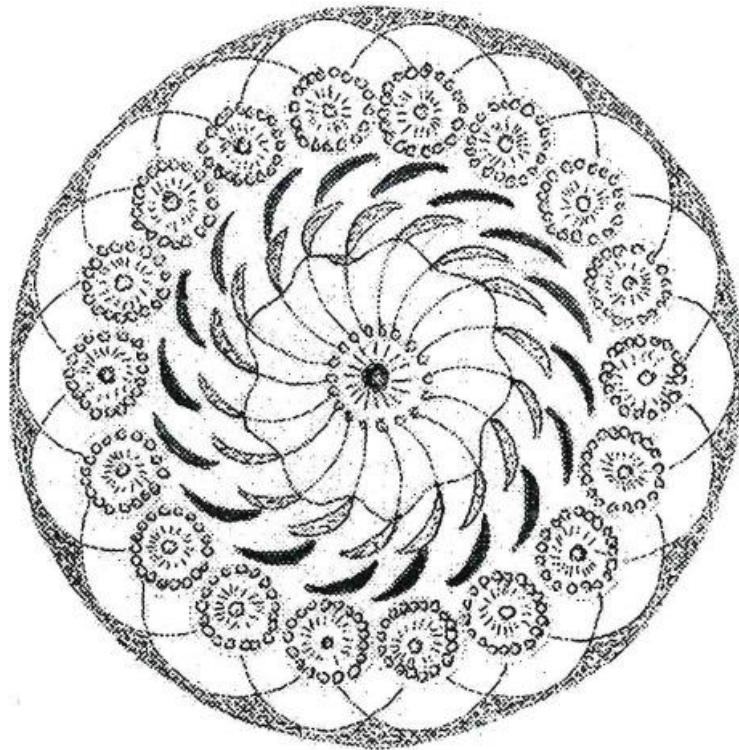
A truly astonishing collection of transformation symbols is provided in the ancient Egyptian book called *Imy duat* or *What is in the Duat*. This book was inscribed on the tomb walls of several kings and is a secret teaching. The duat is

the spiritual world and is described as being located beneath the surface of the earth and also in the celestial sky. The duat is divided into 12 regions, each region corresponding to one of the hours of the night. It is symbolically told that when the sun sinks in the west in the evening, it enters the duat and hour by hour undergoes various changes and adventures until it is finally regenerated. The whole account is too detailed to describe here. Through the entire duat the sun-god is drawn along in a boat, and his followers and associates pull the ropes so that it keeps moving. In the twelfth hour the old worn-out sun-god is towed towards an immense serpent named ka-en-ankh-netcheru - *the life of the gods* or *Divine Life*. The sun-god is now completely pulled through this serpent, entering at the tail and emerging from the mouth. The sun-god seems to pass through the spinal marrow imakh, and in doing so is transformed into the young reborn sun-god in the form of Khepri. Triumphantly, the regenerated sun-god emerges from the serpent, moves out of the eastern end of the duat, and rises in the sky to create the dawn of a new day.

We must carefully note that the word for spinal cord imakh also means *venerated state* or *blessedness*. It is by being in the midst of this state of blessedness that the image of the sun god is regenerated and made new. The cosmic serpent, called Divine Life, is a power-function which acts upon those who affectionately surrender to it, and produces a sublimation of fine energy which is the stuff of new life.

The duat dwzt, or *netherworld*, is within us and is a vast unconscious realm which contains pathways, processes, energies, potentials and substances that are completely unknown to the average person. It is the place where transformation takes place and should be explored by any person who is interested in spiritual growth. Many of the ancients were familiar with the duat and drew maps to show places of hazard and regions of renewal.

The correspondential process of the renewal of the image of the sun in the duat is a reminder to people that they must renew and revivify their image of the Lord God and of heavenly life within themselves at regular intervals. It is by means of such renewal that they keep alive their connection with God and aid the process of personal transformation.



Chapter 74 of the ***Book of the Dead*** contains the following significant passage:

I come forth to heaven, I sit by the light-God.

O, I am helpless, I am helpless, yet I go forth.

Taken literally, the sentence seems to indicate that in the spiritual world the soul can be quite close to God, yet be without power or initiative. Movement and exploration of heavenly life is still possible. In a deeper correspondential sense, the declaration points to a fundamental principle. When a person works on himself or herself for a long time, an abstraction from the physical world takes place, and there is a blessed enjoyment of spiritual states and higher consciousness. This is indicated by being in heaven and sitting close to the Light-God. By the light of higher consciousness the soul sees the truth about itself and discovers that it has no life, power or wisdom from itself. *I am inert or helpless* is repeated twice to drive home this enormous truth. It is the emotional discovery that only God is good, real, true, alive and all-powerful, and that humans can only receive a share of these things. Yet the soul is able to go forth by the power which God transfuses into it, and the enjoyment of heavenly states can be expanded. This passage reveals how clearly the ancients realised their total

dependence on God, and perceived that without Divine Love and mercy they would be dead, inert, non-existent. We must come into the conscious realisation of this great truth and feel its power and significance. It is one thing to accept it as a memory-fact, but only when we see its full power are we transformed by its contents.

The *ka* is a hieroglyph which frequently occurs in religious texts. It is simply a pair of upraised or outstretched arms. In many tombs Ka statutes have been found and they consist of a complete carving of the deceased person, and the Ka symbol rests on the head. Because most Egyptologists are natural-minded persons, they do not grasp the significance of the Ka and refer to it as *the double*, whatever that may mean.

A few appreciate it as the essential energy of a person or deity. However, a deep study of Egyptian attitudes and beliefs clarifies the nature of the Ka and displays its importance in human affairs. These people had deep affection and respect for their recent and ancient ancestors. They never worshipped them, but always felt a deep kinship with the living souls of the departed ones. They believed that their ancestors collectively functioned as the guardians of that vital wisdom and energy which makes human beings what they are. In their efforts to embrace and receive this wisdom-energy they developed the Ka symbol to express the outreach for the power of life. The Egyptians believed that collectively their ancestors embraced them just as they sought to embrace their ancestors. A similar relationship is seen in the life of the Australian Aborigine who lives in intimate contact with the Dreamtime. In an embrace something is transmitted from one person to another, and the Egyptians made the Ka the universal symbol of the sharing of life-substance. Through their inner embrace with the communal spirit of all who had lived before, the Egyptians were convinced they could receive the energy and encouragement to complete their own transformation whilst still living in the world.

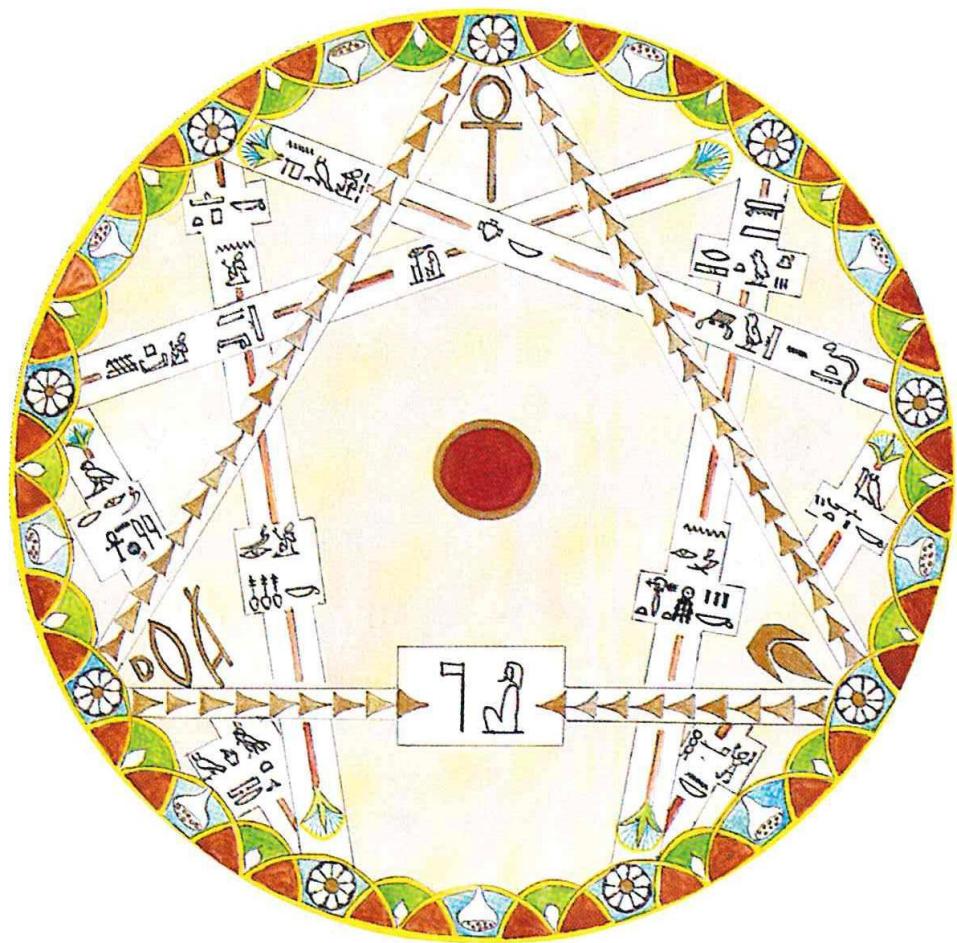
Mandala
based on an Egyptian theme

Enneagram

Points

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 → 4 | <i>The earth is in gladness seeing thy rays</i> |
| 4 → 2 | <i>Sing praise to thee those who are following thee</i> |
| 2 → 8 | <i>Those that rejoice, every heart dilateth forever</i> |
| 8 → 5 | <i>Mayest thou be at peace with me, may I see thy beauties</i> |
| 5 → 7 | <i>A coming forth as a soul, living to see Horus</i> |
| 7 → 1 | <i>May I be received into the presence of Osiris</i> |
| Triangle | <i>O God of Life, Love, Strength</i> |

