

# **PRESENTING SWEDENBORG**

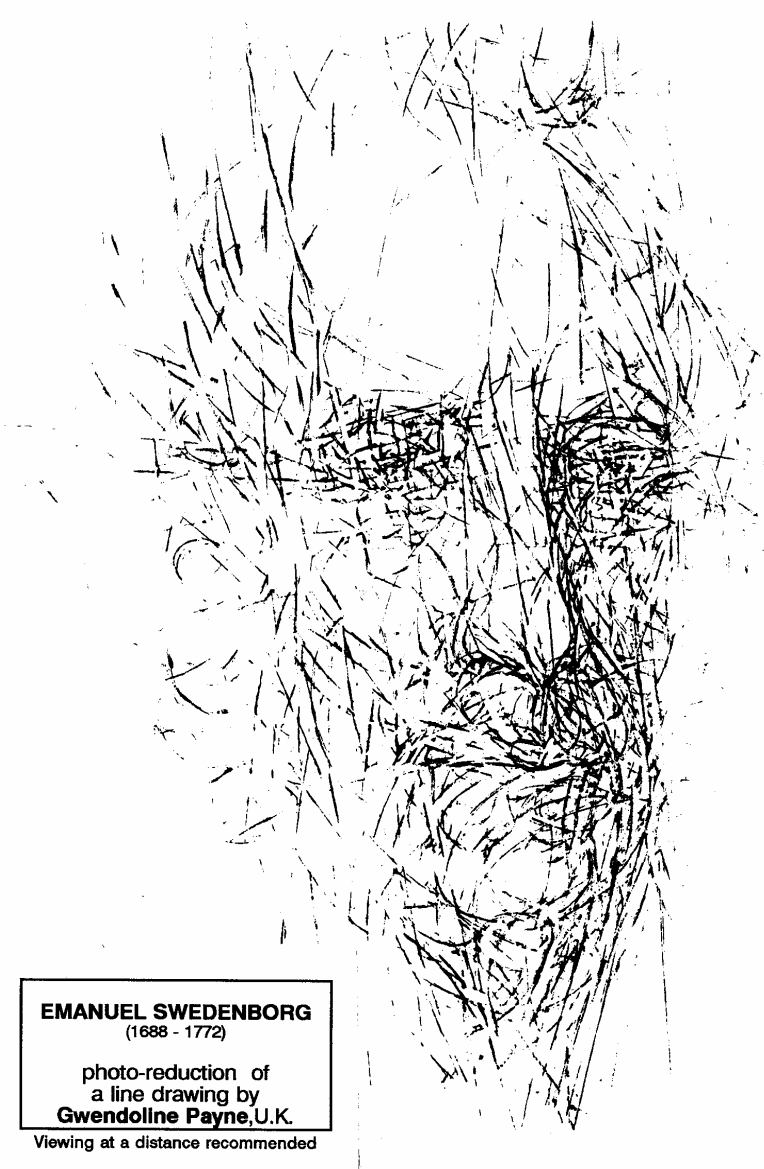
## **A ROAD MAP FOR READERS**

*With Julian C. Duckworth*

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**SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**



**EMANUEL SWEDENBORG**  
(1688 - 1772)

photo-reduction of  
a line drawing by  
**Gwendoline Payne, U.K.**

Viewing at a distance recommended

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# PRESENTING SWEDENBORG

## A ROAD MAP FOR SWEDENBORG READERS

### INTRODUCTION

Emanuel Swedenborg was a man with remarkable insight and foresight. Living from 1688-1772, and having absorbed most of the philosophy and scientific knowledge then available, he made significant contributions to the development of metallurgy, engineering, physics, astronomy, physiology and psychology.

In middle age his interest turned more to philosophy and religion. He found himself in touch with inner worlds of the spirit, developed extraordinary visionary powers, perceived new depths of meaning in the Bible, and felt called to proclaim a new age of freedom and spirituality in religion. This he believed to be symbolised by the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven, described in the book of Revelation.

This booklet introduces the spiritual writings of Emanuel Swedenborg to potential and interested readers not yet acquainted with them in detail. Its aim is to assist the new reader to find his way around the different works by mapping out the overall contents of each. It should help the reader who may be daunted by the number of spiritual insights and apparent repetitions through identifying the major spiritual principles within this universal philosophy.

