

Philip W. Groves

Swedenborg  
and the  
Dynamics of Transformation



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Dr. Groves received PhDs in Biochemistry, Divinity and Psychology as well as having specialised interests in the fields of Natural Medicine (diploma of Naturopathy), Chemistry, Marine Biology, Egyptology, Comparative Religion and Botany. He taught for over 40 years in universities, natural therapy colleges, and privately for his own groups of people. The foundation of his teaching, whatever the topic, was always to guide people into the abundance of life, creative expression of life's potentials as well as developing greater knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live.

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The five chapters in this book are taken from lectures given across a number of years – 1986, 1995 and 1996, and reflect Dr Groves great love and deep understanding of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

*Swedenborg and the Dynamics of Transformation*  
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**Key to Swedenborg's book titles:**

AC     The Arcana Caelestia  
AR     Apocalypse Revealed  
AE     Apocalypse Explained  
TCR    The True Christian Religion  
SD     The Spiritual Diary  
HH     Heaven and Hell

**Books Re-issued with new titles:**

Arcana Caelestia                 Re-issued as *Secrets of Heaven*  
The True Christian Religion    Re-issued as *True Christianity*  
De Verbo                         Re-issued as *On the Sacred Scripture,*  
Or *The Word of the Lord from Scripture*

## Swedenborg's Life: A Dynamic Parable

Born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1688, Emanuel Swedenborg entered the world with an internal store of potentials which were to cause a great stir when they eventually awakened. The mass of psychospiritual capacities, aptly named Emanuel, emerged into a social and cultural setting which was congenial for its personal, formative development. His father, Jesper Swedenborg, was professor of theology in Uppsala University and mingled with brilliant scholars and researchers, including Olof Rudbeck, the co-discoverer of the lymphatic system, and the Swedenborg home was frequently visited by academics and church dignitaries for the sake of discussing lofty topics concerning God, salvation, education, citizenship, and the soul. The child Emanuel listened to these discussions; was stimulated by them, and would sometimes address questions to some of the learned visitors, and in his later years Swedenborg reported that between the ages of four and ten he frequently contemplated religious questions, and found delight in learning about faith from clergymen. At the age of eleven his childhood ended abruptly when he was enrolled at Uppsala University, where he engaged upon the task of growing into responsible adulthood, and certainly, many adults had great expectations of him.

Now let us briefly examine the correspondential nature of this phase of Emanuel's life. Genetically arising from families in which there was scholarly, industrial and commercial excellence, he received at birth a high charge of bio-psychological energy and a rich background of phyletic potential. His embryonic soul was planted in the fertile soil of a close-knit, caring and religious family, and consequently the soul was stimulated and fed by the kindly emanations of family members and visitors of high quality. Exposed to dignified and noble topics of conversations, the phyletic stream of religion in Emanuel's essence was stirred and inspired into free-

flowing action so that even in his tender years of childhood he was drawn towards a spiritual way of life. He heard, assimilated and pondered upon the fundamental principles of Christianity and through this stored within himself the *remains*, or essential residues of living religion, which were to be fully activated in his adult life. About the age of twelve Emanuel began to experiment with hypoventilation, and found that he could produce altered states of consciousness by lowering the rate and depth of his breathing.

In 1703, Jesper Swedberg received a new appointment and was obliged to move to the city of Brunsbo. Emanuel moved into the residence of his sister Anna and her husband Eric Benzelius, who loved and admired Emanuel and became his second father. Benzelius was the librarian at Uppsala University and later became Professor of Theology. In his home he had a splendid library of 3,000 books on a great variety of subjects and young Emanuel had free access to these books which covered many subjects. Benzelius was a fine scholar, teacher and researcher, and was also a linguist and Orientalist, and there is no doubt that Emanuel acquired his love of Eastern languages from his brother-in-law. The three men who exercised a major influence in the life of Emanuel were his father, Jesper, Eric Benzelius and Olof Rudbeck.

Emanuel graduated from Uppsala in 1709, but did not receive a degree; rather his ten years of university training was regarded as being an adequate education. Jesper Swedberg inspired in Emanuel a deep respect for the conservative nature of Lutheran doctrine, while Eric Benzelius inspired him with the love of enquiry, the excitement of intellectual exploration and the joy of being able to think freely about all manner of things. These dual influences created a dichotomy in Emanuel's mind, and for years he was inwardly tortured by the conflict of these principles, although the conflict was resolved many years later through a powerful spiritual experience.

Conflict of interests seems to be an important aspect of human life because it reveals the two faces of the coin of existence. To struggle between



opposing tendencies, each with its own attractive features, keeps the mind alert and prompts it to search for a truth or revelation which will decide the issue and end the conflict forever. We work best when the conflict is active, because we are more awake, more conscious, but of course, most people do not like this internal conflict and suffering: they do not understand it, and complain about it quite often, seeking an easy escape from its tension.

In 1710 Emanuel's broader education began with his first trip to England and the Continent which lasted for four years. During this time he frequently corresponded with Benzelius and purchased books and equipment for Uppsala University. This education followed two streams:

1. He lodged with skilled tradesmen and learned the practical arts of cabinet making, bookbinding, engraving, instrument making, watch making and lens grinding. He built his own microscopes and made excellent observations of small structures, including brain cells.
2. He freely mingled with England's leading scientists including the famous astronomers John Flamsteed and Sir Edmund Halley, and Emanuel even worked in the observatory with Flamsteed, and recorded important measurements on positions of the Moon. He studied the discoveries of Robert Boyle and carried out experiments to verify the results of the great scientist. At Oxford he made extensive readings of English poetry and was entranced with the works of Donne, Spenser, Shakespeare and others.

Emanuel was now engaged in the development and enrichment of his fertile external mind. He plunged into the depths of science and rejoiced in its power to explore the secrets of nature. The facts and truths of the world fascinated him, sharpened his intellectual skills and drew him into the materialistic view of reality. His excursion into poetry moved his interest into the fields of imagination, inspiration, mythology and metaphysics, which provided relief from a completely materialistic involvement.

Swedberg travelled to Holland and met Anton van Leuwenhoek, the founder of biological microscopy, who was the first man to see living things

in drops of water. He built microscopes more powerful than Anton's and made observations which profoundly affected him. In his later spiritual writings he made several references to the importance of microscopy, and urged his readers to procure microscopes in order to observe the fine structure of the world. At Utrecht he encountered the 1712 Peace Congress which effectively ended several small wars which were in progress, and his observation of the proceedings stimulated his political sense, and in later years he became politically active in the internal affairs of Sweden.

In France, Emanuel met leading scientists, visited universities and developed visions for the improvement of higher education in his homeland. He was entranced by the great gardens at Versailles, and developed a love of plants and horticulture which persisted throughout his life.

During his four year travel experience, Emanuel's creative mind had dreamed up plans for a number of inventions including designs for an aircraft and lifting gear for use in mines. The plans for the aircraft included a true aerofoil wing, a cockpit for the pilot, and landing gear, and he correctly calculated the right wing area to support the aircraft. This spurt of inventiveness revealed a genuine spirit of creativity, displayed a highly productive imagination, and indicated that he was becoming interested in *uses* and how new inventions may usefully serve the community. The *doctrine of uses* would become a major feature of his spiritual writings.

Here we pause to introduce material that is not usually discussed by the biographers of Swedenborg. Eric Benzelius, the second 'father' to Emanuel was not only a brilliant scholar and linguist, but was also deeply involved in the study of ancient esoteric systems. Since he had a good working knowledge of the original form of Rosicrucianism and the teachings of old occult schools, he was able to impart a great deal of this knowledge to Emanuel and aroused his interest so that the young man began to explore esoteric literature. Just before his trip to England, Emanuel carefully read the book *Polyhistor Literarium* which gave detailed accounts of 'colleges of occult wisdom'. In London he came across other books which described

ancient Jewish 'colleges of prophecy', and learned that in these colleges initiates were taught to form a conscious rapport with angels and learned to receive spiritual communications from them. He also studied books which explained the methods of transmitting thoughts to people in distant places. From the writings of John Norris he learned a great deal about the secret things of sex, and discovered that the sensations of sexual contact constitute a kind of 'sixth sense', and he developed these ideas to a considerable degree many years later in his book Conjugal Love. Emanuel was also intimately familiar with the important writings and diagrams of Dr Robert Fludd, an English Physician who made a life-long study of esoteric teachings.

These events clearly show that the young Emanuel was initiated into arcane or esoteric teachings long before his final spiritual awakening took place. His alert, sensitive mind was responding to deep spiritual truths and feeding his growing essence at the same time as his skill in handling scientific truths was rapidly increasing. However, he was still an external man and could grasp esoteric teachings only in an external, intellectual manner. Some of Swedenborg's biographers have tried to make out that most, if not all, of his inner knowledge arrived after his great spiritual awakening, but this is not the case. He served a long apprenticeship in acquiring the knowledge of the hidden wisdom of life and not until the Lord God fully opened his spiritual senses did he comprehend the enormous depths that lay behind his knowledge.

This pattern of development is true for every living person: a long period of study, learning, practice, contemplation, and exploration is necessary before any great transformation can possibly take place in the depths of the psyche. Yet people do not want to accept this universal principle, and either they assume that rapid growth and perfecting will take place in their lives, or they egotistically pretend they already possess heavenly secrets and only seek confirmation of their ideas.

When Swedenborg returned to Sweden he published the country's first scientific journal, called Daedalus Hyperboreus. Some leading thinkers and

inventors contributed articles and the journal caused a great stir. Emanuel was endeavouring to bring new standards of science and education to his homeland, and to overcome the relative intellectual inertia which prevailed in Sweden at the time, he joined forces with the prominent inventor Polhem, and became his assistant. He was appointed to a seat on the Board of Mines, yet received no salary, and he further engaged upon works of public importance such as the construction of the Gota Canal, development of salt works, and moving a fleet of ships overland. In 1718 he turned down the opportunity to become Professor of Mathematics at Uppsala University, and a year later Ulrica Eleonora was crowned Queen of Sweden, and she ennobled the Swedberg family. The family name was changed to Swedenborg, and Emanuel was seated in the House of Nobles, and for the rest of his life he played an active, useful role in the political affairs of Sweden. During 1719 Swedenborg busied himself with the development of blast furnaces for steel-making, and designed a slow-combustion stove, and further extended his studies in chemistry and geology.

A second European trip occupied the years 1720-1722, and whilst in Holland he published his book, *Principles of Chemistry*, which was favourably received by European scientists. Upon his return to Sweden he was invited to take up another professorship at Uppsala, but declined, to instead become an Assessor with the Board of Mines, where he eagerly threw himself into the study of geology, mineralogy, mining engineering, methods of metal extraction, the chemistry of ores, and safety procedures in mines. Courageously he went into dangerous mine shafts, climbed down long, unstable ladders, and carefully examined mining procedures. This was a hazardous process, but he pursued it with interest and great enthusiasm.