(Excerpts from the Egyptian **Book of the Dead**)



A Coming Forth as a Soul

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF BIOLOGY

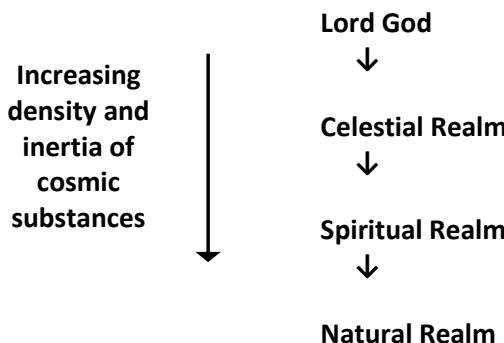


Swedenborg's psycho cosmological view of reality provides us with a huge framework for the exploration and study of all the things we encounter in the world, including ourselves. He describes the real world as being an orderly arrangement of realms or layers in a scale-like manner. At the top of the scale is the celestial, and this consists of ultra fine substances, free-flowing energies, and spiritual heat and light proceeding forth from the Lord God.

The celestial is made alive by innumerable souls of a refined, purified and transformed nature who are able to receive and utilise the heat of Divine Love and the brilliant light of Divine Wisdom. Below the celestial realm is the spiritual where cosmic substances are denser and less mobile, and the illumination is not so intense. The spiritual realm is vibrant and alive with souls of good quality and sharp intelligence, but less evolved and transformed than celestial souls. The third major realm, the natural, is at the lower end of the cosmic scale and consists of coarse material substances, denser atmospheres and many laws to regulate things and events.

The natural world, in this part of the universe, is inhabited by human beings who are souls coated with organic bodies, and adapted to living in the physical world.

A simple diagram helps us to visualise Swedenborg's description of the cosmos.



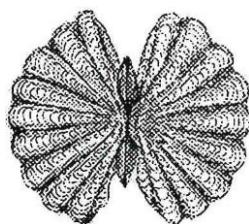
Swedenborg describes creation as progressing from above in a downward manner, and in an orderly, lawful way this produces a series of realms or worlds which differ sharply from one another. He makes it clear that God visualises the whole pattern of creation down to the last infinitesimal detail, and actualises it by the affirmations of Divine Will. Because of this arrangement spiritual things precede physical things and are the cause of their coming into existence (DLW 314-316; DW X11; AC 4240, 4939).

Furthermore, Swedenborg makes it clear that the whole of creation is sustained by the Lord God by means of influx (AC 7004², 7270⁴; DLW 346).

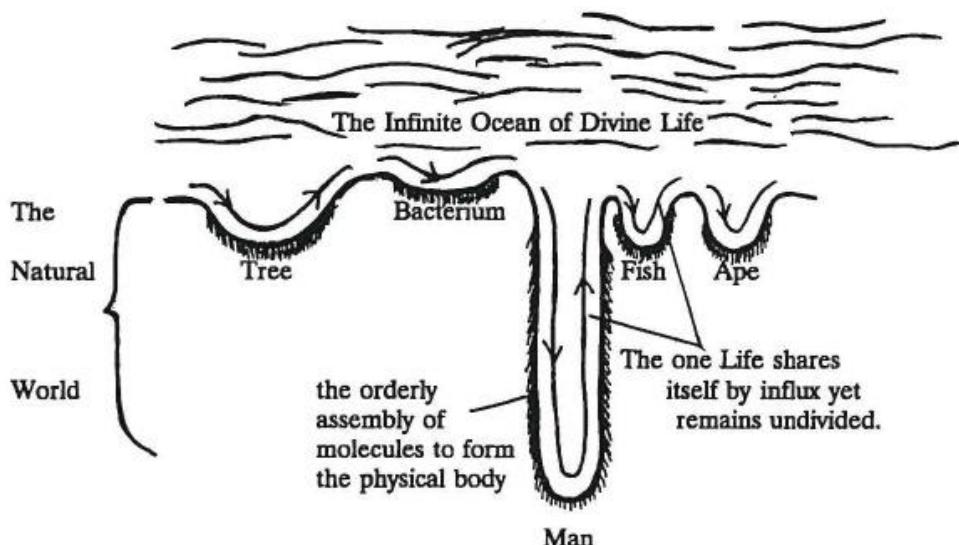
Proceeding forth from God is Divine Truth, energy and ultra fine substance. These influences enter into all things by influx and enable them to exist and perform their functions. Without influx nothing could exist. Influx constantly enters all things, from subatomic particles to huge galaxies and from microscopic bacteria to human beings, and enables organisms to live and lifeless objects to interact in various ways.

In his theological writings Swedenborg sets forth a considerable amount of material to show the priority of spiritual things and how all objects in the natural world are end-effects of the ongoing creative process. He stresses the principle that no organism, great or small, is an independent, self-contained bundle of life. There is only One Life in the universe, and that is Divine Life. The Divine is indivisible and cannot be fragmented into a multiplicity of little lives, but it can share itself by influx. A fine passage from the Indian classic *The Bhagavad Gita*, illustrates the principle quite well:

*With a share of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.
(Gita 10: 42)*



The following diagram may be helpful in visualising the process of sharing the One life with individual organisms:-



The actual situation, of course, is infinitely more complex than a simple diagram can show, but here we are looking at general principles in an effort to understand the nature of existence.

It is the inflowing pattern conceived by Divine Wisdom which generates the final physical form of an organism, and it is important to note that each pattern makes possible the emergence of a set of functions or uses. Swedenborg states:

It is use that commands the forms. This shows that the use existed before the organic forms of the body came forth.

AC 4223

From the infinity of God there come forth an endless variety of functions or uses, and these pass into organic forms for their fulfilment. This stupendous spiritual abundance of urges to use shows up in the physical world as a huge range of organisms, which collectively form the biosphere. More than one and a half million plant and animal organisms have been identified, described and catalogued, and biologists are convinced that several millions more are yet to be collected and classified. In this bewildering array of living things certain principles stand out very clearly, and we shall refer to two of them.

The first principle involves the fine structure of every thing we encounter. Optical microscopy and electron microscopy have opened up wonderful new worlds by revealing an extraordinarily detailed and delicate inner structure of all organisms. Moreover it is a systematic fine structure with an orderly arrangement of minute parts. Molecular biology is able to demonstrate various functions of these ultramicroscopic components, and biochemistry traces out the molecular transformations of organic substances which are intimately associated with these minute components. The second principle is that all organisms are devices for handling energy. Plants, animals and humans assimilate energy, store energy, transform energy and expend energy. This is an important aspect of their cosmic function or use. Even parasites such as Plasmodium which causes malaria, tapeworms, hookworms, Sacculina which infests crabs, bacteria and fungi all carry out this energy-transforming function. This is a dynamic universe in which all things are engaged in action. Action is not confined to living things but is an essential feature of every existing thing. Physicists define action as the time-integral of energy and, at the cosmological level, have been able to demonstrate that the action of stars and planets causes surrounding space-time to become curved, thus generating gravitational fields which help the universe to hang together.