There is a section dealing specifically with the terminology used by Swedenborg, and there are hints on "How to get the most from reading Swedenborg" which provides more general assistance to reading and enjoying Swedenborg. In short, this booklet is a 'road map' to provide a bridge for the would-be reader who wonders

where to begin and where to find the central concepts in Swedenborg's writings.

Every philosophy seeks to present a form of truth that brings greater awareness in the light of the continuing spiritual evolution of mankind. There can be no final single statement of ultimate truth. We are living in a time of great transition as we emerge into the Aquarian age. Spiritual truths are now being understood in more personal and universal ways rather than simply as information. It is increasingly being recognised that within the differences in language and terminology, the various philosophies share much in common. Each philosophy has much to gain from being in contact with others and we are learning to appreciate the great diversity written in the spectrum of truth. This is particularly central to Swedenborgian philosophy which describes the heavenly state as being continually perfected by greater variety.

The essence of Swedenborg expresses the Divine nature and our human spirituality in clear and meaningful statements. Those who read Swedenborg frequently discover that what they read is what they already intuitively know to be true. This is the joy in reading Swedenborg.





## LIST OF WORKS

A great number of scientific and philosophical works were written up to 1745. These are not included in the following list of Swedenborg's spiritual writings.

Journal of Dreams	1743-1744
Worship and Love of God	1745
The Word Explained (Adversaria)	1746-1747
The Spiritual Diary	1747-1765
Arcana Caelestia (Heavenly Secrets)	1749-1756
Earths in the Universe	1758
Heaven and Hell	1758
The Last Judgment	1758
The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine	1758
The White Horse of the Apocalypse	1758
The Apocalypse Explained (manuscript)	1759
The Athanasian Creed (manuscript)	1760
The Internal Sense of the Prophets and Psalms	1761
The Four Doctrines - Of the Lord, Of the Sacred Scriptures, Of Life, Of Faith.	1763
Continuation of the Last Judgment	1763
Divine Love and Wisdom	1763
Divine Providence	1764
Charity	1766
Apocalypse Revealed	1766
Conjugal Love (Marriage Love)	1768
Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church	1769
Intercourse of the Soul and the Body	1769
True Christian Religion	1771
The Coronis	1771



## **SOME TRANSITIONAL WORKS**

### **JOURNAL OF DREAMS**

Begun in 1743, during Swedenborg's foreign travels, this personal diary record of people and places quickly plunges into an account of an inward spiritual search, taking the form of records of many dreams and their significance to Swedenborg. These dreams and inner experiences were written when his life was radically changing. There are about 280 dreams recorded, mostly with comment, and a number with explicit sexual content. It is in the Journal of Dreams that Swedenborg attests his personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

An excellent detailed commentary on the Journal of Dreams has been made by Wilson Van Dusen (Swedenborg Foundation 1986).

### **ON THE WORSHIP AND LOVE OF GOD**

This quite different work is in a poetic classical style. It is in three parts and is written as a fable or drama of creation. It is often referred to as Swedenborg's transitional work, bringing the change from a scientific philosophy to a spiritual approach. Part one presents the origin of the earth, paradise and the dwelling place of living creatures, and includes the birth, infancy and love of the firstborn or Adam. Part two concerns the marriage of the first-born, the soul and the image of God. Part three deals with the married life of the first-born pair. It is clearly meant to be allegorical in meaning, with characters presented representatively.

### **THE WORD EXPLAINED (OR ADVERSARIA)**

An attempt to form a consecutive study of the Bible at a time when Swedenborg sensed the nature of correspondence and the internal meaning of the scriptures. The style is rather troubled and disjointed, with some intimations of his later spiritual understanding. At this time - 1746-1747 - he made a Biblical Index from which he

later drew passages for all his subsequent writings. He also took up the study of Hebrew and Greek. In August 1747 he wrote that "There was a change of state in me into the heavenly kingdom, in an image." This marks the commencement of his full spiritual understanding and he began the *Arcana Caelestia* in December 1748.