All this work shows how firmly Swedenborg was grounded in the natural world. He loved the wonders of the mineral realm and enjoyed studying ore beds, crystals and fossils. He was determined to observe and understand everything in the visible world, and tirelessly struggled towards this end. This energetic activity corresponds to the whole Spirit of Life which perpetually seeks to explore the world it has made, and to develop multitudes of new uses from the potentials embodied in matter. The world

is not something to be ignored or despised, but is to be explored, developed and understood. The world is the visible end-effect of creation, and everything in it corresponds to some thing, energy, process, law or state in the spiritual world. Swedenborg was energetically obeying the Divine Conatus to move about in the world, to see its hidden things and to comprehend its significance. He was catching a glimpse of the principle of correspondence but did not yet comprehend its full operation.

In 1724 Swedenborg received a regular salary from the Board of Mines, and in the same year helped to establish a Museum of Mining in Falun and a Museum of Technology of Stockholm. Between 1724 and 1734 he published a dozen technical books ranging from Swedish currency, hydrostatics, metals and philosophy. From mid 1733 to mid 1734 he spent a year in Europe meeting scientists and scholars, and making arrangement for the publication of his books, and after a brief period back in Sweden, Emanuel undertook another long trip to Holland, Belgium, Italy and France which lasted four years. In 1736 he began to experience the influx of spiritual light into himself during periods of reflection and contemplation. This occurred again in 1739. In later 1740 he explored hypoventilation again, and felt a mystical radiation throughout his body, and it was during this period that he wrote *The Cerebrum* and put forward a number of advance views of the brain that are still being examined today. He returned to Sweden at the end of 1740.

Swedenborg's first intimations of the inflow of spiritual light marked a new phase of his inner development, and set his mind soaring in the direction of the soul. He resolved to explore the nature of the soul and to show how soul and body interacted with each other. He proceeded to study anatomy in detail and carried out some dissections in Paris. He then relied upon reports and anatomical plates from experts for the expansion of his anatomical knowledge, and his book *The Cerebrum* was the product of his study and thought at this time. The soul now occupied much of Swedenborg's attention and, in the period 1741-1742 he studied the religious practices of Lapplanders, and was deeply affected by the ability of

the tribal shaman to intentionally separate soul from body. At this time he was writing a book entitled Rational Psychology.

In 1743 he wrote the Hieroglyphic Key and began to study correspondences in earnest, and, incidentally, the Hieroglyphic Key does not deal with Egyptian hieroglyphs. A functional connection was now forming between his evolving inner self and his well-trained outer self. He was beginning to see the connection between outer things and inner things, and was approaching a far-reaching spiritual revolution in his life.

Unusual dreams occurred to Swedenborg between 1743 and 1744, and he recorded them and attempted to analyse their contents. These records formed his Journal of Dreams, but it was a private diary and he never published it. Through these dreams much of Emanuel's psychic life went through a vastation and reconstruction which paved the way for the arrival of spiritual perception and revelation. For him it was a period of psychological upheaval and intense suffering, but without such 'birth pangs' nothing of a higher nature can come into manifestation. This must be carefully noted by the faint-hearted who assume that great things flow into them without effort and suffering on their part.

In April 1745, in London, Swedenborg had the most profound and moving experience of his life. He had a direct, tangible vision of Christ in which a two-way conversation took place, and here are Swedenborg's own words:

*"He said that He had chosen me to explain to men the spiritual sense of the scripture and that He Himself would explain to me what I should write on this subject; that same night also were opened to me the world of spirits, of heaven and hell. From that day I gave up the study of all worldly science, and laboured in spiritual things, according as the Lord had commanded me to write. Afterwards the Lord opened, daily very often, the eyes of my spirit, so that, in the middle of the day, I could see into the other world, and in a state of wakefulness converse with angels and spirits."*

(Trobridge 1992: 110-1).

Elsewhere he wrote:

*“I saw that all had helped together to this end; that the spirit had been with me from my youth for this very purpose” (Journal of Dreams: 164).*

In this remarkable event we witness a complete transformation of Swedenborg’s being. He immediately renounced his pursuit of earthly science, which he had dearly loved throughout his life, and from then on devoted himself to spiritual matters. At this point his awakened and empowered inner self became his leading principle, and his well-polished, refined outer self became its servant, its minister. The energized inner self now had the power to see spiritual reality and was able to discern things, processes and truths which are totally unknown to the outer self. From the spiritual dimension he was able to enjoy the grand view of creation, and saw how all external things are the end-effects of the spiritual, creative process. He realised that causes and meanings are in the spiritual world, and will never be found through the analysis of material phenomena. It is utterly impossible for the mind of the materialistic physicist to ‘explain’ the world, for he never sees what generates, sustains and renews the world. Science should always be the servant of humankind, and is a most valuable tool for uncovering new properties of matter and applying them as *uses* to serve humanity. Science can never be the arbiter of truth and is unable to account for first causes or ultimate ends, and like art, literature, music or philosophy, science is a limited function of the human mind.

Having mastered all of the sciences in his contemporary world, Swedenborg was now in the position where he could be directly instructed in the science of correspondences and could be shown how spiritual realities are connected with material realities through an elaborate set of inner relationships. So far as ordinary people are concerned, the correspondences contained in sacred writings help them to sense the presence of living realities hidden away inside the outer form of the dead, printed word. By means of inner significations such people are able to live with greater confidence in spiritual and Divine things, and can learn to cultivate new attitudes and states which improve the quality of their lives.

A deeper exploration of correspondences helps the seeker of truth to enter into highly detailed insights regarding the nature of God, life, soul, body, regeneration and eternity, and on this broader basis, the aspirant is able to enter into close association with spiritual and celestial beings and take on new responsibilities and obligations.

Earlier we spoke of the life-long tension which Swedenborg experienced from the conflict between loyalty to the formalism and conservatism of the church, and the passion and excitement associated with the freedom of free-thinking in science and philosophy. Many years after his spiritual life had been opened Swedenborg saw a temple in the spiritual world and over its entrance were the words, *Now it is Permitted*. He was shown that the words meant that by means of truths in the understanding it is permitted to explore the mysteries of the Word, the inner life and the things of faith with the purified intelligence. No longer were the highly conserved things of faith to be kept apart from free-flowing thought which honestly seeks truth, and the previously hidden spiritual mysteries of the Divine Word could now be entered and its truths revealed. *“Each one of its truths is a mirror in which we see the Lord”* (*The True Christian Religion* 508:6).

Swedenborg at last experienced great inner peace because his powerful, truth-seeking intellect now lived in harmony with his love, his faith and his trust. A truly great integration had been brought about in him and he was fashioned into a complete being. Throughout his spiritual writings he insists that this achievement is possible for every individual who sincerely and patiently works on themselves in the light of the inner, inner teachings contain in the Word.

The complete opening of Swedenborg's being to Divine, celestial and spiritual realities did not automatically perfect his being, but organized his body-mind-spirit in such a pattern that he was able to perceive and accurately report the incredibly rich and complex life of the spiritual universe. In addition to writing down the truths, laws, principles and correspondences that were transmitted to him, Swedenborg had to experience the pleasures and pains of interaction with celestial beings and



infernal beings, and consequently his active spiritual life was not a free “Cook’s tour” of inner worlds, but a direct involvement with the states experienced by all kinds of spirits or souls. The *Spiritual Diary*, recorded in the period 1747-56, is an account of just some of the things and events he encountered, and shows that he had to be educated in the ways of spiritual life, just as in his youth he had to be educated in the ways of planetary life.

In 1747 Swedenborg resigned from the Board of Mines in order to work full time on the spiritual task that had been assigned to him. Between 1748 and 1756 he wrote the *Arcana Caelestia*, a major exegesis of Genesis and Exodus, and revealed something of the inner structure and content of the Word. For the reader, this seems to be a massive work filled with all manner of remarkable teachings and interpretations, yet from the spiritual point of view it is but a fragmentary representation of the infinity of states, meanings and experiences present in higher worlds. The *Arcana Caelestia* is the major resource for all the materials required for a deeper and more meaningful interaction with the Lord God, and this detailed and multifaceted work embodies the universal principles of phyletic religion which can meet the spiritual needs of all people no matter what their formal religion may be. Remember, every formal religion keeps alive the knowledge of God and inspires its followers to trust in the reality and power of God.

What Swedenborg was entrusted to write was the outline of the esoteric pathway which leads to God and makes possible the soul’s conjunction with God. These *are* the heavenly, arcane or esoteric secrets now made available to all people, but so few who read them genuinely grasp them as stepping stones to Higher Life. Those who have experienced several years of intensive work in a sound esoteric school are able to recognize and cherish what Swedenborg has presented. Those with a partial knowledge of science and religion, but have never worked on themselves, are quite unable to see that the *Arcana Caelestia* is packed to overflowing with School Work. Yet it has to be this way in order to separate the genuine seekers from the pretenders and from angry egotists who vociferously express their hostility towards God.

It will be recalled that in his earlier years Swedenborg was introduced to an abundance of esoteric material and studied it in depth, however, it did not change him because it was lodged in his external mind. Modern people must realize that the same process is active in their own minds: they acquire much psychological, occult and esoteric material through reading and group work; they enjoy some new psychic states; and they erroneously believe that a big spiritual change has entered their lives. Yet they have overlooked the obligatory process of weakening the ego, struggling with negativities and separating themselves from subjective evils and falsities. Unless spiritual purification occurs, it is impossible to move away from the outer mind and experience the new states and larger dimensions of the inner self. A careful reading of the *Arcana Caelestia* shows that it contains a detailed account of the ideal pattern of outer cleansing and inner perfecting, which is given in the form of a correspondential description of the inner events in the life of the incarnated Lord. In a much lesser way the life of Swedenborg represents the same pattern – involvement with the external analysis of external life, separation from the external, entry into the internal, and finally integration of the whole being and conjunction with God. By grasping, understanding and following this pattern we gain access to Greater Life, and it is worth remembering that self-guidance leads nowhere, although its adherents convince themselves that they are making splendid progress.

Following the completion of *Arcana Caelestia* in 1758, Swedenborg travelled to London, where, in one year, he wrote and published five books – *Earths in the Universe*, *The Last Judgment*, *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*, *White Horse of the Apocalypse*, and *Heaven and Hell*. Back in Sweden in 1759, he wrote extensively in his home and faced bitter criticism from academic theologians. He took manuscripts to Holland in 1763 and had them published under the titles of *Four Doctrines*, *Divine Love & Divine Wisdom*, and *Divine Providence*, and on his ninth European trip he published *Apocalypse Revealed*. In 1770, at the age of 82, Swedenborg took his last major manuscript, *The True Christian Religion*, to Europe for publication. A year later he settled in Londo where he; wrote *The Coronis* – an appendix to *The True Christian Religion*. He died in London

on March 29, 1772. It is interesting to note that when the First Fleet arrived in Australia, it brought a shipment of Swedenborg's books, hopefully to provide a spiritual foundation for the new colony.