Swedenborg goes to great lengths to show that the Divine is the infinite and inexhaustible source of the energy which is essential for the existence of matter, and for the universal expression of action. Spiritual potencies precede material manifestation, and, for living things, the spiritual dimension includes all those influences, visions, patterns of organisation and drives which enable them to exist, to perform their life-functions, and to populate the earth. On this basis we see that things do not accidentally come into existence of their own accord. A fundamental, directive wisdom sees what is to be done in translating Divine potentials into actualised forms and processes. Divine Wisdom is the power of creation and sets all things into existence and action in a truthful, orderly and lawful manner. Unless valid, truthful and utterly reliable universal laws operated, no thing could exist for even an instant. The infinite knowledge of Divine Wisdom is the practical know-how of generating a universe in which all things act together to fulfil a common purpose. But wisdom does not act alone. Swedenborg has repeatedly shown that wisdom emerges from Divine Love, and is the form of Divine Love. Love always strives to unfold its good in the performance of uses (CL 183³, DLW 230, 297).

The good of love acting through wisdom generates the universe of uses and forms. Meaning, purpose and significance are present in all things because they are inseparable aspects of a living whole which knows how to act. The visible world

corresponds to the spiritual realm from which it has been generated. It is a reflection of Divine processes at work, and by carefully studying the things around us we may catch glimpses of the spiritual operations which brought them into being. There are many biological phenomena which indicate that processes other than physical are at work. Let us consider some examples.

The oil-beetles of Europe and southern parts of the U.S.A. are flightless insects. In order to multiply and be disseminated over a wide area, they need the help of another organism. The female beetle lays thousands of eggs in the soil, and following hatching many larvae crawl up the stems of nearby plants and reach the flowers. In order to survive, the oil-beetle larvae must attach themselves to the legs of the right species of a solitary bee. Upon reaching the bee's nest a larva drops off, enters a cell prepared by the bee, and devours the egg. The larva then feeds upon pollen and nectar intended for the developing bee. During its stay in the nest, the oil-beetle larva undergoes several moults and changes its form so that its spiracles are placed high on the body. This arrangement enables it to breathe while it is floating on the surface of the sticky liquid. Eventually the mature beetle leaves the nest, crawls to a nearby plant, mates, and repeats its life-cycle. Neither the oil-beetle nor the solitary bee have the intelligence or the capacity to work out this relationship between each other, and we begin to discern that a larger and more intelligent principle organises these two quite different forms of life into a meaningful togetherness whereby the life-cycle of the beetle is completed.

Some species of the orchid *Ophrys* produce flowers which bear lips that are shaped and coloured like the female of a species of bee, *Dielis capitata*. Male bees are attracted to these flowers and endeavour to copulate with them. In doing so the bee unwittingly gathers pollen sacs (pollinia), and when it visits another orchid of the same species transfers the pollen sacs when it repeats its performance. Female bees never visit these flowers. The Australian *Cryptostylis* orchid is pollinated by male wasps of the genus *Lissopimpla*. The lip of the orchid is coloured and shaped to resemble a female wasp, and when the male wasp attempts union it collects pollen sacs and transfers them to another orchid flower of the same species. Flowers do not have the ability to observe wasps and bees, and then decide to shape themselves so as to resemble female members of those insect species. A deeper and more perceptive process, which stands behind these two life-forms, discerns the functional usefulness of bringing them together so as to guarantee the pollination and seed-formation of these orchids.

A remarkable togetherness of insects and trees is to be found in the rain forests of the Old World and the New World. In South America an earthquake, violent

storm or volcanic upheaval may destroy a large area of forest, and expose the normally shaded root-mat to damaging solar radiation.

Seeds of short-lived Cecropia trees, which are abundant in the soil, germinate under these conditions and can reach a height of more than 2 metres in less than a year. The trees grow quickly and provide shade for the root-mat, and enable the seeds of regular forest-trees to germinate. Cecropia trees do not reach a great height and their life span is from 30 to 70 years. As these small trees grow they are invaded by young climbing plants which threaten their growth. But colonies of Azteca ants, which live in the hollow branches of the Cecropia plants, attack and sever the twining branches and tendrils of the troublesome climbers and so permit the trees to grow without restriction. In return for the services rendered, the Cecropia trees provide the ants with nectar from glands on their leaves and with protein-rich food packaged in Miillerian bodies found in the axils of the leaf stalks. When the Cecropia trees gradually die out small light gaps appear, and the more permanent species of rainforest trees then occupy these spaces.

The Cecropia-Azteca ant complex is a unique system which assists the regeneration of natural forest following large scale devastation. It is a system which has been provided to help maintain the integrity of the rainforest, and that provision is the outworking of spiritual foresight which discerns natural hazards and generates the means of coping with them.

The giant Barrier Reef Clam, Tridacna, opens its shell underwater to reveal a coloured, fleshy mantle. Embedded in the mantle is a huge population of microscopic organisms called zooxanthellae. These tiny organisms possess chlorophyll and carry out photosynthesis, and the clam feeds upon the products of photosynthesis. The zooxanthellae in turn are given a stable environment in the tissues of the clam.

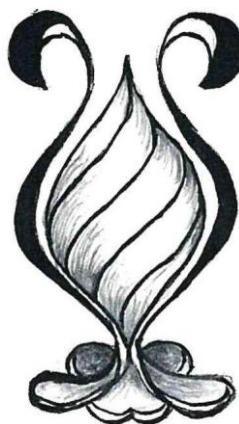
The same sort of arrangement occurs in reef-building corals. When coral polyps are stressed in some way the zooxanthellae leave them and drift about in the sea, and if coral health improves the zooxanthellae re-enter coral tissues. As in the previous examples we examined, the present one provides more support for the proposition that a spiritual organising principle stands behind the symbiotic behaviour of unrelated organisms and enables them to co-exist as a functional unity. These are not isolated phenomena, for thousands of other examples exist in the complex world of nature.

Many people will say that all these phenomena can be explained in terms of adaptation, co-evolution, biochemical modification, genetic variation, and so on. This can certainly be done, but it is simply a matter of attempting to explain end-

effects in terms of other end-effects, and it reduces the whole of existence to a collection of fortuitous events in which there is no meaning or purpose. Externally, we are biological beings who have the same sorts of cellular, genetic and biochemical characteristics as other living things. Internally, however, we are spiritual formations and can learn to explore our spiritual foundations through extensive inward investigation. When our cleansed internals are illuminated by the light of consciousness we obtain an inside view of reality, and it is seen that all natural things in the external world are the visible end-effects of spiritual processes and dynamics which produce and sustain them.

Throughout history there have been many prophets, visionaries and mystics whose direct inner perceptions testify to the spiritual foundations of reality. Men like Plotinus, Ibn El-Arabi, Jalaluddin Rumi, Milarepa, Jacob Bohme, and Emanuel Swedenborg are just a few of the mystics whose inner lives were opened to different degrees, and were able to see that the visible space-time world existed only because the spiritual world sustained it. Of all these people, Swedenborg has given us the clearest and most detailed account of the structure, nature and inhabitants of higher worlds. He repeatedly stresses that whatever exists in the natural world has its origin and cause in things which are in the spiritual world (AC 8211).

Furthermore, natural things correspond to spiritual things and represent spiritual qualities, meanings and values. By getting to know these things, and even perceiving them, we enter the spiritual dimension and gradually discern the vastness of the cosmos in which we dwell.



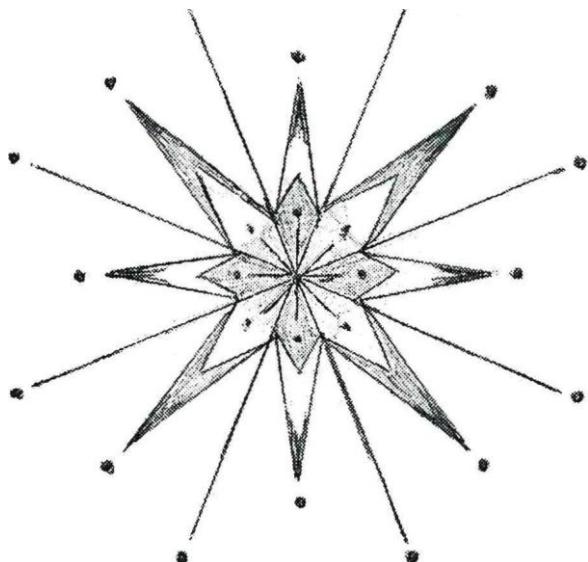
The Greek word bios means *life*. The ancients thought of life as a universal principle which pervaded all things, animated them, and raised itself into autonomous manifestation in organisms. Animistic belief attributed life to the gods, to plants, animals and humans, and even to the sun, earth and planets. Despite the assumed ubiquity of life, no one seemed to know what it was or its mode of operation. Modern biologists reject the idea of life as a universal principle or process: for them it is a complex property of organisms and is the outcome of molecular processes. They assume that organisms are alive because they possess a higher degree of organisation than inanimate objects. Swedenborg's view of life is different. He perceived that life is neither capable of being created (TCR 40) nor is it something which automatically evolves out of finite chemical substances. Life is the active essence of Divine being, is infinite and eternal, and is love - wisdom in perpetual application. Life is not analysable into components, but is prime source substance from which all existing things are derived. In the light of this stupendous principle, biology can be studied in a new and refreshing way. When it is understood that organisms are forms created to receive the one, undivided life in many different ways we begin to see that all species of plants and animals are devices through which life is able to express functions, processes and uses. Creation provides life with the opportunity to translate its potentials into external applications and realizations. All things which come into existence have a role to play in the unfolding cosmic drama of life, and all things correspond to the spiritual potencies, qualities and meanings which brought them forth. Everything has a useful function to perform, and when we study these uses we catch a glimpse of the unifying reality that stands behind all appearance.