## **BIOGRAPHIES OF SWEDENBORG'S LIFE**

There is a very large number of biographies about Swedenborg written from different perspectives and for different reasons. Among these, the following are good introductions:

George Trobridge "Swedenborg: Life and Teaching"

(a short readable book)

Cyriel Sigstedt "The Swedenborg Epic"

(a thorough biography)

Lars Berquist "Swedenborg's Secret"

(a thoroughly researched modern presentation)

Jonathan Rose "Scribe of Heaven"

(a broad coverage of Swedenborg's life and influence)

Signe Toksvig "Emanuel Swedenborg"

(deals more with spiritual and mystic experiences)

Inge Jonsson "Emanuel Swedenborg"

(written objectively from a non-Swedenborgian view)

Two other books that may be helpful are:

Michael Stanley "Emanuel Swedenborg: Essential Readings"

(covers a whole range of spiritual insights)

William Woofenden "Swedenborg Researcher's Manual"

(a very helpful reference tool)

## **GENERAL CONTENTS OF THE MAJOR WORKS**

### **THE SPIRITUAL DIARY (5 VOLUMES) (1747-1765)**

The five volumes of the Spiritual Diary were written at a period of enormous spiritual awakening in Swedenborg's life. He experienced strong powerful insights coming into his consciousness which he understood to come from the spiritual world into which his mind became fully opened. The imagery is vivid and the many concepts are extremely detailed and specific. He recorded his own experiences and dated them. Much of the material in the Diaries was later used and expanded in other books, particularly in the Arcana Caelestia (Heavenly Secrets).

The Spiritual Diary should ideally be read in short sections at a time to savour the rich field of spiritual experiencing. It is a mine of information and it frequently reads like a meditation set down in recorded form. The material is not sequential but intuitive and revelatory, almost at the mystic level, with a useful index of topics given in the final volume.

### **THE ARCANA CAELESTIA (HEAVENLY SECRETS) (1749-1756)**

The twelve volumes (and index) of the Arcana is considered to be the major work of Swedenborg. Its form is quite unique. The internal spiritual meaning of the first two books of the Bible, Genesis and Exodus, are set out systematically verse by verse from beginning to end. Many other verses from the Bible, which refer to the same imagery, are used as support material.

The Genesis and Exodus material presents the sequence of spiritual growth and development as the soul begins to enter consciousness of its existence from the Divine. It outlines the many struggles and temptations of soul-growth in the journey towards eventual angelhood. It deals with the work of the Divine with the

formation of the soul, and in particular with the activity of the spiritual world - both angels and evil spirits - in the states and life of each individual person. The full nature of good and evil are described frequently and in great detail.

Today, the content of the Arcana Caelestia is being increasingly studied and examined for its direct application in areas of spiritual growth, psychology and counselling.

In between many of the chapters of Genesis and Exodus, Swedenborg adds other material - usually referred to as inter-chapter sections - on specific subjects. Swedenborg gives an extensive presentation on each theme from a spiritual world perspective, and includes very many of his own experiences from what he heard and saw.

In written order, these topics are:

- Awakening from death (161-181)
- Entry into eternal life (182-189, 314-319)
- The nature of the life of a spirit (320-323)
- Various ideas held about the soul (443-448)
- Heaven and heavenly joy (449-459, 537-553)
- The communities that make heaven (684-691)
- The hells (692-700, 814-831, 947-970)
- Vastations (1106-1113)
- The Most Ancient Church (Golden Age) (1114-1129, 1265~1272)
- Position, place and distance in the next life (1273-1278, 1376-1382)
- The perceptions and spheres (auras) of spirits (1383-1400, 1504-1520)
- Angelic light (1521-1534, 1619-1633)
- Angelic speech (1634-1650, 1757-1764)
- Inner meanings of scripture (1767-1777, 1869-1879)
- Visions and dreams (1880-1885, 1966-1983)
- The Last Judgment (2117-2134)
- Children in heaven (2289-2309)

- Memory after death (2469-2494)
- Those outside religion after death (2589-2605)
- Marriage and adultery (2727-2759)
- Human freedom (2870-2893)
- Representations and Correspondences  
(2987-3003, 3213-3227, 3337-3352, 3472-3485)
- The Grand Man (correspondence of the physical body)  
(variously between 3624 and 5726)
- Disease (5711-5726)
- The End of the Age (between 3353 and 5071)
- Presence of spirits and angels with a person  
(5846-5866, 5976-5993)
- Influx and interaction between the soul and body  
(between 6053 and 6626)
- Charity and faith (between 6627 and 10831)
- The inhabitants of other planets and earths (between 6695-10837)

The topics of the Grand Man (the physical body representation of communities in heaven), the end of the age, influx and the presence of angels and spirits with a person, charity and faith, and the inhabitants of other earths are given extensive treatment and continue over several chapters or even volumes, regularly either preceding or following a chapter.