Swedenborg was not a passive, scholarly confirmer of ancient esoteric teachings, but rather through his spiritual writings he was able to show the significance and value of certain ancient beliefs and methods and, more importantly, he disclosed an enormous amount of new and previously unknown material. His detailed descriptions of spiritual life far exceed anything which had been published or taught by earlier authors, seers and mystics. He was not an ignorant man who made vague appeals to faith and belief; he was a very learned person, a person with many practical and linguistic skills, and one who had made big contributions to science, technology, industry and education. He insisted that people should exercise their powers of reason in the search for spiritual truth and that they should be knowledgeable about natural things as well as spiritual things. Every aspect of his life was rooted in spiritual principles and corresponded to those principles. He believed in what he taught because he had personally experienced the rightness and truth of those things; also, his profound love of God, his humility before God, and his utter reliance on God transformed him into a living example of Divine and celestial influences made visible and knowable. We must try and understand that as a connecting link between heaven and earth, Swedenborg was playing a role that was scripted in the spiritual world and dramatized in the material world, and he was a willing and eager participant in the part he was obliged to play.

It is helpful for us to learn that on a lesser scale we, too, have a cosmic role to play and will be able to succeed if we exercise the enthusiasm, devotion, effort and eagerness of a Swedenborg to our life opportunities. Far too many people drift passively and gain little, while others vainly imagine they have reached great heights with little or no effort. If we are to enjoy an abundant, exciting, dynamic and productive life we shall do well by bringing ourselves to the type of paradigm represented in the life of Swedenborg.



## Spiritual and Material Connections

When we study the spiritual writings of Swedenborg we encounter a process which is unique in the history of human experience. Here we have the communications of an unusual man who describes his direct experiences of spiritual reality obtained by years of daily entry into spiritual and celestial worlds, and who was directed by the Lord God to unfold cosmic truths that had been lost to humanity for thousands of years. In addition, a great deal of new material was disclosed that had not previously been known. For almost 30 years Swedenborg participated directly in the life of other worlds, and recorded all that he was shown and taught in his copious writings. These records are remarkable for their clarity, honesty, consistency and internal continuity.

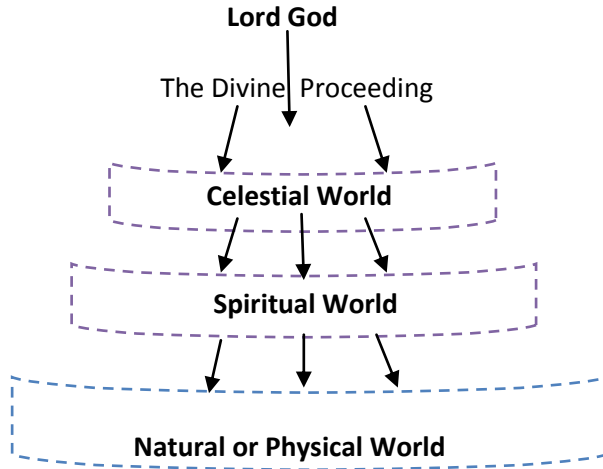
All this was made possible by the long training that Swedenborg undertook as a scholar, mathematician, linguist, geologist, engineer, anatomist, psychologist, physiologist and traveler, and in his time he was probably the last man on earth to truly master all the knowledge of the world. His thirst for knowledge and understanding was unquenchable - as we saw in the previous chapter - and he approached every topic with the same vigor, intensity and enthusiasm. The search for the meaning of life led him into anatomy and physiology, and he performed a number of dissections, becoming a leading anatomist. His microscopic studies of brain tissues enabled him to reason out the functions of the neurons, and his views are scientifically correct.

Swedenborg was strongly religious, but not narrow minded. During his travels he eagerly visited churches of all denominations, including the Vatican, and had long religious discussions with hundreds of pastors, ministers, priests and bishops. His great ambition was to discover and determine the exact nature of the soul, and to this end he employed every

avenue. He spent years examining plant, animal and human organs and tissues in search of clues to the nature of the soul, but at the same time he made a profound study of society, politics and government because these concerned the human condition. In the year 1743, at the age of 55, Swedenborg's inner vision began to open, and for the following two years a vast series of altered psychic states, changes in breathing rhythm and extraordinary dreams took place. He recorded and analyzed some of these dreams, and from this produced the world's first dream-diary.

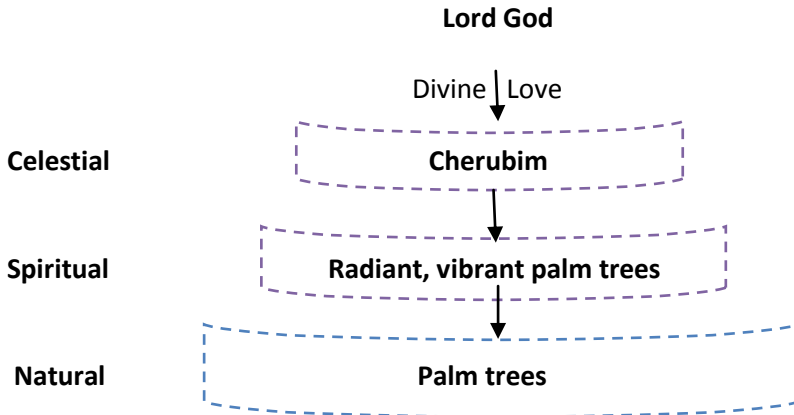
During April, 1745, he went through several tremendous experiences in full consciousness which totally rearranged his life. He came face to face with the Lord who declared that he had been chosen to communicate to humanity the hidden spiritual sense of the Word of God. That same night his spiritual senses were fully opened and he was able to freely move into all the spiritual realms and, at first hand, see the conditions of life in other worlds. Three years later he published the first volume of *Arcana Caelestia*, in which the deeply concealed Divine, celestial and spiritual truths of the Word were expounded for the first time. During the succeeding 23 years Swedenborg published more than 30 books dealing with spiritual life, the regeneration of the human soul, and spiritual doctrine. These include such works as the 12 volume *Arcana Caelestia*, the 6 volume *Apocalypse Explained*, *Heaven and Hell*, *The True Christian Religion*, and *Conjugal Love*, and much more.

One of the crucial principles brought forth by Swedenborg concerned correspondences. He announced that *"Divine things manifest themselves in the world by correspondences"* and that *"the science of correspondences is the key to the spiritual sense of the world"*. We can understand the nature of correspondences by taking into account the layered structure of the universe where there are several worlds which proceed from one another in strict conformity with Divine law and order, and shown diagrammatically on the following page.



These worlds are discreet and separate from each other, there is no direct communication between them, and they do not merge into one another, and in each world there are unique laws, energies and substances not found in the other worlds. Creation is built this way to keep the different laws, principles, forces and grades of substance in cosmic order. Things, affirmations, energies, truths, goods and revelations which proceed from the Lord God successively pass through these worlds, and in each one a different kind of manifestation is generated. Souls which dwell in each world are quite dissimilar in their degrees of awakening, development and receptivity, and what can be received in one world cannot be received in another unless it is modified in some way.

So, in each successive world the original thing flowing from God is differently seen and variously understood, but what is seen in one world corresponds with what is seen in other worlds. There is a continuity of meaning and principle even though the representative forms are unlike in appearance, and again a diagram can be used to illustrate the principle:



The one unbroken impulse from God appears in the celestial world as cherubs which signify love of God to celestial beings; in the spiritual world the same impulse is seen differently as radiant, vibrant palm trees representing spiritual good; and in the ultimate or natural world the impulse terminates as the physical palm tree. So, the palm tree corresponds to spiritual good in the spiritual world and, in the highest sense to Divine Good which is Divine Love. An object, word, sign or representation always corresponds to its hidden component. Visible things correspond to and express the energies, values, meanings, qualities and creative processes that went into their making. This is the way the world is built and every thing that exists corresponds to a spiritual, celestial and Divine set of processes, and is not the arbitrary invention of the human mind.

Now, mere intellectual knowledge of correspondences does not help very much unless there is an appropriate purification of the mind and arousal of new thoughts, feelings and consciousness. Merely to consult a list of correspondences and substitute higher meanings for external things does not really change anything. Correspondences become effective when there is a change of heart and an expansion of one's world view. When one is able to feel and be affected by the spiritual, celestial and Divine things that stand behind the ordinary things and words of the natural world, then



correspondences truly aid the transformation and renewal of the individual. Consider a massive rock – rock or stone corresponds to truth and, in the highest sense, to the endless, living Truth of Divine Wisdom. When a person can outwardly behold a rock and, at the same time, inwardly discern that it is a form or manifestation of spiritual truth, then that person may inmosty receive Divine influx of Divine Wisdom and be profoundly moved and enlightened.

Genuine esotericism is not a matter of getting hold of some fragments of hidden information and then mentally wisecracking about them. It is the process of opening oneself up to huge cosmic influences that come from beyond the personality, and allowing oneself to be acted upon, catalyzed and reformed by their creative action. Correspondences are powerful instruments that link the transpersonal with the personal and bring the dimensions of infinity and eternity into one's life. Correspondences become effective when we have established an affectionate relationship with God.

Swedenborg was able to observe depraved beings in the lower spiritual world who tried to adapt correspondences to the practice of magic. Such beings had acquired a knowledge of certain correspondences and used this knowledge in the following manner. Some would hold a staff or scepter in the hand and concentrate strongly on its spiritual signification – namely, power; but they wanted this power so as to beguile, rule or harm other people. Simple souls would be affected by the apparent energy and radiance proceeding from the staff or scepter, and would then follow the magician, believing him or her to be an extraordinary individual. Other magicians would write out formulae or words and concentrate upon the inward signification, which caused the words to temporarily glow and in this way influence and affect gullible onlookers. Such malevolent beings also practiced this nefarious art while in the physical body, and misled a great number of people, and again their aim was to bring people under their control so as to exploit their bodies, their labours and their possessions.

It takes a while to become accustomed to Swedenborg's terminology, but once this is mastered his writings are easier to follow. We must remember that he was a scholar and a scientist, and he wrote everything in Latin. However, he was precise in his terminology, and this is what we should grasp. He repeatedly uses the terms 'angels' and 'spirits' in all of his work, and by 'angels' are signified purified and elevated human souls, or souls who once dwelled on other planets of the universe, who dwell in the celestial world. They dwell in bliss and harmony, and their leading characteristic is love and a life of good. For them, love of the Lord God is the primary thing and being conjoined with God they are continuously made intelligent and wise by the direct influx of Divine Wisdom which proceeds from Divine Love.

'Spirits', by contrast, are the souls of human beings and people from other planets in various galaxies, who dwell in the spiritual world. Here, life is very different from the celestial world and is lower down the scale of being. The leading characteristic of spirits is their love of truth and learning, and their chief delight is to know and assimilate Divine Truth, and they do not have anything like the love of celestial beings or angels. In addition, there is an intermediate world of spirits where all people dwell immediately after physical death. For them, life continues in almost the same way as planetary life, and many do not even know that they have passed into another world. The world of spirits is a realm of introduction to Higher Life and here there is a gradual sorting out of the celestial types from the spiritual types, and a segregation of foul and infernal spirits. Eventually, as the outermost layers of the psyche are stripped away and the true quality of the soul stands forth, each soul finds its way to its proper place in the immensity of the spiritual universe.