As an example of uses we shall examine a group of small marine organisms of which most people are unaware. These are the gastrotrichs which are less than a millimetre long, and have tiny, cylindrical bodies that bear scales and bristles. They have a simple nervous system, but do not possess eyes. They live in the spaces between sand grains on beaches. These minute organisms feed upon and process algae, bacteria and organic matter found between sand grains, and release nutrients into the sea where they can be absorbed and used by other organisms. Because they are very numerous in some areas they collectively release a large mass of nutrients every day. Since sand corresponds to the external knowledge held in the memory, we can see that the gastrotrichs correspond to the gentle insinuation of higher influences into our minds for the sake of removing contaminating factors which would otherwise obscure our perceptions.

On all sides we are surrounded by a plethora of natural forms and processes which incessantly display spiritual wisdom at work. Our limited range of sensory perception restricts us to an outside view of things, and we do not discern the

spiritual energies and processes which enable them to exist. The things we see in the world are visible representations of spiritual potencies, which are their inner reality. Everything is a symbolic representation of the real world, and if we wish to explore this world we must become familiar with the universal language of symbols.

Swedenborg employed the term correspondence to describe the relationship between visible things and the unseen spiritual principles and powers which brought them forth. He was convinced that the study of correspondences was the *science of sciences*, and even wrote to universities proposing that the science of correspondences be established as an integral part of higher education.



We know from the profound researches of modern thinkers like Carl Jung, Eric Fromm and Joseph Campbell that psychological symbolism plays a central role in the understanding of the operations of the human mind. Dream symbols, religious symbols and the symbolism of mythology enable us to come to grips with unseen processes and currents of energy which are active in the unknown depths of the psyche. The study and employment of psychological symbols can be of considerable value to those people who strive for self-understanding. But Swedenborg goes far beyond this idea of intra-psychic symbolism with his science of correspondences, and shows that correspondence is a universal process which functionally conjoins the Divine with celestial, spiritual and natural realms, and links people with God, heaven and nature (HH 87 - 115). He stated:

... Nature has been created simply for clothing the spiritual and for presenting it in a corresponding form in the ultimate of order.

HH 102

On this basis every existing thing is a cosmic hieroglyph which represents a multitude of spiritual meanings, values, dynamics, states and potentials, and by penetrating these three-dimensional symbols with the aid of correspondences we are able to enter a wonder-world of vibrant spiritual processes, uses, truths and loves. The study of living organisms in the light of the science of correspondences opens up the spiritual foundations of biology in a most enlightening and rewarding manner.

There are many ways in which we can participate in correspondential relationships and acquire experiences of a new order which may contribute to our transformation. Consider the simple experiment of standing before a large tree and beholding its magnificent form. Mentally review the life-cycle of the tree from germinated seed through the sapling stage to its production of flowers, fruits and seeds. Next, review your own life and see how it runs parallel to that of the tree.

The sapling stage corresponds to the formative years of your youth, and the flowering, fruiting and seeding should correspond to the love, wisdom, spiritual enlightenment, good and uses which unfold in your mature years. Now feel an empathic affinity with the tree, and sense that just one great Life activates you both. The tree is full of activity and continually reaches towards the sunlight, and here you must challenge yourself with the question. *Do I, in a corresponding way, reach towards the Divine Light and feel the exhilarating energy of life flowing through me?*

Then consider the photosynthetic function of the green leaves on the tree. Sunlight energises chlorophyll enabling it to cleave water molecules and release

oxygen into the atmosphere. Streams of energised electrons pass out of the chlorophyll to an orderly series of receptor molecules. Carbon dioxide is then combined with certain molecules to form glucose and starch, and further modifications of glucose give rise to fatty acids and amino acids. All this is taking place while you are looking at leaves. *Now what is it in you that corresponds to chlorophyll, to sugar or to proteins?* Use this as an exercise to discover new things about yourself. We change and grow when we seriously reflect upon the nature of existence, and become aware of hidden functions in our lives.

Rebirth is an important theme which various religions teach, and it is central to Christian doctrine as Jesus Christ said:

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3: 3

Swedenborg has a great deal to communicate about rebirth or regeneration, and the index to *Arcana Caelestia* contains more than eight pages of references to the topic. Chapter 10 of *True Christian Religion* presents an excellent treatment of regeneration. Rebirth is essentially the transformation of a person whereby they are changed from a natural being to a spiritual being. Inwardly they undergo a change of form, and come into the possession of new faculties and functions which consolidate and enrich their spiritual life. Outwardly they have the same appearance, but inwardly they are a new person. This transformation or rebirth should be the normal pattern of development for every human being. Unfortunately this is no longer the case, because people everywhere live in a kind of psychological shadow which prevents them from consciously perceiving the aim, sense and meaning of their existence.

In this sleep-like state they fail to see that they have cosmic responsibilities to fulfil and do not even suspect that they are expected to make something worthwhile out of their lives. Inner perception shows that people are sown like seeds into planetary existence, and are expected to develop and exercise all aspects of themselves. On the inside they should consciously receive Divine Influx in a state of delight, be enlightened by the truths of wisdom, and be conjoined to God through reciprocal love. On the outside they should manifest the qualities of the inner self through alertness, productive activity, affectionate fellowship with others, and engage in serviceable uses. All too often this is not how people live. Self-centredness, self love, negative emotions, forgetfulness of God, irresponsibility, irrational thought and behaviour, identification with external things and with small psychological states, narrowmindedness and neuroticism cloud the human situation and rob personal life of its finest opportunities.

Some people do awaken to the fact that their lives are disorderly and incomplete, and they realise that some big changes must take place if they are to become real individuals.



Relatively few people undergo the transformations of regeneration or rebirth, principally because it is a long process and requires them to work against and overcome many negative states in themselves. Transformation or metamorphosis is change of form and entry into a new mode of life. There are many examples of it in the natural world. A tadpole undergoes extensive metamorphosis to become a frog: the frog is quite unlike the tadpole, has a different life-style, and feeds upon different kinds of prey. A caterpillar can only crawl over twigs and leaves, and feed upon vegetation for a period of time before it encloses itself in a cocoon, where it undergoes a dramatic transformation. The butterfly which emerges from the chrysalis stage is completely unlike its earlier caterpillar form.



It is now delicately structured, has the power of flight, may be brilliantly coloured, and feeds upon sweet nectar. During their development crabs undergo several changes of form before they reach adulthood, and all the stages are quite unlike each other. This is true for all other crustaceans. All multicellular animals display rapid transformations during their embryonic development, and young embryos have a very different appearance from their adult forms. These biological illustrations indicate the need for some kind of transformation so that organisms may achieve completion. Such outer indications serve as reminding factors to human beings, who should read the signs and apply the principles to themselves. Psychospiritual rebirth ushers in a whole series of new internal states which often

destabilise the individual, and sometimes cause them to doubt the correctness of their efforts. However, this kind of experience is well-known, and is described by Swedenborg:

A person who is being regenerated, and also a person who is regenerated, passes through variations of states of love and faith by elevation towards interior things, and by depression towards exterior things.

AC 10134⁶

It requires courage, sincerity and determination to undergo rebirth and tolerate the fluctuations of regeneration. But when it is realised that transformation is effected by the Lord God, when we are willing for it to take place, then we can rely on the greatest power in the universe to help us become new beings. Our spiritual dimension is opened from within and we are no longer mere biological organisms.

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*Our soul alone knows which events, circumstances
and relationships are most conducive in leadings
our being to perfection*

(drawn from Edward Bach)

Swedenborg's Vision:

A Quantum Leap in Time



There are many laudable things that could be said about Emanuel Swedenborg the man himself, his attainments and his contributions to mankind. For a long time to come, scholars will continue to produce useful and interesting accounts of his life and his work. As a prelude to this talk we should be conscious of three things:-

1. The entry into the natural space time world of one of the most versatile and productive people in history.
2. The systematic disclosure, through this man, of new and detailed knowledge regarding God, the spiritual world, and the hidden things of reality.
3. The effect upon mankind of the doctrines, truths and principles communicated by Swedenborg for the specific purpose of initiating spiritual awareness and responsibility.