Much of the topic material was later used by Swedenborg in specific volumes, such as "Heaven and Hell", and the "New Jerusalem". It is valuable to read both sources.

The entire Arcana Caelestia is a psycho-spiritual storehouse of the soul, its spiritual form and life, its Divine origin, and its potential development. It is an inexhaustible reservoir of spiritual insights. Swedenborg was never again to touch so deeply and expressively on the spirit within.

## HEAVEN AND HELL

This is the most well-known and frequently-read volume of Swedenborg. It deals specifically with the nature of life after death and the two states of life called Heaven and Hell.

The central theme is the formation and emergence of the individual person's "ruling love" or life's delight while living in this world. This forms the basis of a person's situation and fulfilment after death.

The book operates on two distinct levels: The situation in the afterlife itself, and the internal state within each person. These two "worlds" function according to similar spiritual laws and consequences.

The book is set out in four major sections:

1. The form of heaven and its communities which is the Divine Human.  
Distinctions between the celestial and spiritual angels.  
Distinctions between the three degrees of heaven.
2. A full description of life in heaven as experienced by angels, including their presence with people.
3. The process of dying and awakening, and the three stages of development after death in the initial world of spirits.
4. The state of hell, its life, its inverted form of heaven, its use, and how it is controlled.

Heaven and Hell also presents other major themes:

- Correspondences (87-115)
- Influx (291-317)
- Male/Female (366-386)
- Universality (318-328, 415-420)
- Use (387-414)

## **DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM**

The book outlines the Divine purpose in creating the natural universe. The nature of reality is fully discussed and major topics such as emanations, spheres (auras), series and degrees are presented. These topics are essential for a full understanding of spiritual laws.

The major sections of the book are in five chapters:

- The Creator
- The Means of Creation (Emanation)
- The Structure of Creation (Degrees)
- The Method of Creation (Use)
- The Goal of Creation (Harmony)

This work has been described as literally cosmic in its scope.

## **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

It is helpful to see Divine Providence as a continuation of Divine Love and Wisdom. The former describes the purpose of creation and the latter shows how the Divine nature governs human life and creation.

A major theme of the work is the true nature of spiritual freedom and the laws which provide for this. The question of a loving, just God alongside innocent human suffering is put into clear perspective.

The following outline highlights the key themes and chapters:

- The Government and Goal of Divine Providence (1-45)
- Providence regards what is infinite and eternal (46-69)
- Five laws by which Divine Providence acts -  
(each dealt with at length) (70-190)
- Profanation and safeguards.  
The varying degrees of profanation. (221-233)
- What the Divine permits -  
wars, heresies, atheism, hypocrisy (234-284)



- Providence is universal and in all events (191-220)
- The intention to save all people (285-307)
- No predestination (322-330)
- Providence acts according to its own laws of creation (331-340)

## **CONJUGIAL LOVE (or LOVE IN MARRIAGE)**

Swedenborg presents the nature of male-female qualities, their origin from the Divine, their correspondence, and the dynamic union within marriage. The reasons and causes of marital breakdown both external and internal - are discussed. Human sexuality is described in its spiritual and natural contexts, and in the second half of the work, a large number of disorderly states are examined.

Some of the major areas are:

- Marriages in heaven and our continuing sexuality (27-44)
- Married partners after death (45-56)
- Marriage love as sacred (57-82)
- The marriage of good and truth (83-115)
- The marriage of the Lord and the Church (116-137)
- Chastity, or pure thinking (138-155)
- The union of souls, minds, and bodies (156-183)
- Changes that marriage brings to each partner (184-208)
- Coldness, separation and divorce (234-270)
- Reasons for pretence of love in marriage (271-294)
- The commitment in engagement or betrothal (295-316)
- Re-marriage (317-331)
- Polygamy (332-356)
- Jealousy and zeal (357-384)
- The spiritual origin of parental love (385-422)
- Disorderly loves, adultery and its degrees, and various forms of lust described (423-535)

### **Note on Swedenborg's "Memorable Relations"**

In Conjugial Love, in Apocalypse Revealed and in True Christian Religion, Swedenborg adds a number of his own spiritual world

experiences. These are in some ways similar to the entries in the Spiritual Diary which he discontinued after including the end-of-chapter narratives. These accounts often show a clear connection with the previous chapter material.

## **TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION**

As the Arcana Caelestia was the initial and quite unique outpouring of Swedenborg's spiritual insights of a psycho-spiritual nature, so True Christian Religion, his final major work, also has a distinct quality to it.