In the *Arcana Caelestia*, Swedenborg makes a dramatic statement based entirely upon his direct experience and observation.

*"The chief of the intelligence which angels have is to know and perceive that all of life is from the Lord, and that the whole heaven corresponds to His Divine Human, and consequently that all angels, spirits and men*

*correspond to heaven; also to know and perceive how they correspond. These are the chief things of the intelligence in which angels are above men; from these they know and perceive innumerable things which are in the heavens, and hence also those which are in the world” (AC 4318).*

In another startling statement he makes it clear that:

*“The states of spirits and angels, with all their varieties, can in no wise be understood without a knowledge of the human body; for the Lord’s kingdom is like a man (Maximus Homo)” (SD 1145:2).*

In these and many other statements Swedenborg makes it very clear that if we seek to understand the meaning and significance of life, we must become familiar with the details of our bodily form. Everything in us corresponds to Divine, celestial and spiritual things, and not only do they correspond, but they are derived from these things. Our bodily structure is the visible end-effect of vast creative processes which terminate in each organ, tissues, cell and fibre. Written within us are all the laws of creation, and hidden in the bodily form are all the principles, goods and truths that relate to Higher Life. In his later years Swedenborg was able to look back and see that all of his deep studies in anatomy and histology were a necessary preparation for the eventual opening of his spiritual senses.

Not only the human body, but every natural thing in the universe – galaxies, stars, planets, moons, mountains, rocks, minerals, clouds, rivers, all plant life and all animal life correspond exactly with Divine, celestial and spiritual qualities, processes, truths, meanings, purposes, affections and goods. Ouspensky understood this principle when he declared,

*“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” (Ouspensky 1971:51).*

Collectively, the body and the world are a library of living hieroglyphs which correspond with and are capable of revealing to the understanding

innumerable spiritual realities. Little wonder, then, that the ancient Egyptians, at the peak of their enlightenment, developed their system of hieroglyphic writing which was largely based on natural forms. The Egyptian hieroglyphs are pure correspondences and when we learn to use them more consciously, they can flood the sensitized understanding with considerable insight and knowledge. The knowledge of how to work on oneself so as to pave the way for transformation is a very great human need.

Since the purpose of creation, the object sought for by Divine Will, is the perfected being of all people, and it is clear that human beings require help in order to achieve this possibility. Genuine esoteric schools – not so-called ‘schools’ of new formation – have always known that help can reach humanity in two ways: directly or immediately from God; and indirectly or mediately from developed or more conscious beings. Gurdjieff used the term ‘*Theomertmalogos*’ or ‘Very Word-God’ to indicate Divine help, and referred to the Inner Circle of humankind for the indirect help. Swedenborg directly perceived the Theomertmalogos as the Logos or Word, which is the Divine Proceeding flowing into the universe, and this Logos or Word is Divine Self-Communication which produces quite different influences and effects at different levels of the universe. At the human level, the Logos becomes communication in a form that can enter the human psyche, and it is higher wisdom adapted to human facility in the form of correspondences.

Earlier people set down this wisdom as they received it and in this way generated the holy books or sacred scriptures. Only a few of these holy books exist in the world today, as quite a number have been lost forever, and we only know of their former existence by a few extracts from them or references to them. Although the Dead Sea Scrolls are not holy books, parts of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Koran most definitely are. A genuine sacred writing has its origin in the Theomertmalogos or Word proceeding from the Lord God, and the written form corresponds to Divine, celestial and spiritual things. Such writings have four fundamental levels of meaning, namely:

- Divine, inexhaustible meaning and life
- Celestial meaning composed of love, wisdom and highest consciousness
- Spiritual meaning of conscious understanding
- Natural or literal meaning adapted to awareness

The vast bulk of people never get beyond the external literal meaning, because they have never developed something inside themselves which is capable of being more wide awake and therefore able to discern another level of meaning and behaviour.

Various movements such as Sufism, the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky Work, Christian Mysticism, and so on, sense that greater meaning is contained in various sacred writings, as well as natural things and phenomena, and endeavour to reach them by the method of allegory. This is a helpful process by which concepts and principles may be clarified, and consists in explaining one set of terms in another set of terms that provide an alternative or deeper view. The method of allegory depends upon the skill or imagination of the person who generates the allegory, and at best, it is the reading into a genuine statement or truth of an alternative idea invented by the allegorist. It is completely different from a correspondence which can only exist on the basis of meanings, values, qualities, principles, truths and energies from higher levels which were lawfully coated with celestial, spiritual or natural forms so as to instruct, inspire and inwardly nourish beings of different attainments and dispositions. Following the Sufi procedure, Gurdjieff employed the allegorical method, referring to it by the term '*podobmisirnian*' (Gurdjieff 1993:738), and he was quite open and clear about this, and made extensive use of allegory in his main book *All and Everything*.

While the method of allegory brings in a whole range of alternative psychological concepts that may be useful in shifting a person from a fixed viewpoint, its effect is very limited, because allegory only substitutes what is already known at the natural or sensuous level for other things not so clearly known at the same level. The weakness of allegory is that anything –

whether it is sound information, imagination or stupidity – can be read into any object, event or principle.

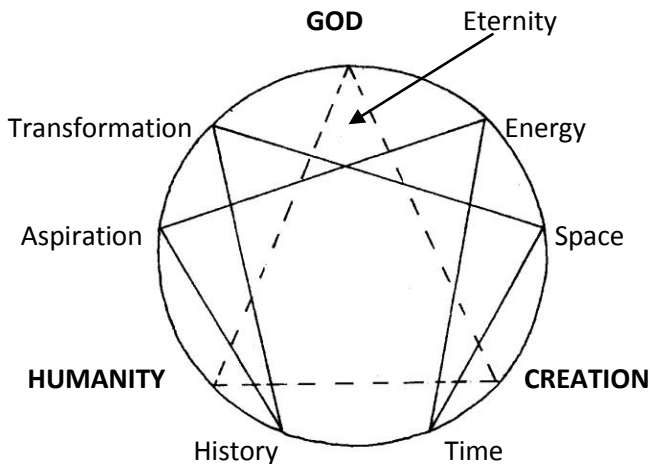
To pass from allegory and symbol to correspondence is not an easy matter. Some fundamental structural and physiological changes must be brought about in the body, and the deadly state of sleep (non-directed imagination) must be overcome. Many times a day we should make efforts to be conscious of things – conscious of self, conscious of people, conscious of the Divine Presence, conscious of the life-mind-process in our being, and so on. If you are going to be conscious you must be conscious of something, because consciousness without content is fiction. If you can become more fully conscious of a thing you will be able to understand it more effectively, then you open yourself to influx from a higher universe and can be informed of the inner contents and sources of that thing. Remember, we cannot force our way into a higher world; we can only work on ourselves and prepare our being for the ingress of that higher world, then we shall see correspondences at work.

## **The Sources & Nature of Spiritual Teaching**

The voluminous spiritual writings of Swedenborg, which cover a period of more than a quarter century, are consistently filled with important themes relevant to the inner development and evolution of human beings. Personal transformation is not an isolated, unique event, but is a process deeply involved in the structure of the Real World, the dynamics of creation and the spiritual history of humanity. Swedenborg gives us a direct view from spiritual and celestial worlds of the historical processes that marked the rise and fall of humanity's inner existence, and how the present time affords valuable opportunities for the perfecting of our being. He goes on to show that work on oneself is a key process, and that it is inseparable from the pattern of creation, the Lord God, the influence of eternity, of time, of human development, and the trends of history.

To study any one of these components in isolation is to lose sight of Reality and plunge ourselves into incompleteness. The diagram on the next page translates into an enneagram where we recognize that creation is the energetic introduction of patterns and processes into space-time, that history is a time-process, and that humans maximize the historic process by aspiration and transformation, and we must be conscious of the framework of these conditions. It is helpful to study these connections and interactions carefully because they throw light upon the highly dynamic and interlocked nature of the Real World. Human history has an inner and outer aspect, with the outer aspect easily recorded and studied.

However, the inner or spiritual aspect is little known, and yet it is of major importance to all people, as will be shown by the enneagram on the next page.



An outline of human spirituality, as given by Swedenborg, is as follows. The very earliest forms of men and women were simple beings with a close affinity to the animal kingdom, and were primitive and animal-like in appearance and behaviour. An accelerated transformation of their centres, especially the brain with its association areas, and related organs took place and they were elevated into the truly human condition. Their outer form became the full expression of the inward pattern of their design and, importantly, their outer psychological states were a faithful expression of their inward states. Such was their biospsychospiritual organization that they were conscious of the source of their arising and directly experienced the inflowing of sacred energies and fine substances that sustained them. Furthermore, a fundamental innocence ruled their lives and was supported by openness and love, and above all, they were conscious of the laws and indications of how to live effectively, and continually received into themselves correspondences which conveyed cosmo-spiritual information to them.

Correspondences are the universal language throughout the universe, and as we have discussed previously, it is automatically understood when consciousness and love are fully operative. These early people were of a



celestial disposition and their primary concern was to live in the most intimate, affectionate conjunction with God, on whom they depended utterly for their existence. They were not interested in controlling the physical environment, but concerned themselves almost entirely with the exploration, experience and integration of their spiritual dynamics. They sought to live as conscious souls, and collectively, these people constituted a culture that extended from Northern Africa, through much of Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, Iraq to Turkestan. Esoterically, they are known as the Most Ancient Church or School. Their intelligence consisted in the understanding, willing and living of the laws and principles of soul-growth and inner perfection according to the teachings and truths transmitted by God.

This extraordinary and highly inwardly developed civilization continued for many centuries until their descendants gradually became more interested in the things and phenomena of the world. They began to explore their environment more analytically and observed the regular cycles of the seasons, the movements of planets, the positions of star clusters, and reproduction and growth in plants and animals. Whereas the celestial people of the Most Ancient Church or School saw *all* things as vibrant hieroglyphic representations of Divine and spiritual realities, their descendants began to regard natural objects as things in themselves and became curious about their properties.

With emphasis being placed upon the external world, a new psychospiritual orientation developed in these later people and the results were, in a sense, catastrophic. By changing their aspirations and orientation from things sacred and Divine to things external and physical, they closed up their centres of spiritual receptivity and more fully opened their physical sensory channels. No longer could they inwardly communicate with and understand each other, but had to develop external modes of communication. So, language was born and humans became psychosomatic beings. Changes occurred in the pattern of respiration, and new centres and pathways developed in the nervous system so as to adapt to the new direction human life was taking.

However, despite these extensive reorientations, many of these people retained a knowledge – although not direct experience – of the highest teachings of their celestial ancestors. They knew it was important to somehow establish a relationship with God and higher worlds and they knew that the Most Ancient people thought about and understood things in terms of pure correspondences. Accordingly, they collected all the correspondences they could recall and began to make representations of them in wood, clay, stone, and various metals, and they kept these objects in their dwellings and simple tabernacles as visible reminders of high principles and truths to guide their lives.