In brief, Swedenborg was the instrumental means of making known to mankind a detailed account of the nature of life after physical death, of the occupations and activities of those who dwell in the spiritual world, and of the practical steps to be taken in this life so as to lay the foundations for a happy and useful eternal life. Swedenborg provided a clear, logical and consistent view of spiritual life and brought it within the comprehension of people who yearned to have reliable knowledge of the post-mortem state. Some of the earlier accounts of the spiritual world, such as the Egyptian ***Imy Duat (What is in the Underworld)*** and the Tibetan ***Bardo Thodol (Tibetan Book of the Dead)*** sought to describe levels, places and events in that realm, but only general portrayals were set forth. By comparison, Swedenborg has provided us with detailed descriptions of what people do in the spiritual world, how they dress, where they live, and what occupations they follow. His honest accounts of what he directly perceived make a striking impact upon the reader and, in many cases, forever alter one's view of life in its visible and invisible phases.

As a thinker and investigator Swedenborg established himself as a devoted seeker after truth. His logical and orderly mind, coupled with honesty and integrity, marked him out as a man of conscience and reliability, and one whose views were not to be lightly dismissed. After many decades of pursuing the sciences, which he loved so dearly, Swedenborg entered into a new phase of life when his spiritual senses were opened and he gained access to the things and people of the spiritual world . With the same truth-seeking spirit of inquiry, the meticulous recording of his experiences and observations, and detailed cross-referencing of his copious notes, Swedenborg developed a bulky collection of theological writings which he believed to be of the utmost importance for mankind. For Swedenborg, the importance of these theological writings was due to their being received directly from the Lord God (TCR 779, 780).

Emanuel Swedenborg bequeathed to the world a living religion of universal dimensions which takes into account the higher worlds, the infernal worlds, the scientific facts of the natural world, and the broad spectrum of human experience; this religion clarifies the functions and duties of human life, and brings purpose into existence; and it contains a methodology which can promote the purification and upgrading of the human spirit. Swedenborg demonstrated how the visible world was to be understood as the final common pathway through which the Divine creative affirmation, love and wisdom were objectified and rendered into external forms of use. A cosmic function is associated with everything that exists. The universe is composed of degrees or levels which are discrete and do not merge into one another. The celestial is distinct from the spiritual, the spiritual is distinct from the natural and the natural is distinct from the infernal. Each discrete level has its own unique energies and properties. In principle, this was an interesting fore-shadowing of the concept of discrete quantum energy levels in atoms developed in the 20th century. Despite the discontinuities in the universe, Swedenborg saw that the Divine was fully present in each level and that a living influx entered and supported all things. Human beings receive this influx and experience it as life. By means of the life-mind energies they receive, all people are enabled to act upon the physical world and translate ideas and impulses into external effects. But Swedenborg introduced a new principle which is still not fully appreciated, namely that the end of creation is the conjunction of God with the universe, and this conjunction is to be effected through human beings (DLW 170; AE 1207⁴). Creation is organized so that through humans there may be a descent of Divine things down to nature, and from nature an ascent to God through people (AC 3702, 4009, 4042). The more consciously, willingly and affectionately we participate in this two-way process, the more effectively is the world conjoined with God. This vision of the central importance of humans in creation was further

developed by Swedenborg who, in many parts of his theological writings, declares that every thing and organism in the world has reference to us (TCR 67).

Whereas modern evolution theory indicates that people have no special, privileged position in the world but is just one more species spawned by the laws of random gene assortment and natural selection, Swedenborg confidently declares that the human spirit has been created to complete an immense cosmic pattern and has a significant role to play in the scheme of things. But the role must be played with affectionate acknowledgment of God, humility, absence of self-love, a spirit of charitable service, and an eagerness to contribute to the harmony of the whole by assimilating and living the truth and good which proceed from the Divine.

Swedenborg's vision of the spiritual world was not a single, isolated experience but an ongoing state that lasted for more than a quarter of a century. For many hours each day he moved into the spiritual world, explored many realms there, conversed with all manner of people, and enjoyed an exceptionally wide range of experiences. Many of his direct insights were incorporated into his theological writings, and represent the honest record of an astute, trained observer. The things that Swedenborg encountered in the spiritual world are timeless and eternally valid. From these he gained insights that were far ahead of the science and learning of his day, and this seemed to be making time-jumps ahead of his contemporaries. In his *The Spiritual Diary*, paragraphs 3576 - 8 set forth an important principle. There he declared that everything in the universe had been brought forth to perform a use, and so fulfil a Divine end or affirmation. However, uses and ends are never mere theoretical abstractions, but are intentional strivings that require organic substances as their instrumental means of operation. He wrote:

Throughout the universe use can never be separated from organic substance

SD 3577

and for useful functions to come into manifestation they must proceed from external organic substances.

Swedenborg further declared:

Since affections and thoughts are simply changes of state in the forms of the mind, memory is nothing other than the permanent state of those changes. For all changes and variations of state are such that once they become habitual they become permanent.

DP 279

In DLW 316, he specified the neurons of the cerebral cortex and called them *star-like forms* which send fibres to the body. Swedenborg indicated that the flow of affections and thoughts is due to changes and variations of state of the substances in the neurons and their fibres. These fascinating insights were procured at a time when there was no systematic organic chemistry or physiological chemistry; hormones and neurotransmitters were unknown; the nature of proteins was not understood, and there was no means of measuring and quantifying neural impulses. Only in the 20th century have scientists been able to demonstrate that fluctuations in the secretion and concentration of various neurotransmitters (acetylcholine, adrenalin, nor-adrenalin, serotonin, dopamine, etc) are intimately associated with thought and feeling, mood and sentiment. Other modern investigators have found that the formation of enduring memory is intimately associated with the synthesis of new protein material in cerebral neurons. Swedenborg's view of the involvement of organic substances with the processes of mental life has been repeatedly verified by modern research.

However, Swedenborg was not a reductionist who tried to explain mental experience in terms of physical matter. He endeavoured to show the relatedness of things, and how all aspects of human life - body, mind, soul - formed a single complex. For him, life flowed from Above, from the Lord God and descended by degrees through several worlds until it insinuated itself into the organic substances of the body. Swedenborg was strongly opposed to the notion that life, mind and spirit had their origin in matter. But he recognized that wherever the fine spiritual substances of life, consciousness, thought and will are active there must be appropriate organic substances to provide them with channels of expression. He discerned that every part of creation was substantial, and appropriate grades of substance were necessary for the generation of forms or the performance of action (*God alone is Substance in itself* - DLW 283), and from that fundamental Substance all other degrees of substance in the universe are produced by condensation and progressive separation from the Divine. Hence there is Divine Substance, celestial substance, spiritual substance and material or chemical substances portrayed by the periodic table of elements. Our bodily senses are quite incapable of detecting finer spiritual or celestial substances, even as they cannot detect cosmic rays or radio waves. Following physical death, when the centre of gravity of life is transferred to the spiritual body, the spiritual senses of that body register the things and substances of the spiritual world in a firm and tangible manner.

Swedenborg presented the view that the complexity and abundance of creation is but a partial expression of the infinite nature of God. In God there are infinitely

many potentials, and this is the source of the endless variety of things to be found in the world. He declares:

All things are the recipients of the unlimited influx of the Divine: infinity stands at the heart of the finite . Because all things arise from the Infinite, then they must display endless detail in their internal structure, and an endless variety of forms, functions and differences.

DLW 155

Modern science has demonstrated that with increasing microscopic magnification, living and non-living structures display fine details and complex formations quite beyond anything known in the days of Swedenborg. Electron microscopy and molecular biology have revealed new worlds within familiar objects, and physicists have shown that at the heart of physical matter there are complex interactions between fundamental particles, wave phenomena and curious combinations of fractionally-charged quarks. Modern biologists now realise that every natural population has a gene pool that contains enormous genetic variation, and from this pool emerges the great diversity of phenotypes (observable characters) we see in the world (Ayala, F.J., *The Mechanisms of Evolution*, in *Scientific American*, September 1978, p 48). Only in recent times has this principle been fully appreciated. While Swedenborg did not foresee the specific forms of information regarding the fine structure of things, he was conscious of the inward complexity of things and perceived that they were manifestations of the Infinite Lord God. That which he spiritually discerned as a working principle has been demonstrated, at least in a physical manner, more than two centuries later.