It is a highly systematised explanation of traditional Christian theology and doctrine within which are contained many new and radically different spiritual insights. Using religious terminology, subjects such as God, The Trinity, Salvation, the Scriptures, Faith, Charity, Free Will, Regeneration, and the Last Judgment are extensively discussed.

## **APOCALYPSE REVEALED AND APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED**

Swedenborg set down two expositions of the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, which contains powerful imagery and apparent prophecy of things to take place. In the ***Apocalypse Revealed*** our eventual personal self-judgment in the spiritual world is described, with reference to deeper levels of both good and evil states within us being aroused and resolved. This is also set in the context of the Last Judgment, or major re-ordering of the whole spiritual world, which Swedenborg claimed to have witnessed.

Each verse of the book of Revelation is presented in terms of its spiritual or internal meaning. The book also outlines the two extremes towards which religion tends to decline, described as "faith-alone" and "love of dominion".

In ***Apocalypse Explained***, written relatively early on, and published posthumously in six volumes, Swedenborg presents a verse by verse exposition of the Biblical book of Revelation, drawing extensively from other passages in the Bible as supporting material for the spiritual meaning given. He did not complete this work, and left off writing quite suddenly at Revelation chapter 19 verse 10.

A number of sections are included as additional material and form continuations in the main text throughout the work:

Religion and Life  
The Word of God  
Life in Animals and Plants, etc..



# **GENERAL CONTENTS OF SOME OTHER WORKS**

## **EARTHS IN THE UNIVERSE**

In this age of space exploration, this work has aroused unusual controversy, as Swedenborg claims that he met in the spiritual world former inhabitants of several of the other planets in our solar system and our moon. There are also sections dealing with spirits from earths beyond our solar system. Controversy apart, the book's great value lies in its descriptions of the states and qualities of spirits in the whole of creation, their understanding of God, and their perceptions of spiritual life. It is in this work that Swedenborg states that in the whole of the universe the Divine is known to be One, and that the quality of human life on earth is the most natural to be found in the universe.

## **THE LAST JUDGMENT**

This work states that the Last Judgment, predicted in the Bible, took place in the spiritual world in 1757; a uniquely Swedenborgian belief. The events associated with this Last Judgment, together with the spiritual qualities and lives of the different nations, are also described.

## **THE NEW JERUSALEM or THE HEAVENLY CITY**

This is an invaluable wide-ranging summary of many of Swedenborg's spiritual concepts; almost a 'precis' of topics covered at length elsewhere. The topics in order are:

- On Good and Truth (11-19)
- On Will and Understanding (28-33)
- On the Internal and External Man (36-46)
- On Love in general (54-61)
- On Self-love and Worldly love (65-80)
- On Love of the neighbour (84-105)

- On Faith (108-119)
  - On Piety (123-128)
  - On Conscience (130-138)
  - On Freedom (141-147)
  - On Merit (150-157)
  - On Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins (159-169)
  - On Regeneration (173-182)
  - On Temptations (187-195)
  - On Baptism (202-208)
  - On the Holy Supper (210-214)
  - On Resurrection (223-228)
  - On Heaven and Hell (230-239)
  - On the Church (241-245)
  - On the Sacred Scripture or Word (249-254)
  - On Providence (267-275)
  - On the Lord (280-297)
  - On the Government of Church and State (311-325)

Swedenborg adds many references from the Arcana Caelestia which provide supporting material for each topic. Some of the modern editions omit these references.

## **THE FOUR DOCTRINES**

The unique and extremely valuable approach of this work is in the amount of supporting passages given from the Bible for each teaching. The four doctrines covered are:

The Doctrine of the Lord  
 The Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture  
 The Doctrine of Faith  
 The Doctrine of Life

Even though the titles might suggest a duplication of material presented elsewhere in Swedenborg, there is much fresh ground here presented in relevant ways. For example, the Sacred Scripture section introduces the place of world mythologies in Divine revelation, and the final Life section deals with the Ten

Commandments, stating that as we turn against murder, theft, adultery and other states as sins against the Divine, we will grow in love, honesty and purity.

## **CHARITY**

This short work can be said to be quite practical in content, since Swedenborg describes the attitude and spiritual motives of people in various occupations towards others.

The degrees of the 'neighbour' are outlined.

## **SMALLER SPIRITUAL WORKS**

### **THE WHITE HORSE**

Based on Apocalypse 19, it deals with the spiritual sense of the Word and gives a list of the inspired books within the Word.