These people no longer directly perceived Divine, celestial and spiritual things, but they had a profound love for the truths and goods which their correspondences portrayed. For them, the science of correspondences was the key factor in organizing their spiritual life, and over long periods of time these correspondences and representations underwent organizational changes and passed into new forms – namely hieroglyphs which became of major significance among the Egyptians and the Hittites. Collectively, this widespread culture was known as the Ancient Church or School, and it flourished in Egypt, Ethiopia, Canaan, Arabia, Persia, Assyria, Babylon and other nearby lands. Archeologists have recovered thousands of these imaged correspondences which they call ‘votive objects’, ‘religious emblems’, or ‘cult artifacts’.

With the rapidly increasing secularization of the human race and a growing interest in social organization, rulership, commerce, agriculture, building and various industries, the then existing correspondences were modified into alphabetic letters, and so writing developed. Various scripts were invented to cope with the peculiarities of local languages and ranged in form from cuneiform to Phoenician to Greek, and eventually Roman. Human beings in the African and Middle Eastern regions, where such an exalted culture had preceded them, were now ego-bound, earth-bound and largely asleep to their higher possibilities. In Egypt and a few other places, small groups of people tried to keep alive some of the previous teachings and methods of the past, and these became the ‘esoteric schools’

which interest so many modern people, but already much that was important had been lost, and only fragments of earlier wisdom were scattered amongst them. To make up for what was lost, most of these schools invented methods and teachings on the basis of intuition and experimentation, and as a result, many different schools spread throughout the ancient world and communicated teachings of widely varying value.

Spiritually, humanity needs to be linked with Higher Life in order to exist, and unless there is some community or nation that receives the Divine Theomertmalogos, the human race is in danger of undergoing complete separation from the Source of life and regeneration. Swedenborg points out that the whole of humankind is a vast, interconnected organism, and just as the lungs are one organ which enables life by supporting the oxygenation of all tissues and organs to take place, so one culture or community which receives Divine Breath or Spirit inwardly enlivens and maintains all of humanity.

The extinction of the Ancient Church or Great Spiritual School was hastened by the adaptation of sacred correspondences to magical practices, and the spread of viciousness, cruelty and disregard for human life. A veritable flood of evil, depravity, ignorance and psychospiritual perversion swept through the nations that once received and cherished the highest things. In order to correct this destructive calamity a sequence of short-lived Churches arose, and acted out the Divine impulses which energized them. Some of these Schools were recorded in religious history under the names of Noah, Shem, and Eber. The School of Eber arose in Syria and became known as the Hebrew Church, but it was an external expression of high truths and never attained genuine spiritual insights.

Eventually, the so-called Israelistish Church arose, but it never became a genuine Church or School, because although it contained genuine teachings and correspondences, the people were so grossly sensuous and external that they saw nothing of the internal laws and processes which would assist their spiritual evolution. Only the outer forms of teachings and methods

remained, and a vast complex of detailed rules, laws and injunctions were applied to keep the people in some semblance of order.

With the rise of the Christian Church or School, all the external representations were put aside and a re-awakening of the truths, wisdom and powers of the Most Ancient, and the Ancient Churches or Schools took place, but incredibly few people understood what was available to them, because the habit of living as external beings was deeply engrained in them. As a whole, the Christians were completely ignorant of Higher Life and of spiritual and celestial things, and simply regarded the Divine doctrines and laws of spiritual evolution as things of faith; they were asleep to the real Work available to them and lived in a somnambulistic state.

In addition to this outline of ancient Churches, there was also what can be called the Gentile Church which was never part of the mainstream which we have just discussed. It includes the many forms of religion and spirituality scattered throughout the entire world from the shamanism of Siberia to the tribal practices of Australia and the Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet. In these many forms of religion, people exercised their rationality regarding the nature of existence, and concluded that one God created the universe and gave them life. This belief partly opened their spiritual senses and enabled them to catch glimpses of non-physical realms, and in this way confirm their intuitions and views. In their endeavours to attain conscious immortality they devised many methods and techniques ranging from mastery of the bodily functions and breath control to intentional austerities and deprivations of many strange kinds.

The formal Christian Church disintegrated hundreds of years ago, and out of its remnants a new spiritual impetus has been under way for about two hundred years. It is simply known as the *New Church* and is to be understood as an inward process rather than an external organization. This process includes *all* the laws, energies, principles and activities of the earlier and Christian Churches, with additional dimensions.

That which unceasingly proceeds from God is the Word, or Theomertmalogos or 'Very-Word-God'. It is both communication and ultrafine energy-substance, and when it is eagerly received by a sensitive human being, is cherished, explored, and acted upon, it makes that person a 'church'. It is an invisible, living relationship and process, and becomes more fully a church or school when groups or societies of people gladly participate in its processes, and there may or may not be a corresponding outer organization to show the active presence of an esoteric or inner school. For any particular human being, the body-mind complex is the temple in which deep internal celestial and spiritual transformations take place.

The whole function of these churches or spiritual schools is to bring about the transformation of people into fully-developed men and women. They are cosmic patterns of interaction in which Divine affirmations and influx, supported by auxiliary activities from celestial and spiritual worlds, are intensively transmitted to men and women, and the methods of opening to these influences are also transmitted, so that people can act and be acted upon in such a way as to initiate change and development. Many of these methods are concerned with cleaning the personality and eradicating defects from the inner self, so that the fine, pure influences from higher worlds may act without hindrance or distortion.

When a church or school begins to degenerate, its participants begin to turn inner psychospiritual disciplines into external rules and rituals; the people become dogmatic, tightly bound with a false sense of brotherhood, and dogmatically assert that they are the only possessors of the truth. They deal harshly, even cruelly, with dissidents and in this way display their own lack of wisdom, love and development. Because historical forces are in a constant state of flux, the human situation is changing all the time, and the psychology, physiology, knowledge and sensitivity of people in one age is different from those in another age. The infinite flexibility of the Divine Proceeding allows for these fluctuations and generates a new form of help, revelation and activity in each age. It is only the inconsistency, impulsiveness and self-willed activity of humans that generates these

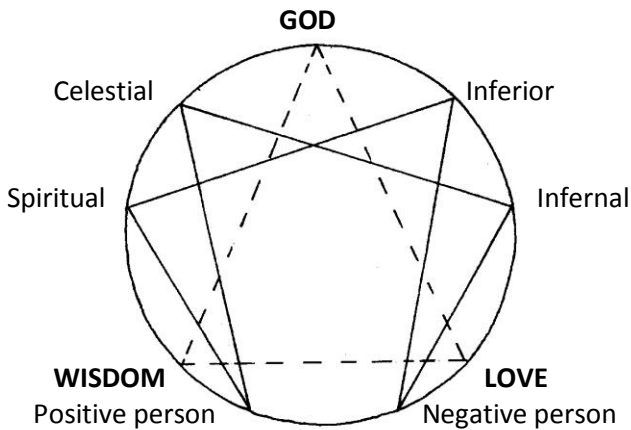
varying circumstances, and taxes Higher Life with the need to vary its regenerative measures. Human beings can change only with the help of the transpersonal, and to the extent they open themselves up to these greater influences, so they are able to begin or even undergo regeneration.

People who are born into the world are bundles of possibilities, and are capable of undergoing very considerable development. In the most general terms, there are three major levels on which people may learn to function – the natural or physical level; the spiritual level; and the celestial level, and we have diagrams showing this in chapter 2. These levels, or worlds, are distinct from each other and are characterized by different properties, functions, energies and substances. Human beings are so constructed as to be able to interact with these worlds, provided that corresponding types of awakening and development takes place in them, but many people are not interested in this possibility and even reject the idea. They rather confine themselves to natural existence and remain asleep to their own higher possibilities.

Each level or world is differentiated into an endless variety of grades and sublevels, like an enormous series of octaves. This is to accommodate the endless variety of beings who achieve different degrees of awakening, development and perfecting. Accordingly, myriads of communities of beings live, work and function in each of these worlds, but they all have different capacities and pursuits, and exist with relative independence. Swedenborg points out that according to the quality, intensity and nature of our wishes, needs, affirmations and motives so we bring into our lives influences that correspond with them. A person who struggles to acquire spiritual truth, to understand the ways of wisdom and the blessedness of love attracts influences from those who are already in the fullness of those states, and is accordingly helped.

Exactly the same principle is at work with those who are inclined to negative and evil states, because they attract reinforcement of their negativities from depraved, low-level beings. People in the natural world are poised between two vast realms and are subjected to a mixture of

influences, and it is by their intelligence, choice and affirmation that they place themselves under the energies and drives of one realm or another. Those of a positive and good disposition become strongly connected with spiritual and celestial beings and forces, and accept higher things; and those who are careless, lacking in vigilance or actively inclined to evil become integrated with low beings and influences. The enneagram below clearly portrays this situation.



There is a correspondence and equilibrium between the infernal (lowest) and celestial (highest), and between the inferior (intermediate) and spiritual (intermediate). The power of human choice is enormous and every individual has the power of self-selection to direct themselves into one realm or another. This is a balanced universe and the individual has the capacity to swing that balance in favour of his/her dedicated way of life. Our motives, inclinations, wishes, cravings, passions, affections, hopes and strivings which are deeply rooted in our being orientate our lives in one direction or another. Even unconsciously our lives are directed to ends that may never be selected in the light of clear consciousness. Therefore sound reason based on higher teachings, the clearest possible state of consciousness, a broad and inclusive world-view, and above all, purification of emotions and thoughts are essential preparations for that transformation that leads to connection with higher worlds.





## Conditions of Spiritual Growth

Swedenborg was appointed and directed to make known to the world the necessity of rebirth and regeneration of human life as the condition for participation in a happy, useful and progressive immortal life. His instruction was Divine, and the truths and principles he communicated were always reinforced by direct experience of their operation in higher worlds. Moreover, it was demonstrated to him many thousands of times that the required perfecting of human life is a fundamental, even central, feature of the entire cosmic process. Running through the vastness and complexity of creation is an ortho-genetic theme that there is a best and most effective pathway of human development, and for many ancient people this pathway was easy to follow. They were minimally involved in material pursuits and from their spiritual insights and intuitions sought to connect themselves directly to Divine, celestial and spiritual things. After thousands of generations we modern people are inextricably bound up with external things, especially human artifacts, and it is very difficult for us to even appreciate the Reality of higher worlds. Human spiritual senses were closed long ago and we have within ourselves precious little activity that even hints at Higher Life.

Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, in common with the Sufis, spoke of this internal insensitivity as an indication of the 'sleep' state which affects almost the whole of humanity. They proclaimed the principle of awakening from sleep, and taught psychological methods for achieving this – namely self-remembering, non-identification, external considering, and the struggle against vanity, egotism and the expression of negative emotions. Self-observation is a necessary practice, and many people came to regard all this as a way of inner development and called it esoteric method, but this is not correct. It is useful preparation for real work, yet is not esoteric work itself, as was understood by the Sufis and Christian mystics who employ all

these procedures in the initial stages of their training, and have never regarded them as esoteric secrets.

