



EVIDENCE OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

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You know it's said that the subject of death is like that of sex used to be — everybody does it but nobody talks about it. Now, I'm not going to talk to you tonight about death at first. That will be later on in my lecture. I'm going to talk to you first of all about the scientific understanding of the world. This is important because so very often, people who would like to believe in a life after death feel that it's science that stands in the way.

Now, the first part of my talk tonight is the hardest part. It's the part where you will have to make the most effort or concentration to follow clearly what I am saying. But if you do, it will pay dividends, and I can assure you that the talk will get easier, much easier to follow later on. So, the hardest part first.

Does science stand in the way of believing that there is a life for us beyond the death of the physical body? Is it a scientific fact that I am looking at and holding a yellow, circular disc? Now, I want us first of all this evening to consider what is happening when we see colours, like for instance the yellow of this disc, and what science has to say about this.

Science tells us that light is formed of electromagnetic vibrations. These are oscillating values of electricity and magnetism in an all-pervading field. That's the term that science uses, for want of a better term. And light comes from a source, in this case of course we've got electric light in these buildings, and it sends out electromagnetic vibrations of different wavelengths, and these are impinging on this disc and there some of them are absorbed and some are reflected. In this case, those of a particular wavelength are reflected and some are reaching the iris in my eyes and some are reaching the iris in your eyes, and there these electromagnetic vibrations of this particular wavelength are then being focused down upon a set of



rods and cones at the back of the eye. And there a mysterious thing happens because they become converted, as it were, into what are called electrochemical impulses which travel along the optic nerves until they reach the nerve cells at the end of the optic nerve in the brain.

Now, when we get to the brain, that is when the most mysterious and most fantastic thing happens. It's at this point that we have to leave our modern science behind and take a leap because in the brain, this most mysterious thing that happens is I say I can see a yellow disc, but science cannot tell me of any yellow out there in the scientists' world. There is no yellow out there; there are only electromagnetic vibrations of particular wavelengths, which have become converted into electrochemical impulses travelling along the optic nerve and reaching cells at the end. Where is the yellow, because there is no yellow in the world of science?

The yellow exists in my mind and in your mind. Our minds interpret these signals coming up the optic nerve in this special way. We say, "That's yellow." But realise what we're doing: our minds are sitting somewhere, as it were, tuned into a receiver that we can call the physical brain, and as the electrochemical impulses come in, our mind interprets them and says 'yellow'.

Right, but you might say, "Okay, but can't you feel that you're touching it? Isn't there something out there that you're touching?" Well now, wait a minute. We'd better take a look at what science has to say about the construction of what is out there beyond the mind in the physical world, and as I'm sure you're all well aware, science describes what is out there as being made up of atoms. There are atoms that make up this disc and there are atoms that make up the flesh and the nerve endings and the bones of my fingers. But wait a minute — what are these atoms made of according to science? A central hard-core nucleus surrounded by empty space and then a number of circling electrons. If we imagine the nucleus of each atom to be about the size of a pea, the electrons are whirling 'round roughly the circumference of this hall. These electrons are 2000 times smaller than the central nucleus of the atom.

But the strangeness doesn't end there, because what are these electrons made of? Science has discovered that the electrons are not particles of matter at all. They can sometimes appear like particles but at other times they appear like waves. They can be described mathematically by the scientist but he cannot picture what an electron is like, and he has now given up the struggle to attempt to do so.

You've all heard of Albert Einstein, I'm sure. Einstein spent the last 30 years of his life struggling to find some way in which things like electrons could be visualised in a direct, solid way. He died without finding the answer, and the scientific world no longer believes that it ever will be answered.