### **ATHANASIAN CREED**

Presents a true understanding of the Trinity of Persons as contained in the Athanasian Creed.

### **PROPHETS AND PSALMS**

A useful brief summary of the spiritual meaning by chapter and verse, using tabulated topics.

### **THE WORD FROM EXPERIENCE (Latin: DE VERBO)**

A treatise on the Word, in heaven, on earth and in people, with much spiritual world experience provided by confirmation.

### **THE DIVINE LOVE AND THE DIVINE WISDOM (or DOCTRINE OF USES)**

Uses many illustrations from anatomy and embryology to present ideas on the nature and origin of the soul and human use as love.

**CONTINUATION OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT**

Written five years after the first work on this topic, this work reaffirms that the judgement has taken place and compares before and after the judgement. The second part deals with various nations in the spiritual world.

**BRIEF EXPOSITION**

A sketch of the doctrine of the New Church in a summary form.

**CANONS OF THE NEW CHURCH**

Deals with the same subjects as the first three chapters of True Christian Religion: The Infinite, the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Trinity.

**SOUL-BODY INTERACTION**

(previously INTERCOURSE OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY)  
Deals with spiritual influx based on order and its laws in connection with the "mind-body problem".

**SCRIPTURE CONFIRMATIONS**

A straight list of references to support various doctrinal subjects, drawn mainly from Paul's Epistles and Acts to show their supporting nature.

**CORONIS**

Treats of the four periods or "churches" on this earth, of their nature and eventual consummation, and of the new church to be the crown of all.

**CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE**

Treats of the Lord's Second Coming and the New Church and miracles.

## **CENTRAL SPIRITUAL TOPICS CONTAINED IN SWEDENBORG**

Within much of Swedenborg's spiritual philosophy is a wealth often hidden at first reading - of the basic universal laws of spiritual life. Many of these can be found spread throughout the whole of Swedenborg's writing and they form the ground on which the entire and integrated philosophy is built. It is essential for any reader to become as fully acquainted with these foundation principles as possible to gain a sound understanding and sense of Swedenborgian thinking. Most of the key principles are stated and briefly explained below.

### **THE DIVINE FLOW OF LIFE**

All life ceaselessly flows from the Divine Source, maintaining the outer physical universe and inner spiritual levels in existence. Were this to cease for a moment, everything would perish. This flow of life - itself perfect and good - is maintained equally with both good and evil people; the former channelling it in its purity, and the latter distorting it for their own evil ends.

### **PEOPLE ARE RECIPIENTS OF LIFE**

The appearance - and persuasion - of our senses is that we have life from within ourselves. This is an essential law of a loving Divine Creation which gives life and freedom. The appearance we live in provides the basis for our spiritual freedom to acknowledge or deny the Divine. The truth, which the spiritual person increasingly comes to know, is that we receive all things from the Divine.

### **A DYNAMIC DUALITY EXISTS IN CREATION**

The Divine Itself is one, yet our finite perception of the Divine requires a sense of duality to increase our understanding of it. As with the heat and light from the sun, which is from one source but is



distinguished by us into two distinct energies, so we perceive the Divine nature as being both Love and Wisdom. The relationship between the two forms a dynamic since they work towards unity, to provide life.

From this come the forms of dualism both in creation, such as male and female, symmetry, etc., and the internal dualities of good and truth, will and understanding, faith and charity etc., which are shown by Swedenborg to be complementary to one another. From this comes the essential balance in all life.

## **PEOPLE FORM THEIR OWN SENSE OF REALITY WHICH IS ETERNITY**

There are many levels of awareness which have the potential to become consciously opened up within the developing human soul. As we turn towards the Divine source, higher levels of conscious awareness become opened and form our sense of what is real. Our eventual chosen level becomes permanent and forms our final view of reality within which further awareness takes place.

## **DIVINE LIFE IS ONE BUT IS TO BE PERCEIVED IN DISCRETE DEGREES**

The subject of 'discrete' degrees is central to Swedenborg and concerns the variations within spiritual life and development. It is impossible to progress gradually from one level to another as with continuous degrees of increasing light, heat and height. A discrete degree involves a shift from one level to another, for example, from knowledge to wisdom, and from wisdom to love. Yet, in spite of being distinct, higher degrees are within corresponding lower ones, as their source. All spiritual forms are in discrete degrees.