Swedenborg's access to the real spiritual schools of the near and remote past enabled him to see and know that humans are not merely asleep: they are spiritually dead. That is to say, people are quite dead to spiritual things, do not see them and fail to respond to their influence. Whatever is known of higher things is mere theory or speculation, so people either pay lip service to them or go against them completely. In his book *The Fourth Way* (1972:435) Ouspensky discusses the idea of 'dead' people and 'dead' essence, but he writes about an essence which is dead in one life being able to recur in a healthy and normal state in the next recurrence. All this is speculative rubbish and spoils the useful psychological work he carried out. Swedenborg's account of dead people is not allegorical or relative; it is a description of an actual state that is confirmed by spiritual observation. Dead people are characterized by congealment and hardening of all their internal spiritual energies, faculties and functions, and everything in them which should be sensitive, alive, conscious and responsive has become hard, woody, tough, stony and lifeless. There is no internal warmth, no flow of life, and an absence of vibrancy and vigour. These hardened things are the truths, goods, and processes which are the means of giving spiritual life to human beings, and when they close up, that inner life ceases.

Inevitably the question is asked, 'If we are spiritually dead and are unable to see or feel Divine and spiritual influences, what can we do to change this situation, and become spiritually alive?' The truth is that human beings can do absolutely nothing to reactivate their dead inner selves, because Life is the flux of Divine energy and influence, and is never under the control of human beings. Only God can resuscitate that which is dead – a universal truth known through all the ages – and if a rebirth is to take place it can only be effected by the Will, Love and Mercy of God. This does not happen automatically merely by asking for it. The individual person who seeks life in place of death, wisdom and understanding in place of ignorance, and love in place of hatred, self-concern and negative emotions, must be willing to make being-efforts by way of preparation for rebirth.

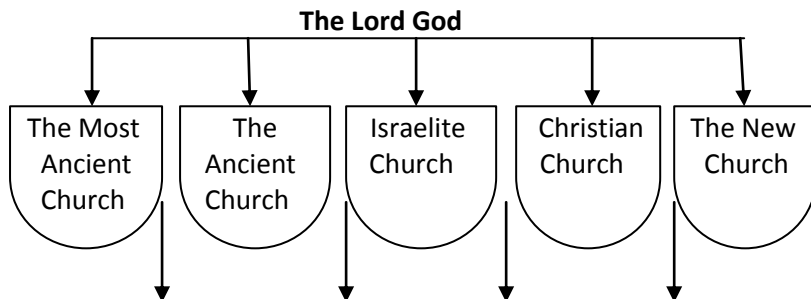
In the light of teachings of a spiritual origin a person can begin to wish not to be dead, insensitive and incomplete, but they must have a very good reason for this wish. The wish must be translated into various efforts whose sincerity determines the outcome .

A person cannot work on themselves without very great help, because they have not the energy, capacity, consciousness or knowledge to transform themselves or even see what needs to be changed inside. The idea that people should get together in 'schools' and help one another to wake up and be regenerated is a human invention. All esoteric 'schools' are artifacts and deal with neglected or rejected aspects of knowledge, just as schools of medicine, science, engineering, etc, deal with the accepted knowledge of the day. Some of these schools endeavour to preserve ideas and methods from earlier sources, but unfortunately much that is imagined or invented has become mixed with genuine fragments. Real schools, in the spiritual sense, do not originate with human beings but with the Lord God.

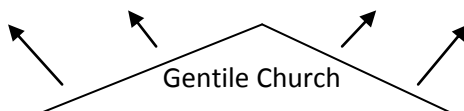
In the previous chapter titled 'Sources and Nature of Spiritual Teaching', we discussed how a series of outpourings from the Divine, for the sake of renewing the inner life of humanity, took the form of churches or schools. These were the means by which the only reliable wisdom, knowledge and teachings could reach the human race. The human-made 'esoteric schools' are all based on fragments derived from the original sources, and are illustrated in diagrammatic form on the following page.

Gurdjieff, the materialist, concerned himself mainly with the human-made schools of the East and tried to find the useful principles common to all of them, while Ouspensky always suspected that real Schools existed and hoped to make contact with them, but never knew the direction to move.

One of the truly great principles which should be known and applied is that when a person begins to work upon themselves in the light of higher doctrine and sincerely opens to the Divine influx, that person becomes a Church or School in miniature.



A great variety of derived groups, schools, societies, religions and movements came from these Churches - including Gnosticism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Rosicrucianism and the Fourth Way.



Scattered throughout the world in the form of Buddhism, Islam Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Polynesian, American Indian, Mongolian, Aboriginal, Tibetan and African beliefs.

A School or Church is a place where Divine energy, wisdom and love are able to act upon human potentials and bring them to life. It is not enough to awaken them, because they may simply become active at the psychological level and not really help the person. They rather have to be infused with Divine energy so as to become spiritual, then, if the person cooperates, transformation can get under way.

In all people the deepest things of creation are rooted as their life-potential, and when these potentials are called into play by higher energies, we begin to build our spiritual life. It is then that we become an active school in miniature, and are enlightened, guided and brought into a more conscious relationship with transformed beings. Meaning, affection, a sense of participation in the vast spiritual or School community, and the arising of an enduring sense of internal harmony grow within us if we voluntarily allow ourselves to be acted upon by Divine influences. Should

we assume that by our own efforts or the self-guided application of acquired techniques we can elevate ourselves to new degrees of attainment, we shut off reception of Higher Life and remain the slave to our own egotism. The alternatives are very clear: work so as to cooperate with, receive, cherish and live with help from Above; or vainly try to lift oneself up by the shoelaces.

The transformed individuality is a new self or higher proprium which is generated by the creative action of God, and is diametrically opposed to external selfhood in which we find the expression of the ego and the outer self. The integrated individual is vibrant with a spiritual life that is lacking in the external person. The body and external life of integrated men and women is the end-effect and final common pathway for internal and inmost processes which are now active. Very big changes are required for the transformation of a purely external person who is 'dead', into a conscious integrated spiritual person.

Rulership of life has to be transferred from externals to internals, and the internals of a person must be aroused, developed and infilled with what Swedenborg describes as good and truth, or love and wisdom before this is possible. When people hear a description of this process they often readily agree with it, however, they do not always undergo the process because it involves what they feel to be sacrifices they cannot bear. To struggle against the innumerable weaknesses in oneself is no easy thing, and to destroy a major view or attitude that is faulty is very hard indeed, and it is extremely difficult to actually perceive the mixed up states in one's own life, acknowledge it, and work against it. When there is a conviction that a very big change and purification must take place, there is heart-felt willingness to go through with the suffering, and efforts are made to work in this direction, then we find real help enters us in a deep and unseen manner. Mental and emotional upheavals may occur, bodily states and general health may be thrown into turmoil, and outside events and relationships may be disorganized. Sometimes a swift and shattering change occurs, but more commonly a series of smaller upheavals serve to wean the person from unhealthy attachment to many things.

We have just described the process which Swedenborg calls vastation and, although uncomfortable or painful, it is for the eventual spiritual good of the person, and is the key to regeneration or the renewal of life on a fresh foundation. The outer form of life has to be reconstructed so that new laws, energies and processes may be able to operate within its framework. Vastation is the laying waste of the edifice of false assumptions, of ignorance and misleading beliefs, of fantasies and literalisms that prevent any possibility of forming permanent connections with the Real World. The Real World is the total planful creation of the Lord God, and is the pattern and process of generating forms which reveal and express the Divine Nature, and of developing conscious souls that can be useful to God. It is the celestial, spiritual and natural in the form envisaged by God.

Swedenborg rightly points out that ordinary 'dead' people cannot devastate themselves and have no personal means of purifying and upgrading their life. Help is needed and that help comes from the Divine. It is only Wisdom, Love and Energy which understands the personal human situation, discerns the possibilities and has the ability to work from within each person to put things right.

One of the great errors of the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky approach was to regard God as the infinitely distant and virtually unreachable 'Absolute'. In place of real higher help these men taught that only self-effort counts, and that any help comes through the Work itself and perhaps from people belonging to the inner circle of humanity. Yet, in contradiction to this alienating teaching, Gurdjieff, on several occasions, when he was able to provide assistance to people, was heard to mutter, "God help me". This primary recognition that without Divine help we can do nothing is the basis for self-change, and contrary to what many people assume, even the very life that we enjoy and experience is not ours. It is the active energy of the Divine, operating within the fields, structures and organizations of body-mind-soul that generates that dynamic state we call life.

We humans are experts in the ignoble art of generating disharmonies and deflections of universally flowing Life in our being, and it takes a greater

love and wisdom than ours to get it back into order. Therefore, human beings must learn the rules of right living and orthogenetic correction which have been transmitted to them throughout the ages, and act upon them sincerely and faithfully. An individual person can prosper spiritually only when there is the closest cooperation between his or her efforts to improve and the Divine effort to initiate regeneration and bring it to completion. The first two chapters of the Book of Genesis, which were copied from much earlier sacred texts, describe the steps of human rebirth and regeneration, and because it is written in the language of correspondences ordinary people cannot see its spiritual and celestial contents, and so treat the literal sense with imagination, not reason. What appears superficially as the creation of the world, of living things and human beings, is in fact the re-creation of the person as a celestial soul. This is very fully expounded in the first volume of the *Arcana Caelestia*, and an excellent outline is provided in Chapter 9 of Van Dusen's book *The Presence of Other Worlds*.

One of the universal laws which governs the operation of everything in the universe is – *harmony through variety*. The more complex and varied a system, and the more effectively it is inwardly connected, the greater is the harmony of its being and operation. This law applies everywhere – to the entire universe and its several worlds, to galactic, molecular and electronic systems and to the individual person. In undifferentiated simplicity there is monotony and sameness, a very limited capacity for structural and functional flexibility, and a restricted usefulness; but when additional components are differentiated or introduced, a very great variety of structures and processes can be generated which enrich and intensify that system. The blending of those structures and functions leads to operational harmony.

We can illustrate this principle with an example from chemistry and engineering. Pure iron is an interesting substance, but its applications are quite limited. It is hard and brittle, is difficult to machine, and is not very useful to the engineering industry. However, when this homogenous iron is melted and substances such as carbon, sulphur, phosphorus, nickel,

chromium, manganese and vanadium are dissolved in it, then allowed to cool, a new and complex substance is produced, which is steel. If the nickel, chromium content is high it produces a very serviceable stainless steel, which is heat resistant, corrosion resistant, ductile, malleable and readily shaped into a great variety forms. It has great versatility and a wide range of uses, all of which are made possible by the harmonizing of togetherness of the various components of the steel.

It is the same with human beings. A poorly differentiated psyche is a very limited organization, and is able to adapt itself to a severely narrow range of interests and capacities. This can be changed in a spectacular manner by introducing a broad range of new interests, knowledge, skills and features into such a psyche. When some mastery of new topics, pursuits and skills has been achieved, it becomes possible to incorporate these into the life so that the individual begins to function with new confidence in a larger and more interesting world. As the individual experiences the inward harmony of the newly developed, diverse functions, so their sense of being increases. Every person should strive to master new knowledge and cultivate fresh skills for the sake of enriching and enlarging life. Master a number of crafts; learn some geology, chemistry and marine biology; grasp the principles of botany, zoology, ecology, anatomy, and physiology; make an attempt to understand two languages – one modern and one ancient. Above all, be active in these pursuits. For example, if you study botany, go out on field trips, visit nurseries and the Botanical gardens; sketch and photograph things of interest; use a magnifying glass or microscope; dissect flowers, buds, stems and fruits – in other words get involved and bring consciousness and feeling to bear upon your activities. The harmonized enrichment of the psyche provides a more effective field through which the Divine influx can act.