These so-called electrons that are on the outside of the atoms of my fingers, and on the outside of the atoms of this disc, these electrons are even stranger. Every electron is some kind of disturbance which is spread throughout the whole of space and the movement of every electron affects the movement of everything else in the universe, for they are all in some mysterious way interrelated. Science does not know what the electron is other than in terms of mathematical equations and the movement of pointers on the dials of their instruments. They cannot tell us what is really out there but my mind (and your mind) interprets some of the so-called electrochemical impulses coming to the brain, interprets some of those as hardness, roundness, yellowness, wetness, dryness. But realise that all these terms I've just used are all things that are in my mind and your mind but science has shown conclusively that they do not exist out there, outside of our minds.

Now, as I said at the beginning, this, I realise, is the hardest part of this lecture for you tonight. You may need to some extent to go home and think about this, but realise that we only experience sights and sounds, shapes and touch and so on insofar as our brain and its nervous system is operating, for our mind is dependent upon interpreting these impulses that come into the brain, and whether it is hardness, softness, roundness, yellowness or what have you, they are all some form of electrochemical impulse in an optic nerve, whatever that is.

So, the mind is an interpreter of sets of signals which are coming in through a receiver transmitter that we call the physical brain. But that is not the only information which is coming in to our minds. Our minds receive other sorts of information than sights, sounds, colours, tastes, smells, touch and so on. For instance, we experience impulses, some of them creative, some destructive. We get bright ideas out of nowhere. We have dreams at night. We may even experience what you want to call visions — all these things coming not through the nerves in the brain but from somewhere else. And where do you think the musical composer gets his melody from? And where does the scientist get his brilliant hypothesis from that causes the next great advance?

Einstein, you know, didn't pick up his theory of relativity out there, like you might go out and find a new species in the jungle. The theory of relativity is a creation of the human mind in an attempt to describe and understand physical phenomena. Where do scientific hunches, hypotheses and models come from? They do not come through the nerves and the physical brain.

So, the mind has more than one receiver, more than the brain. And so, you see, the mind is more than separate from and superior to the brain. The mind is open to receiving other signals. We might have got onto this track if perhaps we had thought sometimes about the situation when you have, say, a headache or a toothache. If you have a headache or a toothache, you might have trouble, possibly, convincing



your doctor or dentist that you've got anything the matter with you. He could examine your body or your teeth and say, "I can't see there's anything wrong with you. I can't see any cause for you experiencing pain." And yet we know that we are experiencing pain. So your toothache and your headache is an experience you have that I do not have. I do not experience your toothache or your headache, nor do you experience mine.

So this shows us that our minds are receiving experiences which are real which are incommunicable to anybody else. I cannot prove to you that I've got a raging toothache. There's no way I can prove it, although because you've had your own toothache, you may be sympathetic and seeing me looking troubled, believe me. So we have many real experiences which are incommunicable, unprovable to other people and yet we know they are real.

The same applies to our dreams. In our dreams we have experience of a different kind. The images we have in our dreams are usually chaotic, jumbled. If we remember our dream in any detail we might have a lot of difficulty in understanding what on Earth it's all about. Everything jumped about in such a strange, peculiar manner. But we certainly know we've dreamt. We've certainly had a real experience but of another kind to that which comes through the nerves and the physical brain.

The upshot of this argument I've been putting to you is that the mind is something which is independent of the brain and it is in the mind and only in the mind that all the appearance of the world around us resides, for when we go to the physical sciences, they can only tell us about this electromagnetic reservoir that is somehow 'out there' where there are all these strange waves that are not really waves but particles, but not really particles, but waves or something else, all interacting. That's all there is out there — no colour, no taste, no touch, etcetera. The mind is superior to and independent of the brain so that when the brain ceases to be able to function as at the point we call physical death, the mind has simply lost one of its receiver transmitter units.

This view I'm putting to you that the mind is superior and separate to the brain is confirmed by modern biofeedback research. I won't give you the details of that, but simply the result. It can be shown experimentally quite easily now that the human mind can alter and control the brain waves that are measured on an instrument. The mind can change and control the waves that are in the brain. So the mind is superior to, it is above the brain.

Now, many people, in fact a large number of people, as we're now discovering, are having from time to time a strange experience which is now called an out-of-body experience, or OBE for short, an out-of-body experience. In fact, according to the most stringent of surveys that have been done, at least one in eight people in the



population have reported having at some time in their life experienced some kind of out-of-body experience.