In the field of dream psychology Swedenborg was far ahead of his contemporaries, and it is only in recent decades that his observations and studies have been more fully appreciated. Dr. Wilson Van Dusen has rendered a sterling service to mankind by providing an excellent and sensitive commentary to Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* (Swedenborg Foundation Inc., New York, N.Y. 1986). Of Course, Swedenborg knew from his study of the Bible that dreams were highly regarded in ancient times, and were considered to be instruments of prophecy and revelation. He broke new ground in the mid-1700's by adopting an empirical approach to his own dreams, and endeavouring to understand their contents. Swedenborg found that a deeper wisdom lay behind the symbolic drama of his nocturnal dreams. Sometimes this wisdom chided him, at other times it seemed to instruct him, and on still other occasions it provided indications for correcting his thought and behaviour. The recording of his dreams and his attempts to

understand them brought about changes in Swedenborg's life, and Dr. Van Dusen has drawn attention to the quality of writing before and after the period of recording the dream journal. Works written before the Journal was compiled are highly intellectual and lifeless, while those written after the Journal are alive and filled with feelings (JD 19 and 20). This first ever record of dreams and their analysis was another leap ahead in time, because it was not until the 20th Century that the systematic study of dreams and dreaming became a scientific pursuit. Following the pioneer work of Freud and Jung, clinical psychologists made extensive use of their patients' dreams in the effort to resolve neuroses and behaviour disorders. Today there are several dream laboratories which employ sophisticated electronic equipment to explore the duration, cyclicity and psychophysiology of the dreaming process. It must not be forgotten that Swedenborg was the herald of this new era of dream analysis. A delightful summary of the symbolic nature of dreams is presented in the book ***The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths*** by Eric Fromm, a renowned psychologist. Like Swedenborg, he affirms that dreams and parables are expressed in a universal symbolic language, and that we can come to know this language.

A careful study of ***Arcana Caelestia*** reveals a very detailed spiritual psychology which not only describes levels and functions of the mind, but also indicates practical methods for its purification, development and integration. This psychology of inner transformation is to be found in all of Swedenborg's theological writings, and is brought into a neatly summarized form in ***True Christian Religion***. Swedenborg insisted that all the laws, truths and procedures he recorded were not his own, but came from the Lord God. This being the case, then we have available to us the most meaningful, practical and effective system of regeneration we can procure. A central theme that is repeatedly stressed is the need for the aspiring individual to make ongoing efforts to struggle against his own weaknesses, negativities and inadequacies. According to Swedenborg, God continually acts in a creative way to bring about the restructuring of life, and we should co-operatively respond by resisting useless habits, intelligently reviewing and correcting our belief systems, and modifying our emotional reactions in the light of what is good and true. This helps to open inner pathways through which higher influences can reach us. Real efforts are possible only when we are fully awake to our life situation and can see what ought to be done. *But just how awake are we?*

Swedenborg declared:

In the Word, natural life is compared to sleep and spiritual life to a state of wakefulness.

TCR 606

Elsewhere, he brought the message home more forcefully:

... whilst a person is in spiritual life they are then in wakefulness, but when they are in natural life separated from spiritual, then they are in sleep; and what they then see resembles what they see in a dream

AE 1006

also:

The state of a person when in their proprium, or when they suppose that they live from themselves, is compared to "deep sleep", and indeed by the ancients was called deep sleep.

AC 150

Relatively few people paid much attention to the idea that a considerable number of human beings lived out their entire existence in a state of psychospiritual sleep. It is therefore refreshing and exciting to realize that in the 20th century two unusual men expended considerable energy in trying to arouse people from their sleep state. About the time of World War 1, G. I. Gurdjieff introduced into the western world a set of methods and teachings which were said to be forgotten aspects of Christianity which shared common ground with the methods of certain eastern esoteric schools. Gurdjieff had spent decades tramping through the Orient in search of ancient knowledge, and received instruction and training at many important spiritual centres. His work attracted the attention of the noted author, P.D. Ouspensky, who studied under Gurdjieff and became a leading exponent of what was called "The Work". Gurdjieff and Ouspensky taught both the theory and method of struggling against the spiritual sleep of people, and showed people how to resist idle day-dreams and fantasy. They urged their students, who included famous people, to seek the clarity of consciousness, and develop the need to overcome pride and vanity. Gurdjieff taught the importance of reverence for the Lord God Who dwelt in the *Holy Sun Absolute*, and indicated the necessity for a reciprocal interaction between God and people in order to achieve a thorough-going transformation of the human essence. Now while none of these teachings was developed from Swedenborg's theological writings, they are an intensified application of what Swedenborg had indicated. Humans were in a state of sleep and had to be aroused from sleep in order to be able to participate in spiritual life. A fundamental principle set forth by Swedenborg had reappeared later in the

time-stream to arouse people out of their internal lethargy. Yet another of his spiritual visions had leaped through time to be recognised and applied as a valuable principle two centuries later.

Swedenborg taught that the transformation of human beings requires another kind of life to be formed in prepared, receptive individuals (AC 3610²; TCR 572, 573). This new life is spiritual life and comes from God. It is not an automatic arising from blind belief or pseudo-piety, but comes about through personal effort and a wish to be conjoined with God. Concerning the need for personal effort Swedenborg wrote:

A person can, as of themselves, reform and regenerate themselves, provided they acknowledge at heart that it is the work of the Lord. Everyone who repents and believes in the Lord, is being reformed and regenerated; a person must do both as of themselves, but this power to act "as of themselves" is from the Lord ... you were not created statues but people, so that you might co-operate with the Lord as of yourselves.

TCR 621

No one is ever compelled to participate in the deep psychological processes of self-examination, recognition of inner conflict and negativity, refusing to identify with bad states of mind, and resisting evil tendencies. If the wish, love and will to be transformed is there, it can be done; and all the necessary steps are set forth in Swedenborg's theological writings. We live in an age when people like to get involved in all manner of studies and movements. They attend workshops in a variety of practical subjects, investigate the teachings of oriental religions, and pursue courses that impart the principles of self-improvement. The spirit of change is among us, and many persons are looking for a new way of life which is meaningful and effective. It is into this situation of change and the anticipation of better things that the works of Swedenborg can be introduced for the benefit of many individuals. Once the beginning student can master Swedenborg's terminology and become accustomed to his frequent repetition of key principles, he will begin to find in the spiritual writings a great abundance of material that can be employed to bring about self-change. To feel that our life is the very influx of the Divine is an important experience, for it helps us to discern that we exist in the midst of an incredibly vast, orderly and meaningful cosmic system. Knowing how intimately we belong to the world of Divine Order can stimulate us to make active efforts to more fully participate in its processes and delights.

A survey of the whole of Swedenborg's spiritual writings shows the depth and breadth of his insights. In them he has woven together the Lord God, the celestial and spiritual worlds, the starry universe, the world of nature, human psychology, aspects of anatomy and physiology, early phases of history, the science of correspondences, and many factual things revealed by physical science into one great, meaningful complex. Through his profound grasp of the oneness of God he discerned unity and order in all the works of God, and thereby understood the principle of holism. In recent times the holistic way of thinking has been revived in the minds of many people, and especially in the field of alternative medicine. The spread of such a broad and inclusive concept could well prepare the way for a wider appraisal of Swedenborg's great contribution to humanity. For Swedenborg, every natural thing and process referred to God, heavenly life and people through correspondence. He saw interconnections between things that modern objectively-trained minds often fail to perceive. And he never wearied of pointing out that the attitudes we hold determine whether we shall see reality in its lowest and most external form or in its more radiant spiritual state. Science, technology and a great deal of modern education tend to give us an outside view of reality: Swedenborg invites us to undergo a change of heart so that we may also enjoy an inside view of reality. As our holistic inner-outer view of things enlarges, so we become more spiritually substantial in ourselves and more conscious of the real world.

Swedenborg was convinced that the *science of correspondences* provided the key to understanding the nature of the natural world and for the unfolding of the spiritual contents of the Word. His theological writings contain many references to correspondences and he provides numerous examples of how they operate. A correspondence exists when images of spiritual things are correctly and adequately represented in natural things. Specifically:

... what is natural is nothing else but a representation of the spiritual things from which it comes forth and subsists; and that the representation by the Natural is precisely in accordance with its correspondence.

AC 4053

Internal or spiritual things must clothe themselves with external things so that they may be made manifest. Writing under Divine guidance, Swedenborg sought to restore the ancient science of correspondences which he said was well known in earlier times by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Egyptians. Apart from Swedenborg's theological writings incredibly little was known about correspondences. Then, in 1931, there appeared an English translation of a book

entitled ***A New Model of the Universe*** by P.D. Ouspensky (Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, London, 1960). We have already encountered this author in connection with the struggle against psychological sleep. In the chapter, *Esotericism and Modern Thought*, Ouspensky likens the process of creation to innovative and productive work in a Great Cosmic Laboratory. He wrote, ...*all the work of the Great Laboratory had in view one aim - the creation of Man* (p51). This idea is in complete accord with Swedenborg's message, and in his theological writings we encounter the following declarations:

... *man is the principal end of creation ... all things were created for their sake.*

TCR 67

Everything has been created for man as its end.