The acquisition and utilization of scientific and cultural truths and principles is also valuable in a developmental manner. As many people already know, the layered structure of the real world is replicated in human beings. We are all born as natural, external, sensory formations, and our initial contact with the world is through the physical sense. In this way we are provided



with a great abundance of impressions which are food for mental life, and all too often impressions enter the sensorium in a willy-nilly fashion, and are erratically juxtaposed in the memory. When we learn to systematically study various features of the world with heightened attention, interest and curiosity tinged with a sense of wonder, we bring the intellectual function into play. The task of this function is to get to know truths from a study of the things which have been carefully perceived.

At first, when we study and think about the things we examine in an orderly manner, we obtain rational truths and these open up the rational level of the psyche. Then, as we endeavour to understand these truths more fully, our active mentation proceeds in a more abstract fashion and we search for general or universal principles, and as this proceeds, we procure for ourselves intellectual truths and so open up the intellectual level of the psyche, which borders upon the spiritual functions. By proceeding in this orderly manner the impressions and information we gather are arranged and systematized in an orderly, harmonious way. A proper growth sequence is established, which in turn prevents the crude, external parts of the psyche from trying to make a direct entry into the holy, celestial level of being. Such a forced entry is an act of violence and can only destroy a person's efforts to undergo regeneration. A great multitude of untrained people get hold of psychospiritual techniques, work at them vigorously, and try to experience higher states of life. Or they experiment with hallucinogenic and psycho-pharmacological drugs in the effort to enter elevated states of consciousness. All this is psychobiological violence and, despite the enjoyment of unusual experiences, only closes up the way to what are often called the Higher Centres, namely the spiritual and celestial levels of being.

In an orderly manner a way must be opened to the spiritual and celestial functions, and the disciplined employment of the senses and thoughts will open the rational function. The further search for truth, order, meaning and universal principles opens the intellectual function, while the quest for spiritual truth in the light of correspondences opens the spiritual function. Finally, the profound love for the Lord God from whom all of these realities

proceeds, opens up the celestial function. This enables cosmic order to proceed in the individual person so that Divine influence nourishes and infills the celestial level; the celestial guides and energizes the spiritual; the awakened truths and wisdom of the spiritual guide and illuminate the intellectual function, and the intellectual then makes conscious and orderly the rational, natural and sensory functions. In this manner the inmosts of a person come to govern, coordinate and enliven the outermost functions.

## De Verbo Revisited

An initial reading of Swedenborg's small book, De Verbo may create the impression that it is a convenient summary of information concerning the Holy Word, which has been culled from his major works. It was written in 1762 but was not published in Latin until 1854, long after the author's death. De Verbo was written when Swedenborg was at the height of spiritual perception and involved in the preparation of important books such as Divine Providence, Divine Love and Wisdom, and the Apocalypse Revealed.

When we revisit De Verbo and carefully study its contents, we discover that it is a highly significant work which is packed with esoteric teachings and principles. It was intended to be an original and unique manual because it contains very few references to Swedenborg's earlier works, and because of its insignificant size – a mere 41 pages – it has been overlooked by many scholars and writers who are interested in Swedenborgian materials. In this chapter we will devote our attention to a number of esoteric or arcane principles which can be of considerable use to us.

De Verbo begins with a description of an experience enjoyed by Swedenborg in the spiritual world. It was not a vision during a trance state but direct observation of things and people in another universe, where everything observed was a representation of spiritual verities, and Swedenborg unlocked the correspondences to reveal their inner meanings.

*"I was given to see great purses, appearing like sacks, in which was stored silver money in great abundance, and since these sacks were open it seemed as if anyone might taketh of the money therein, yea, steal it. But beside the sacks sat two angels who were guards. The place where the sacks were deposited appeared like a manger in a stable. In an adjoining room was seen modest virgins accompanied by a chaste wife and near this room were*

*two little children and it was said that they were not to be played with childishly but wisely. Afterwards there appeared a harlot and then a horse lying dead. It was then perceived that thus was represented the sense of the Letter of the Word in which is the spiritual sense. Those great purses filled with money signify the knowledges of Truth in great abundance therein but they were opened and yet guarded by angels signified that everyone may take the knowledges of Truth thence but that care must be taken lest its interior sense, in which is nothing but verities, be falsified.*

*The manger in the stable where the purses lay signified spiritual instruction for the understanding. A manger signifies this, even the one wherein the Lord was laid when born, for a horse signifies the understanding hence a manger signifies its nutrition. The modest virgins, who were seen in the next room, signify the Truths of the Church and the chaste wife, the conjunction of Truth and Good which exists everywhere in the Word. The little children signify the innocence of Wisdom in the Word. They were angels from the third or celestial heaven who all appear as little children. The harlot with the dead horse signified the falsification of the Word by many at this day whereby all understanding of Truth is destroyed. A harlot signifies falsification and a dead horse no understanding of Truth”.*

There is something very important in this experience because it is repeated in full in *the Apocalypse Revealed:para 255*, and in the *True Christian Religion:para 277*.

A very helpful exercise to undertake is to construct a simple diagram to illustrate the arrangements of the angels guarding the sacks of money in a particular room. Make a sketch of the adjacent room with the two virgins and the wife and then the nearby celestial children and finally just indicate the harlot and the dead horse. When you juxtapose these images together it makes the inner contents of this extraordinary vision stand out very clearly.

The whole scene reflected in the first section of *De Verbo* is a synchronistic togetherness of several quite different representations, and these are brought into relationship to teach a great lesson.

Swedenborg very briefly explains some of the correspondences in order to unfold the meaning of the theme, and passes over others without explanation. It is your function to complete the picture by adding the correspondences for such things as house, room and silver money, and this can be done by referring to the *Dictionary of Correspondences* and the *Dictionary of Bible Imagery*.

As we have discussed previously, by means of this representation it is shown that the Divine communication which is called the Word, De Verbo, Logos or Theomertmalogos has an exceedingly rich inner, spiritual content, which is contained within the literal sense and is freely available to those who seek it. However, care must be taken to avoid the perversion and destruction of spiritual truth by the machinations of literalists, fundamentalists and cynics. Throughout history human beings have repeatedly fallen away from states of spiritual perception and conjunction with the highest Reality. The scene of the harlot and the dead horse epitomizes a person's self-willed impulse to try and shape reality into the mould of their imagination, and to substitute their personal 'explanations' of reality for the eternal meanings which form its essence.

In *Heaven and Hell*:para 306, and elsewhere, Swedenborg reported that a great and very serious decline occurred to the human race. Originally, the enlightened Ancients had their interiors turned heavenwards, and were in a state of functional conjunction with the Lord God, and since their spiritual interiors were fully open they received immediate influx and revelation from God. Due to an abuse of their freedom many people partly turned themselves away from God and began to involve themselves with the interesting things and phenomena of the external world, and although they lost the capacity to receive direct revelation on a daily basis, they were able to retain some degree of functional interaction with the spiritual world by means of correspondences. It was given to them to know that all things in the outer, physical world corresponded to enduring spiritual realities, and therefore, everything was seen to be a representation of the spiritual and celestial realms, and of God.

Gradually, the knowledge of the science of correspondences was lost: all remembrance of this important link with the spiritual world was blotted out because people were adapting correspondences to perverse and magical practices. It was then that the Word was written so that people could be reminded of the reality of God and the presence of the spiritual world. Although the Word was written in the pure language of correspondences, no one could see the inner realities, because people were now completely external, and interpreted everything in a scientific, literal manner, and thought in material terms. It was to remedy this completely degenerate state of the human psyche that the Lord God entered the world as the Living Word, and endeavoured to reveal the inner contents of Divine communication.

The Word has a cosmic function in that it serves all levels of the Ray of Creation simultaneously. An external, terrestrial person can read the Word and see only the literal sense; there is nothing in that person which can detect an internal meaning. However, the same words read by that person are perceived by spiritual beings as expositions of universal truths and principles: for them the literal meanings count for nothing and only the richer spiritual truths are contemplated; and taking it further celestial beings see transcendental values, states, uses and functions in the literal or spiritual meanings. From one viewpoint these seem to be utterly different and unrelated things, however, in the final analysis they are one because all levels, qualities, states and values are in mutual correspondence, and they come forth from the one Divine communication.

Swedenborg sums up the function of the Word as follows:

*“Thus after man separated himself from heaven the Lord provided a medium of conjunction of heaven with man by means of the Word”.*

It is known from spiritual sources that when a man or woman reads the Word with sincerity and feeling, and knows that it has a sacred inner content, then what is read is apprehended by the outer mind with a degree of illumination. At the same time, spiritual beings associated with the

person grasp the more universal meanings embodied in the words and are themselves enlightened. Simultaneously, celestial beings associated with the person perceive the meanings, ends and uses contained in the words and act accordingly. Therefore, when used consciously the Word unifies the interests and functions of earthly beings and heavenly beings, and brings them into correspondential harmony.

We humans, who live in the world of space, time and physical matter, have all of our thoughts bound up with these things and dimensions, and never see the fulness of the real world. Those who live in the spiritual universe are beyond the limitations of space, time and matter, and moreover, their thoughts are unrestricted and they clearly see the spiritual objects and processes to which their thoughts refer. Even if terrestrial thoughts are presented to them, they never see them in earthly terms but perceive only the cosmic and spiritual riches which they contain. For example, if the name Moses is presented to spiritual beings it is impossible for them to think of the historical figure of that man. Instead they comprehend only the laws of life, the order of spiritual creation, and all the good, truth, love and wisdom which the laws contain. Celestial souls do not think like men and women, in fact, they do not cogitate, reason or meditate upon ideas at all. They have immediate perception of the inner contents of things and experience them by means of exquisite affections or states of love.

Now, it would be the height of folly to try and imitate these spiritual and celestial states, merely because one has heard about them. It is impossible to push oneself from a natural state into a spiritual or celestial state, because the higher levels are attained by means of regeneration, and this is a lifelong process. Many of us know through hard personal experience that even after years of contact with the transformational Work, problems and difficulties still arise, and we must not lose heart and assume that nothing is happening or that the Work is letting us down. The Work catalyses our internals, cleanses them, and restructures them, and in effect, this is a new creation which requires innumerable changes. For a long time we may not notice the changes that are taking place, and so must work patiently and without rigid expectations of what we assume we are entitled to receive. In

a quiet, internal way the Work, which is the operation of God, will lead our inner life into spiritual and celestial states.