One of the following: some say that they suddenly find themselves seeing their own physical body from above. They are four, five or six feet above their body looking down on it and it looks like an empty shell. The experience can last for two minutes, five minutes, an hour — quite lengthy times in some cases. Some people experience while as they're out of the body, seeing themselves in what we can call an apparition body. There is their physical body down there on the bed and here they are in some kind of other body. This other body they're in they report as not being subject to the laws of gravity and they are able to see and report events that are going on in the vicinity of their physical surroundings, which in many occasions have been confirmed experimentally.

Some people report in this state actually moving and finding themselves seeing some distant place or event. And in some cases, some person or persons in that distant place have reported seeing an apparition. Fifty-four cultures have been surveyed for this phenomenon and fifty-one have shown conclusively that there are people reporting this experience. Realise of course that many people who have this experience are still too afraid to ever mention it to anybody. They don't realise how many other people have had some kind of similar experience and they feel that they were said to be regarded as going round the bend. So, we don't know how many people have had an out-of-body experience who as yet have not come forward in any way to tell us that they've had such an experience. I have met many such people. There could be six, seven, eight or more of you in the audience here tonight who have had an out-of-body experience. I hope you will mention it to me before you leave tonight if you have. I'd be interested to know.

Now, recently, a very exciting new area of research has been opened up. It's an area which is now called that of the near-death experience. Pioneer research was begun in the 1950s — that's 30 years ago — by a Dr Osis, but it was in 1975 that the publication of this book by a Dr Raymond Moody, called *Life After Life*, that the subject first hit the popular press, and again many of you here may know or be familiar with this particular book. This is a kind of experience which occurs very often when a person has lost the use temporarily of their heart. Their heart has stopped beating and they are in a coma and to all intents and appearance, dead, but on being resuscitated with modern technical machines that we have in our hospitals this day for this purpose, many report having very real, coherent experiences taking place whilst they were apparently in the coma and their heart had stopped beating, and at one time it was assumed that such a person was dead.

Dr Moody was the first person to study many cases and analyse them and put them together, and he found that there was tremendous similarity and overlap in the



accounts given by people who had gone through such a near-death experience. He studied over 100 cases and those are reported in this book, *Life After Life*. Since then, other researchers have become interested and entered the field, including two cardiologists, that's physicians who are working with dying patients and who are able to report directly what they have been told by their patients as soon as the patient comes round out of the near-death experience. Each of these has written his own book: it's Dr Rawlings, Dr Sabom and Dr Ring.

What I want to do this evening is I want to quote from each of their books what they call a composite description of the near-death experience, and by that they mean that all the cases that they have known and studied and analysed, they put them together and worked out a composite picture which contains all the different types of experience which are reported, although no one patient has experienced all these factors at the one time.

Altogether, these researchers have studied hundreds of reported cases. They have worked quite independently, and each has produced their own composite description, and I will begin first of all with that of Raymond Moody's, which goes as following:

A man is dying, and as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. He begins to hear an uncomfortable noise, a loud ringing or buzzing and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long, dark tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance as though he is a spectator. He watches the resuscitation attempt from this unusual vantage point and is in a state of emotional upheaval.

After a while, he collects himself and becomes more accustomed to his odd condition. He notices that he still has a body, but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind.

Soon, other things begin to happen. Others come to meet him and help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind he never encountered before — a being of light appears before him. This being asks him a question, non-verbally, to make him evaluate his life, and helps him by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events.

At some point, he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life, yet he finds that he must go back to Earth, for the time for his death has not come. At this point, he resists, for by now, he is taken up with his experiences in the



afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love and peace. Despite his attitude, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives. Later he tries to tell others but he has trouble doing so. In the first place, he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes. He also finds that others scoff, so he stops telling other people.

Still, the experience affects his life profoundly, especially his views about death and its relationship to life.