DLW 170

Ouspensky further declared:

The Laboratory began to work long before the appearance of man. A multitude of forms was created ... and each of these forms, in order to be alive, included in itself and expressed some of the fundamental cosmic laws, appearing as their symbol or hieroglyph.

(Ibid pp 50 - 51)

Here is the principle of correspondence restated in a very concise form. In a few words, Ouspensky indicates that the things of the natural world are the end-effects of higher, prior energies and laws; the outer forms differ from the inward causes yet are the symbolic or hieroglyphic representations of them. This is very close to Swedenborg's statement that:

The spiritual things to which natural things correspond, present themselves in the Natural under a different appearance, so as not to be recognized.

NJHD 258

Such recurrence in time, in different ages, of a leading principle is an hyparchical process that leads to its fuller manifestation and operation.

Swedenborg informs us that the ancients who were conversant with the science of correspondences often made religious objects that were representations of spiritual things. This was done for the purpose of frequently reminding themselves

of Divine laws and principles (see CL 76). Archaeologists have uncovered thousands of artifacts from ancient sites by means of systematic excavation. Among these artifacts are many symbolic objects which have religious significance. Students of early civilizations may well find that an understanding of the science of correspondences can help them to more completely grasp the beliefs, concepts and spiritual attitudes of the people who made those artifacts. The spiritual significations are as true today as they were three or four thousand years ago, because that which is spiritual is eternal and does not change with passing time.

The Divine is Infinite and Eternal. Swedenborg endeavoured to show that Infinity is not indefinitely extended space, and that Eternity is not endless time. Space and time, he declared, began with creation (TCR 27). In Eternity everything we call past, present and future is an ever-living NOW. Swedenborg describes the timeless experience of celestial souls as follows:

... they have ... the most perfect remembrance of what is past, and intuition of what is to come, since both the past and the future are all in their present

AC 2493

Because Swedenborg received his enlightenment from the Eternal, Living God, the things made known to him had a direct bearing upon the past, present and future of the space-time world. His visions and insights that had reference to what lay ahead of him, and which appear to us as time-jumps, were actually the unfolding of some of the innumerable potentials already present in the Eternal. Through spiritual insight and the reception of knowledge from the Eternal, Swedenborg enjoyed a very large view of life which extended far beyond his place and time of existence. He saw that many of the ancient values that formerly sustained and inspired human beings, had disappeared from society, and had been replaced by concern for survival, greed, possessiveness and the quest for wealth, power and fame. But he received the vision of a new heavenly process which was to re-establish an internal conjunction between God and people, and this involved an opening up of spiritual arcana in the Sacred Word. He could see that a new enlightenment was under way, and realized that it could not take place suddenly. It was made clear to Swedenborg that this latest extension of Divine Love and Wisdom to the human race was for the sake of its regeneration and revivification, and:

... is to have its beginning with a few, afterwards to be with many, and at last to grow to its full state.

Moreover,

This new church is the crown of all the former churches.

TCR 787

Here, indeed is a big quantum leap in time that probably extends through many centuries. Already there are distinct indications that the process is under way. When Swedenborg's *Arcana Caelestia* was first published very few people read the work and accepted its doctrines. As the decades passed the number of readers increased, societies were formed, and churches were established. Today, there is a slow but unmistakable growth in the number of readers of his theological works. More scholars are taking an interest in his theological writings, and there is a growing volume of literature which serves to expound and clarify the spiritual doctrines he communicated.

In this present age of change many people are looking for new meanings and values. Quite a number of nominal Christians have moved away from their church because they feel that something vital is missing. Some turn to Yoga, Buddhism, Sufism and Tantra in their search for an understanding of the nature of existence. We are in the midst of an extensive spiritual transition which Swedenborg says began in the spiritual world and must inevitably be reflected in the natural world. Out of this search for a new spirituality there may emerge a wider acceptance and recognition of Swedenborg's message, and a grateful employment of deeper teachings and methods of transformation communicated through him from the Lord God. This active search for the truth of things is a healthy sign, because it shows that various people are no longer content to passively listen to dogmas and admonitions, but wish to experience for themselves the dynamic processes of the spirit. God acts and human beings must react or respond if real changes are to take place. People who actively search for spiritual truth may be able to enter into a state of reciprocal conjunction with God, and receive the power to perceive and live that truth. But for those who remain passive and expect God to endow them with bliss, enlightenment, salvation and security, no conjunction can possibly occur. Swedenborg is very clear on this theme:

... action and reaction are the cause of all conjunction, while action and mere passiveness do not produce any conjunction; for an agent or active power, when it inflows into what is merely passive, passes through and is dissipated, for the passive yields and recedes.

The moral of all this is very simple: we should always actively seek out that which is useful, good and true. When we encounter Divine goods and truths, it is our duty to act in accordance with their indications. To be able to do this means that we must stir ourselves out of our psychological sleep.

A number of references have been made to the principle of transformation, and we must now examine it more closely. Transformation or metamorphosis, is a change of form whereby the appearance, internal organization and lifestyle of an organism is appreciably altered. We are familiar with many biological transformations which occur in various groups of animals. For example, a barnacle egg hatches to release a minute free-swimming nauplius larva; later this changes into a cypris larva of quite different form, and finally settles on a firm surface to undergo metamorphosis into an adult barnacle. A fertilized oyster egg releases a trochophore larva which changes into a veliger larva, and this soon becomes a free-swimming spat. After about two weeks it settles on a hard surface and becomes the familiar rock oyster. From a butterfly egg emerges a small wormlike larva which feeds and grows into a caterpillar. Eventually it spins a silken cocoon around itself and becomes a pupa or chrysalis. Here a very extensive restructuring of the creature takes place, and there finally emerges an adult butterfly with beautifully coloured wings that enable it to enjoy the freedom of aerial flight. In DLW 354, Swedenborg refers to this very metamorphosis, and likens the caterpillar to earth-bound person and the butterfly to the image of transformed person in a heavenly state. Such analogies are helpful in grasping the central idea of transformation, because if human beings aspire to become spiritual beings they must undergo a corresponding type of change. Swedenborg makes it very clear that untransformed person is incomplete and disorderly. He wrote:

*The natural person is nothing but a beast, as regards their will ...
What a person's nature is by birth, and what it would be unless
they were regenerated, may be seen in savage animals of all kinds.
They would be a tiger, a panther, a leopard, a wild boar, a
scorpion, a tarantula, a viper, a crocodile, and so on. Unless,
therefore, they were transformed into a sheep by regeneration,
what would they be but a devil among devils in hell?*

TCR 574

Hard words, indeed, and they may hurt our pride, but they are true. Transformation by regeneration is the means of being psychologically and spiritually changed into the image we were created to be.

Transformation in human beings is essentially an internal change. It does not alter one's face, body or speech, but profoundly changes the mind.

A regenerated person is ... born again ... created anew ... and is altogether another and a new person.

AC 3212²

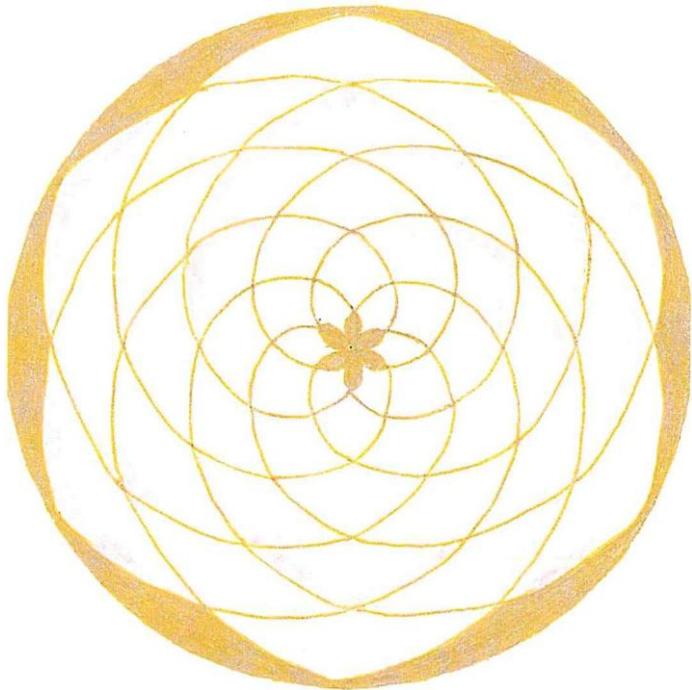
The mind of a regenerated person is now open towards heavenly life, and there is love towards God and one's neighbour. The ability to love God from within oneself is the greatest arising that can take place in the human psyche, according to spiritual wisdom. To some, this may not seem to be a very big thing, and they may declare that a manned space flight to Mars or finding a universal cure for cancer to be far more important. However, the genuine ability to love God is a capacity which is given from Above, and it leads to the state of intimate conjunction with the Lord God. By means of such conjunction the transformed individual becomes the recipient of endless love, illumination, instruction, wisdom, delight, and the power to be useful and effective. Transformation of being in this life leads to endless perfecting in spiritual life, because there is no end to the growth, purification and development of the human spirit. We humans bear within ourselves an enormous abundance of potentials that are capable of being actualized and applied. Yet in most people hardly any of them are even recognized, let alone developed. We have far more in us than nature requires for survival and adaptation. We are Divinely endowed with an inexhaustible treasury of undeveloped functions and uses, and it can be our delight to bring these forth into serviceable expression.