There are outer aspects of the Work which we can apply to ourselves for the sake of improving the quality of our external lives. These include the processes of non-identification, avoidance of negative emotional reactions, rejection of prejudices and fixed attitudes, and taking a lively interest in the things and phenomena of the world. These practices all help to establish a more pleasing and satisfactory adjustment to the demands of the world.

The written Word we have today is not a miscellaneous collection of myths, religious laws, and accounts of historical events, but rather, internally, it is a completely coherent, consistent and most elaborate spiritual system. This cannot be seen from a literal rendering of its words, because the internals are revealed by means of correspondences and spiritual perception. Millions of people throughout the world make the error of trying to decipher the spiritual core of the Word by means of a naturalistic interpretation of the language in which it is written, and will be as unsuccessful as trying to eat a meal with the saws, pliers hammers and set squares used by carpenters.

People in the Western world have fallen away from their primordial Dreamtime state, and no longer have a sense of kinship with celestial and spiritual souls. Many of our spiritually degenerate contemporaries deny that they themselves even have a soul. Without a feeling of connectedness with the spiritual dimensions of Reality, it is impossible for any person to enjoy the potencies, states and qualities of Greater Life. When they lost their feeling of kinship with ancestral spiritual communities, human beings also lost the inner languages of correspondences. This deprived them of the power to unfold the inner contents of the Word and to be illuminated by its millions of truths, indications and principles. At present, people are limited to the capacity of literal interpretation, and from this literalism they develop many fallacious and ridiculous principles.



In the ancient world, which included Canaan, Ugarit, Assyria and Egypt, there was a written ancient Word which predated the present Word. The ancient Word is still used by celestial beings in the spiritual world because it has always been the source of their spiritual nourishment. Swedenborg was shown that the first seven chapters of Genesis were copied from the ancient Word, and elsewhere in the current Word there are references to certain books which are found in the ancient Word. For instance, in Numbers 21:14 & 15 reference is made to the 'Book of the Wars of Jehovah', and in both 2 Samuel 1:18 and Joshua 10:13 the ancient 'Book of Jasher' is mentioned.

Since the Word always exists with those who constitute a Church or School, and since various teachings derived from the Word are found in adjacent tribes and nations, we can see that the ancient Egyptian religion derived its fundamental principles from the ancient Word. Scattered throughout sacred Egyptians writings are many fragments of the original teaching, and some of these are examined in Carl Odhner's book, Correspondences of Egypt, a Swedenborg Academy publication, and study will show many features of Egyptian theology can be regarded from the viewpoint of correspondences. In addition, Greek myths represent greatly diluted forms of teaching also drawn from the ancient Word.

Specific examples of the arcane contents of the Word will now be considered, and it will be seen that such contents refer directly to processes in the human psyche, and are therefore applicable to ourselves.

Chapter 30 of Ezekiel gives a remarkable description of how the Lord God threatened to devastate Egypt and shatter its foundations, and not only Egypt itself but also those who supported Egypt are to be brought down.

*"Thus saith the Lord; they also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down; from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword" ( Ez 30:6).*

*“Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I am against thee Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and will break his arms...and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand...And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries” (Ez 30:23).*

The entire chapter contains many declarations of this nature, and it seems to be a one-sided attack upon a nation which was once part of the Ancient Church. Yet the ‘Egypt’ spoken about by Ezekiel is not the Egypt of history, of pyramids and of hieroglyphs. It is a pure correspondence of a significant highly influential component of the human constitution. The ‘Egypt’ within us represents that part of our being which can make or break our lives. In the simplest terms, it is the natural or outer self which is separated from the inner spiritual self and has no integrity. That is why ‘Egypt’ in this part of Ezekiel, and also in Isaiah and Jeremiah, is spoken of in such a harsh manner.

When the natural self acts without reference to its spiritual source and support, it is suffused with self-intelligence, pride, vanity, and a mass of active negative states. In this condition it cannot see itself, is unable to deal with itself, and vainly imagines it has the ability to control its destiny. This pathological external self draws upon theories and doctrines of a most ridiculous nature in the effort to strengthen itself, and to justify its completely abnormal outlook. Such artificial boosts to the disordered personality are described by Ezekiel as “they that uphold Egypt” and, of course, in the light of cosmic truth “they shall fall”.

In the language of correspondences Egypt signifies the outer or natural self, and all the impressions, cognitions, knowledges and scientific information which it collects and stores. The outer self was created to be the instrument and servant of the inner self, which is spiritual, and to be the means of completing the Ray of Creation which brought us into being. Normally, the outer self, our personal “Egypt” is conjoined to the inner self by means of the affections for truth. The inner self receives truth by influx and by means of spiritual instruction, and through the experience of the outer self it seeks external confirmation of its truths. In this way heavenly

things are conjoined to earthly things, and human beings are the instruments of conjunction. That is one of the reasons why we study natural things and search for their spiritual correspondences.

But the outer self is easily persuaded by external influences to place its trust in external things. It turns itself away from heavenly powers and truths, relies upon its self-will and self-intelligence, and endeavours to work out existence in purely external terms. Genuine love and charity disappear, and the ego is left to its own devices to live an isolated existence. Proprium or ego always endeavours to justify itself and to bolster up its self-loving tendencies. It invents theories, explanations and excuses itself, and in this way generates an extensive system of lies. This becomes the falsity of an outer self, driven by the evil of self-love.

When the outer self, or our Egypt, strives to act as an independent entity, and pretends that it is one's whole being, it dissociates itself from its Divine, celestial and spiritual background and functions as a materialistic earth-bound complex. Should any person identify themselves with the outer self and cause it to become the centre of gravity of their life, they disconnect themselves from Reality and undergo spiritual death. This is correspondentially described as the desolation, destruction and dispersal of Egypt. It seems as though God is angry and works His vengeance on unruly and disobedient people, however, this is only an appearance because God is the very essence of Love and wishes no harm to any being.

It is by Divine, inexorable law that a person who separates themselves from cosmic unity brings destruction and devastation upon themselves, and only they are responsible for the ensuing disaster. All condemnation in the final analysis is self-condemnation, because the law is clear and simple: align yourself with spiritual reality, enter into conjunction with God, and all the powers and influences of the Infinite will assist your progression towards unification, harmony and happiness. But if you separate yourself from all that is, and endeavour to exist as a self-guided finite entity then, like a small battery you will run out of power and your life will peter out.

The Word is packed to overflowing with instructions and indications like the ones we have just examined, and because we live and think externally and literally, we fail to see the Word's endless inner contents. *De Verbo* points out that the Word serves the needs of all beings on all levels – natural, spiritual and celestial, and each soul takes from it what he or she is capable of receiving according to their degree of love, development and purification. Because the Word comes from the Infinite it has infinite contents which can never be exhausted, and that is why the Word continues to be used by spiritual and celestial beings.

*De Verbo* :10 makes it clear that the sense of the letter of the Word is just as important as its spiritual and Divine contents, and the reason for this is as follows. Every thing in creation is intended to pass from its Divine origin to ultimate manifestation in the natural world, and this principle holds true for the Word. It serves the needs of the celestial, the spiritual, and people living in the physical world. Since natural, external people have a very limited perception, the truths of the Word are given to them in the form of simple, clear instructions or laws, as well as in the form of parables and historical stories. From these ultimate communications people are expected to draw guidance concerning their conduct, and procure a foundation upon which to build their belief or faith. Unless the highest truths can be applied and lived in the natural world, they are useless. Should a person work on themselves for a while and receive a degree of enlightenment, they may perceive some of the inner depths of the Word, and see why external laws and instructions ought to be obeyed. Gradually, such a person learns that the whole inner content of the Word rests upon the external sense just as a building rests on its foundations. The outer and inner aspects of the Word form a unity, and this corresponds to the union between a person's outer self and their inner self.

The external sense of the Word corresponds to the hairs on a person's body, and in particular, the hairs of the head and the beard signify a person's most external manifestations, and are representations of the most external form of the Word. In the spiritual world men who are bald and lacking a beard are those who despised the literal sense of the Word during

life, and this is a spiritual representation which has nothing to do with the physical body. In ancient Egypt, which was part of the Ancient Church, the beard had the signification we have just discussed: kings were clean-shaven but on ceremonial occasions wore a narrow, artificial beard. In death they were equipped with these beards, and even female Pharaoh's, like Hapshetsup, wore them in their coffins. The beard was regarded as a Divine thing, and indicated acceptance of the external form of sacred scripture.

The Word plays a greater role in human life than is generally suspected. Remember, the Word *is* God in a state of communication, and that which God communicates from Himself is always love and truth. The Word transmits Divine Truth to humanity in an internal, mediate way by entering into our will and then passing into the understanding. Before the will can receive the truth of the Word it must be in a state of good, because a will that is poisoned and perverted by hatred, suspicion, antagonism or self-love can never receive the inward things of the Word.

Very many stupid people allow themselves to be persuaded that 'real' spiritual truth can be obtained immediately from spirits. They learn to develop full or partial trance states and acquire the faculty of conversing with spiritual beings, or they go to people who are either trance mediums or claim they receive 'guidance' from highly developed spirits. Such people fondly imagine that through such spiritualistic processes they can receive revelations of a special kind. Let it be known that it is a law of Reality that no spiritual or celestial angelic being ever has the right, authority or power to instruct Divine truths to any person on this planet (*De Verbo*:13<sup>2</sup>). Human beings are taught Divine truths through the Word, and when a person receives good in the will from God they are able to receive, understand and live these truths.

It is a very strange thing that many people seek to understand the psychological symbolism of their dreams and are fascinated by the hidden meanings in myths, yet they cannot bring themselves to study the Word and grasp cosmic meanings through the correspondences it contains.

Physicists, astronomers, mathematicians and geologists make many attempts to explain the structure and operations of the universe, and even devise theories of how it came into existence. All this work is academic and theoretical with not a trace of experimental verification. Official scientists, who are approved by the Establishment, work intelligently and sincerely to procure a satisfying view of Reality, yet they do not catch even a glimpse of how the world is constituted. Their studies are confined to the end-effects of creation, and they hope to find in atoms and fundamental particles clues about the origin of everything. Ages ago enlightened people were shown the principles of creation and existence, and were given an inside view of Reality, and it was made clear to them that although the universe is a mighty and most impressive structure, it is not the ultimate goal of the creative process. The human race is the goal of creation and the universe was brought forth as its seminary. Human beings exist on thousands of planets scattered throughout the universe, but the human race is a very complex formation, and people are not averaged out on the cosmic scale. Every individual soul is taken into account.

On this earth there have always existed the three circles of humankind: the inner or esoteric circle of conscious people; the middle or mesoteric circle of developing people; and the outermost, exoteric circle of undeveloped people. This arrangement is discussed by Ouspensky in his books *In Search of the Miraculous*, and *The Fourth Way*. One of the leading features of the inner, esoteric circle of conscious people is that they possess the Word and understand its living interiors. Because they receive Divine, cosmic truths they are thoroughly enlightened and vivified, and they feed principles, teachings and methods into the world which are derived from those truths. They function as the heart and lungs of humankind.

*For a further detailed discussion of correspondences please refer, in particular, to 'Spiritual Foundations' by Philip W. Groves*

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