And now, the composite description of Dr Rawlings, a cardiologist:

A dying person simply faints or painlessly loses consciousness as death occurs, and yet he is still able to hear himself pronounced dead by his doctor. He then discovers that he is out of his own body but still in the same room, looking on as a bystander and observing the procedures. He watches himself being resuscitated and frequently he is compelled to walk around other people who might be obstructing his view, or he may look down upon the scene from a floating position near the ceiling, in which he sometimes finds himself. Often he is standing or floating behind the doctor or nurse looking down on the back of their heads as they work to revive his body. He notices who is in the room and he knows what they are saying.

He has difficulty in believing that he is dead and that the lifeless body used to be his. He feels fine. The body has been vacated as if it were a strange object. After he becomes more accustomed to this odd condition, he notices that he has a new body which seems real and endowed with superior senses. He is not a ghost. He can see and feel and think and talk just as before but now fringe benefits have been added. He notices his body has infinite capabilities of transportation and thought reading and is capable of doing almost anything. He may then hear a peculiar noise, after which he finds himself moving through a long dark passage with walls [break in recording] wonderful, frequently a rolling meadow, or a beautiful city, or it may be inexpressibly horrible, frequently a dungeon or a huge cave. His whole life may be played back as an instant review of all the major events in his life as if anticipating a judgment.

As he walks along with his friends or relatives, frequently his parents in a good experience, a barrier is usually encountered beyond which he cannot go and still return. He usually is turned back at this point and suddenly finds himself back in his body where he may feel the shock of an applied electric current or chest pains from someone pushing upon his chest.

And now finally the account of Dr Kenneth Ring:



The experience begins with a feeling of ease or peace and a sense of wellbeing, which soon culminates in a sense of overwhelming joy and happiness. This ecstatic tone, although fluctuating in intensity from case to case, tends to persist as a constant emotional ground as other features of the experience begin to unfold.

At this point, the person is aware that he feels no pain, nor does he have any other bodily sensations. Everything is quiet. These cues may suggest to him that he is either in the process of dying or has already died. He may then be aware of a transitory buzzing or wind-like sound, but in any event, he finds himself looking down on his physical body as though he were viewing it from some external vantage point.

At this time, he finds that he can see and hear perfectly, indeed that his vision and hearing tend to be more acute than usual. He is aware of the actions and conversations taking place in the physical environment, in relation to which he finds himself in the role of passive, detached spectator.

But all this seems very real and even quite natural to him. It doesn't seem at all like a dream or a hallucination. His mental state is one of clarity and alertness. At some point, he may find himself in a state of dual awareness. While he continues to be able to perceive the physical scene around him, he may also become aware of another reality and feel himself being drawn into it. He drifts into a dark void or tunnel and feels as though he is floating through it. Although he may feel lonely for a time, the experience here is predominantly peaceful and serene. All is extremely quiet and the individual is aware only of his mind and the feeling of floating.

All at once he becomes sensitive to but does not see a presence. The presence, who may be heard or speak or who may instead merely induce thoughts into the individual's mind, stimulates him to review his life and asks him to decide whether he wants to live or die. This stocktaking may be facilitated by a rapid and vivid visual playback of episodes from the person's life.

At this stage, he has no awareness of time or space and the concepts themselves are meaningless. Neither is he any longer identified with his body — only the mind is present and it is weighing logically and rationally the alternatives that confront him at this threshold separating life from death — to go further into this experience or to return into earthly life. Usually the individual decides to return on the basis not of his own preference, but on the perceived needs of his loved ones, whom his death would necessarily leave



behind. Once the decision is made, the experience tends to be abruptly terminated.

Sometimes, however, the decision or crisis occurs later, or is altogether absent, and the individual undergoes further experiences. He may, for example, continue to float through the dark void toward a magnetic and brilliant golden light from which emanates feelings of love, warmth and total acceptance, or he may enter into a world of light and preternatural beauty to be temporarily reunited with deceased loved ones before being told in effect that it is not yet his time and that he has to return to life.