Transformation through regeneration depends upon the formation of a new will. This will is the nucleus of our spiritual life and it has to be formed in us by Divine influx. We are not sufficiently clever or wise to form a new will for ourselves. A new will consists in constantly striving to love and apply the good and truth that proceeds from God. We cannot simply think ourselves into this desirable state, but by working on and gradually improving the quality of our affections, we can pave the way for the formation of the new will. What a person understands, knows and believes must be in complete agreement with the will. Renewing of the will also requires renewing of the understanding, and unless these functions are in a state of co-operation and harmony there can be no unity of being.

The details of rebirth or regenerative transformation are many and cannot be recounted in a short talk. In order to acquire a sound knowledge of this most important process it is necessary to explore the theological writings of Swedenborg. The chapter on *Reformation and Regeneration* in ***True Christian***

Religion provides an excellent, clear introduction to the subject, and for those who wish to pursue it in depth **Arcana Caelestia** is the work to study. All this remarkable and eminently helpful material was set down by Emanuel Swedenborg more than two centuries ago. He ushered in a new era of practical spirituality which can be of the greatest benefit to those who sincerely and intelligently apply themselves to the truths set forth in his theological writings. Swedenborg's work has not fallen into disuse or stagnation, but has projected forwards in time a range of concepts and principles which others have taken up and developed in their own way. Swedenborg's vision of higher worlds, of the process of transformation, of the value of correspondences and, above all, of the nature of the Divine, has made possible the entry into the human race of a completely new understanding of the significance and purpose of life. May we, who now live in what was the future for Swedenborg, share his vision and be affected and inspired by it, just as he was two centuries ago.

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*By trying out the impossible, over and over again,
the possible becomes manifest*

(drawn from Hermann Hesse)

Appendix

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG



His pioneering and creative intelligence, a restless, germinal, well-nigh universal mind that took all of earth's secrets - and, at length, heaven's - for its province.

So wrote the Editor of the Boston (U.S.A.) *Sun* newspaper about Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) at the time of the 250th anniversary celebrations in 1938 of Swedenborg's birth.

In terms of intellectual stature and original, creative thinking, Swedenborg has been compared to Leonardo da Vinci. Yet, for the most part, the world remains in ignorance of the significant contribution made by this Swedish genius in so many fields of human endeavour, and of the veritable mine of enlightenment to be found in his theological writings which give the blueprint for individual spiritual development and growth. These theological writings are known to have influenced the earliest anti-slavery movements, and many of the great thinkers and religious leaders during the past 200 years. These same theological writings largely inspired the establishment of infant education in Germany and England in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Their impact has spread far and wide like the ripples in a pond but the source is largely forgotten. Today, though, as the world enters a new era with a growing thirst for an understanding of the purpose of life and the working of the human psyche, there is a re-awakening of interest in, and appreciation of, the immensely valuable insights to be gained from the contents of Swedenborg's works. His name is becoming increasingly known.

Emanuel Swedenborg, born in Stockholm, Sweden, in the year 1688, was the son of Jesper Svedberg, a bishop of that country. Endowed with a remarkable mind, he grew up to be one of the Sweden's most illustrious men of science. In an era when, compared with now, scientists were few and limited, Swedenborg investigated in all directions of the physical universe. He made many remarkable discoveries and anticipated much of our modern science. He wrote

some thirty-three scientific works embracing such widely differing subjects as metallurgy, mineralogy, physiology, mathematics, cosmology, and the structure and function of the brain. During this period of outstanding mental activity he worked in an important government position of a Royal Assessor of Mines, and contributed significantly to the re-vitalisation of the mines industry of Sweden. Swedenborg travelled extensively throughout Europe, taking notes everywhere on the latest scientific marvels, meeting the leading scholars of the day, always searching, wondering, probing the mysteries of life.



In all this, his desire was to locate and understand the working of the soul. Having reached the limits of human knowledge to postulate the existence of the soul, and for the deductions he brought forward, rational as these were, he gradually realised that he was not going to achieve his objective. At the age of fifty, Swedenborg relinquished government work and his scientific and anatomical research. Whilst continuing a normal, active life of a man in his position, being a member of the Upper House of the Swedish Parliament, he began a detailed study of the Bible following a series of spiritual experiences. It may sound extraordinary, but Swedenborg claimed that for the last twenty-seven years of his life, from 1745 to his death in London in 1772, his spiritual faculties had been opened enabling him to become a citizen of two worlds at the same time - this natural plane of which we are all conscious, and the spiritual dimension of consciousness into which we fully enter when the physical body ceases to function. A scientist and philosopher, as he had been, trying to demonstrate the existence of the things of the spirit, Swedenborg was brought to see that the answers he had searched for and principles he had tried to discover would need to be revealed - from above and from within.

The profoundest questions about the existence of God, the creation of the world, our spiritual dimension, and the Divine government of the natural and spiritual world, are all discussed in one or other of the approximately thirty volumes which comprise Swedenborg's theological writings. He saw these things written by himself as a God-given response capable of satisfying the

questioning and the probing of men and women in full possession of their rational and critical faculties.

Neville Jarvis 1987

Recommended Further Reading

on Swedenborg's Contribution to Spiritual Understanding and Enlightenment

Swedenborg Life and Teaching

George Trobridge

Revised by Richard H. Tafel, Snr.

156 pages, paper and cased, Swedenborg Foundation Inc.

The most widely read biography of Emanuel Swedenborg with summaries of his theological, scientific and philosophical works.

The Heavenly City

Emanuel Swedenborg

112 pages, paper, Swedenborg Foundation Inc.

and in *Audio Cassette Format*, The Swedenborg Centre, Sydney. A 1993 modern and lively translation by Lee Woofenden of *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*. Sub-titled A Spiritual Guidebook, this edition makes an excellent and challenging introduction, and a handy reference, to his major theological concepts by Swedenborg himself.

Emanuel Swedenborg - Essential Readings

Edited by Michael Stanley

176 pages, paper, The Swedenborg Centre, Sydney

A selection of quotations from Swedenborg's theological writings presenting holistically the physical and spiritual dimensions of life, including the Divine Nature, man's nature, rebirth, sexuality, the spiritual ages of mankind.

The Presence of Other Worlds

Wilson Van Dusen

256 pages, paper, Swedenborg Foundation Inc.

A fascinating account of the monumental journey of Swedenborg through the depths of his own mind to spiritual worlds beyond and back again. In detailing Swedenborg's spiritual voyage, Van Dusen presents the reader with the awesome opportunity for self discovery.

Aim - The Workbook

Peter S. Rhodes

165 pages, paper, J. Appleseed & Co.

Based on a lecture series on Emanuel Swedenborg and Maurice Nicoll entitled "New Will", this book provides a practical spiritual growth method developed from Swedenborg and Gurdjieff.

Light in My Darkness

Helen Keller

160 pages, paper. Swedenborg Foundation Inc.

Revision of Helen Keller's My Religion including additional material from Miss Keller's other essays, letters and lectures. Foreword by Norman Vincent Peale.

Swedenborg Explores the Spiritual Dimension

Brian Kingslake

176 pages, cased. The Swedenborg Centre, Sydney

An introduction to the teaching of Swedenborg, dealing with such topics as his life, creation, heaven and hell, ruling love, self-judgment, sex and marriage, church history and organisation, and many other subjects. It is written with humour and human sympathy.

Swedenborg Researcher's Manual

William R. Woofenden

366 pages, cased. Swedenborg Scientific Association

Covers Swedenborg's complete literary output, glossary of technical terms, selected list of key concepts in Swedenborg, and major documentary collections.

THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE

A non profit organisation which promotes an awareness and appreciation of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg in Australia. The Centre in Sydney is located at:-

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