In any event, whether the individual chooses or is commanded to return to his earthly body and worldly commitments, he does return. Typically, however, he has no recollection how he has effected his re-entry, for at this point he begins to lose all awareness.

Very occasionally, however, the individual may remember returning to his body with a jolt or an agonising wrenching sensation. He may even suspect that he re-enters through the head.

Afterward, when he is able to recount his experience, he finds that there are simply no words adequate to convey the feelings and the quality of the awareness he remembers. He may also be or become reticent to discuss it with others, either because he feels no-one will really be able to understand it or because he fears he will be disbelieved or ridiculed.

You will have noticed the amazing similarity of those three accounts, each based on over 100 studied cases. Note that not everybody who goes through the experience of having their heart stop beating and then are resuscitated has any experience — only a percentage report this experience. And the reason why all do not have it is not yet known for sure.

Dr Sabom has made an interesting study of a comparison between those who have reported a near-death experience and those who have not, although their heart stopped beating for a length of time, usually of course between about five minutes and 30 minutes is the reported time. Dr Sabom was interested to find out whether having an experience of near death changed the patient's fear of death or changed his belief in an afterlife, and of all those who had no experience when their heart stopped beating, only one percent became less afraid of death, whereas of those who had an experience, 50 percent lost their fear of death. Of those who had no experience, none reported any increase in their belief in an afterlife. Of those who did have an experience, 47 percent reported an increase in their belief in a life after death.



Many of those who have had this experience have said that what it has left them with is a realisation of the importance in this life of the need to cultivate love for others. This is an impression which is very strongly left with them and it changes their life in very many cases. And also, many say that they are left with a realisation of the importance of widening one's horizons and knowledge. By that, of course, they don't mean the kind of knowledge you get in an encyclopaedia, but they mean knowledge of life and its experiences.

I have met one or two persons who have undergone the near-death experience. All of them have reported major change in their life as a result, although one of them told me that she had a close friend who also underwent a near-death experience and she is not able to detect any great change in his life. That is my own second-hand experience so far of the near-death experience.

So, the near-death experience lies at the threshold of a world of the mind or spirit which is detached from the brain, the physical body and the physical world. Has anyone gone beyond and experienced further without actually dying? Yes, in fact there have been many. But we must raise the question: how reliable are such persons reporting more extensive experiences of another world not attached directly to this physical one? What weight can we put on their reporting of their experiences, bearing in mind how we, who in a sense know so much of this physical world around us, so misunderstand its reality, its true nature, according to modern science? Are we the best persons to describe to some alien from some alien dimension what our world really is?

So I raise this question: of those who report experiencing while still alive in this world, another world, another dimension which seems to go beyond the threshold experience of the near-death experience — of these, are there any who seems to strike us to have special credentials, to make us feel that perhaps we can trust and follow what they report more than others? And there is indeed such a person, and it is Emanuel Swedenborg, the scientist, philosopher and mystic of the 18th century. He in my view and that of many others is easily the best witness that has ever been, despite the fact that he is far from being the most recent witness to this other world or other dimension.

This is the claim that Swedenborg makes towards the end of his life — a long life, he lived to the age of 84 — and he wrote this in one of his last books:

I have been permitted by the Lord to be in the spiritual and natural worlds at one and the same time and so to converse with angels as with men and thus to become acquainted with the states of those who after death flock together into that hitherto unknown world, for I have conversed with all my relatives and friends and also with kings and dukes and men of learning who have met



their fate, and this now for 27 years continuously. Therefore, I am able from living experience, to describe the states of men after death in relation both to such as have lived good and such as have lived evil lives.

The credentials of Swedenborg for this role of reporter on the other world are absolutely superb. To be a scientific reporter of the spiritual world, you could not have someone better trained and qualified. To begin with, his sanity is completely attested to by countless famous people of his day, for he was a public figure who moved in the highest circles of royalty and intellectuality — utterly sane throughout his whole life. He had a complete training in all the sciences of his day. He had a brilliantly clear, rational mind. He was practical and inventive, even hard-headed, as you might say might we expect of scientists.

His inventions are numerous. They include a submarine and an aeroplane which is designed according to the first known principles of modern aerodynamics and has been reported as such in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

But it is as an anticipator of modern scientific discoveries that we begin to realise how astounding this particular individual was, and I can only scratch the surface for you here in telling you some of the amazing anticipations that Swedenborg made of 19th and 20th century modern discoveries, and we have no reason to believe that the list of anticipations is closed for as more discoveries come to light, we may well find that in Swedenborg's writings they have been anticipated yet again.

He was the first to understand the origin of magnetism and the magnetic force. He foresaw that all matter is not solid but is actually made up of energy revolving at high speeds, and that every part of this revolution is formed of smaller parts which are moving even more dynamically, even more faster. This picture is being confirmed with modern fundamental physics today. He anticipated the discovery of stars that pulsate in their energy, called 'pulsars' today.

But his most amazing discoveries are in the realm of anatomy and physiology, and this is where the list becomes so long and is getting longer. In his day, there were many glands whose function was not known by medical scientists. He correctly anticipated what the function of those glands was before this was experimentally determined. He was the first to discover brain waves, the fact that the brain has waves and that the brain is oscillating in its cavity, in and out. As we breathe in, the brain collapses; as we breathe out, the brain expands.

He anticipated the recent discovery, which was awarded a Nobel Prize, that the brain, which has two halves, left and right, the brain is receiving into its two halves two different kinds of functions, or use. It's now known that the left brain operates to enable us to think rationally and analytically, whereas the right brain enables us to



think intuitively and holistically, that's to say, to be able to appreciate something as a whole, whereas the left brain cuts things up into pieces and analyses.

This was anticipated as long ago as 1733 by Emanuel Swedenborg. Before the living cell was discovered in the body, Swedenborg had anticipated it and its essential functions, how each cell in the body is itself like a body that has to take in food and excrete it and has machinery, as it were, that operates on the basis of the energy coming in. And amazingly, Swedenborg had a vision, on one occasion when he was meditating upon the skin of the hand, of an intertwined spiral, and again in the '60s, the Nobel Prize was awarded to Watson, Crick and co. for their discovery of the double helix of the DNA molecule, which is the genetic carrier in the living cell — a double intertwined spiral.

We can also add to this list of qualifications: to be a scientific reporter of the spiritual world, the tremendous length of time that Swedenborg had for this study. He first had his experience of being aware of both worlds 27 years before his death and on and off, these experiences continued and he continued his practice of making copious notes just as he had done with his science before, of all these experiences, and he has left for posterity an amazing wealth of experiential knowledge and analysis for people to study for aeons to come.

He showed conclusively by chance rather than by deliberate action, that he was able to obtain information which could only be known by dead persons at the time, and these are again well attested by many witnesses from amongst royalty of the day.

And finally I would mention his very modest, unassuming character. It will undoubtedly be shown eventually that he had the greatest brain of all time when his anticipations really come to light and are known by the scientific world as a whole. He had every reason to be very swollen-headed, and in fact he was so as a young man, as a young scientist, until he had his experience of having the spiritual world opened up to him when he underwent a great change of character and lost his pride and became quiet, modest, unassuming; writing books quietly, answering questions quietly, thrusting his experiences and wonderful knowledge at no-one unless they were interested.

How does Swedenborg describe the process of entering into the spiritual world? For he reports that he saw many people being resuscitated in the other life, waking up to their new life in this extended world of the mind or spirit. He says that for most people, for those who die quietly, the mind rests for up to about three days, between one and three days, before it begins to become aware of another world. And at first, the slowly awakening spirit is surrounded by angelic beings of a very high order.

By the way, Swedenborg discovered that all angelic beings had once been men and women on some planet in our universe. These highest angelic beings have the



essential quality of beaming love. But their quality of spirit is so high that they are normally invisible; only the great love which they have for all spirits emanating forth from them. As the slowly awakening spirit becomes aware of this, after a while the spirit finds that this aura is too strong for him to be able to bear, and so these celestial angels, as Swedenborg terms them, these very high angels of love, withdraw when they find that the spirit cannot take the strength of their aura, and a lower order of angelic being, called by Swedenborg 'spiritual angels', draw near. Now, the spiritual angels have the quality of great light or wisdom. They shine very brightly from the great light and understanding that they have within them.

Many spirits awakening up in the spiritual world find even this aura after a short while too powerful, and these spiritual angels withdraw, and good spirits of a nature closer to that of the awakening spirit draw near and frequently among these are relatives and friends who have gone before.

The newly awakened spirit finds that a new world opens up before him, which is just as real, in fact often he will say it seems more real than the physical world that he has left. It feels just as, or more so [bangs table] solid as the solidity of our tables and chairs and stones and so on in this life. But remember what we saw at the beginning of this lecture. The experience of solidity, or wetness, or whatever you like of the senses — exists in the mind and not in that world out there that we call the scientific world measured by scientific instruments. So just as the scientific electromagnetic reservoir can be experienced by us as sometimes being solid, there is no reason why this other greater world of the spirit should not also have the same or greater sense of solidity.

After a while, the new spirit begins to look around in his new surroundings and he begins to move about and to be drawn to certain people like himself, or at least if they appear to be like himself and then he finds out they're different, he will move on to others, and his character will begin to change, that's to say, what he really is inside, what he really wants out of life begins to emerge and the outer shell, his superficial covering, begins to change. And as it does so, he finds that his surroundings change because in fact, whatever the spirit sees around him is in fact an exact correspondence of some quality of state in his spirit at the time.

I shall say a lot more about this particular aspect in my second lecture next week, but just let me leave it like this for the moment, that in this new world that we can call for short 'the spiritual world', all the visual images that we will see around us will be a reflection, be like a mirror of the states that we have in our spirit, good and bad, so that to the extent that there are beautiful parts of our spirit, this will project out and be imaged back by beautiful objects, whereas ugly elements of our spirit will be projected out and mirrored back as ugly forms around us.



In this new world, there are many levels of being corresponding to the many levels that there are for our spirits to be in and to traverse, for the spirit can rise and fall spiritually. It can become more pure or more impure. And again, I will say more about these levels in my next lecture. But the spirit finds that love is the key factor at the basis of the spiritual world. Love is the important element that decides everything.

And now, how are we going to evaluate what we hear from reporters such as Emanuel Swedenborg and others? There's an old Spanish proverb that goes as follows: "Take what you want," says God, "take it and pay for it." Take what you want, take it and pay for it. You can choose if you want to take the limitations of believing only what comes in from the electromagnetic reservoir to the brain, believing that the mind is tied to the brain absolutely and must die with the brain.

But if you do, you will pay for that taking in this way. You will tend to develop a narrow, restricted, crude view of life. You will tend to become cynical, tend to lack real hope and uplift. You will tend to become fearful of death or have to repress that fear by rushing around doing all sorts of other things and of course you will suffer the feeling that your loved ones who have died are literally gone forever more. And perhaps worst of all, if this is what you are taking, you will begin to suffer from the feeling of the ultimate meaninglessness and purposelessness of all existence and one's own life in particular, the kind of feeling that has led many people to commit suicide.

You can buy all that if you want to, and many are doing so, but you cannot prove that view of life to be true. Science can't even prove that there really is anything out there at all and certainly science has proved that what is out there, this electromagnetic reservoir, is totally different from what we imagine the outer world to be like.

I have taken and bought what my experience confirms again and again — that my mind is receiving all sorts of experiences which are independent of the brain and the physical body and is therefore a mind which can continue to exist without the receiver transmitter we call the brain and the physical body, a mind which exists in its own mental or spiritual world, a world that transcends the death of the physical body.