## **A TRUTH-GOOD INVERSION IS THE PATTERN OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

Swedenborg brings out the discrete and cyclic nature of all spiritual development. Initially, a person's perception of spiritual life seeks to acquire a knowledge or understanding of what is true which is seen as the goal. But the second stage of the cycle of regeneration brings about an abrupt and discrete change of emphasis, in which truth, now seen, leads the will of a person to seek expression in something good, useful and living. Thus there is an inversion.

## **NEGATIVE STATES ARE INEVITABLY PART OF SPIRITUAL LIFE**

The pattern of spiritual life can be expressed in the form of a sine-wave or undulation of 'highs' and 'lows'. This is due to a necessary period of loss of vision, or temptation (defined by Swedenborg as an 'attack on what we love') during spiritual growth. When we receive a new level of insight or motivation from the Divine, this needs to be made "ours" by first appearing to be taken from us. This leads us to choose at depth if we genuinely wish to rediscover the initial vision, and the work of setting ourselves to this goal is the major part of regeneration.

This pattern is a continuing one in spiritual development, even eternal, although angels do not experience the same degree of 'swings', having established a true relationship with the Divine.

## **LINKING WITH THE HIGHER SELF**

The Divine lives within each person, but much of its activity lies beyond human comprehension, or beyond our ability to harm or interfere with its purpose of salvation. Yet people who are developing spiritually tend to come into an awareness of their own 'higher' self from which spring perception, conscience, commitment, will and motivation, and general positivity. This higher self,

contrasted with normal human responses which are of a lower kind, is an experience of the Divine within us.

## **THE DIVINE SEEKS TO REVEAL ITSELF**

The Divine seeks to make itself known to what it has created. It does this in part through the order of the created world which expresses and mirrors spiritual causes and ultimately the nature of the Divine itself. In Swedenborg this relationship is described as "correspondence". The Divine also manifests itself through personal revelation which can take the form of internal images experienced in dreams and visions, or during meditation, or collectively in mythological themes and figures; or, most powerfully, through a revealed Scripture, such as the Bible, Koran, or Bhagavad Gita, in which Divine truths find precise and poetic expression as a fixed revelation to mankind.

## **THE OUTER AND INNER WORLD ARE IN CORRESPONDENCE**

The natural world in which we now live is created by the Divine, and therefore mirrors and contains the spiritual within it through "correspondence". As above, so below. It is a living relationship in which natural forms are symbols and images of our spiritual life. These correspondences, for example, can be seen in the three kingdoms of nature which generally correspond to memory-knowledges in the mineral kingdom, living growing perceptions in the plant kingdom, and warm affections or loves in the animal kingdom. Correspondences are universally expressed in scriptures, dreams, myths, and nature.

## **UNIVERSALITY AND DIVERSITY ARE EXPRESSIONS OF DIVINE LIFE**

The Divine seeks to express itself in innumerable and varied ways. It is never identical but continually diverse. This is the pattern of the kingdom of heaven, or Grand Man, in which great diversity

brings increasing perfection to its form and usefulness. In this world differences often lead to discord; in heaven, variety is perceived as delightful and enriching.

## **THE SPIRITUAL WORLD AND OUR INNER WORLD WORK BY SIMILAR LAWS**

We are already, as far as our thoughts, feelings and responses are concerned, living in the spiritual world. The laws by which the spiritual world operates, whether that is heaven or hell, are the same laws by which our present inner states of life operate. This is because the spiritual world is the final environment in which our internal states have full expression. What we think and intend unavoidably becomes what we say and do.

## **THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ORIGINATE FROM THE PRESENCE OF SPIRITS**

It appears to us that our thoughts and feelings are our very own. According to Swedenborg the truth is otherwise and indicates the relationship between the spiritual and natural worlds. Our environment here provides an ultimate, or lowest plane of experience for all spiritual beings to seek the expression of what they find delightful. Conversely, our thoughts and feelings enter into our awareness through the presence and suggestion of various spirits who love to introduce their own delights. We are therefore free to accept and retain these visiting impulses or to disassociate ourselves from them.



# **A GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT SWEDENBORGIAN TERMS**

(Mainly adapted from Swedenborg Researcher's Manual, Woofenden, Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1988)

## **ANCIENT CHURCH**

The second spiritual epoch of mankind which followed the decline of the Most Ancient Church (see).

Those of this 'church' had conscience in place of perception, understood correspondences, and had a written form of the Word. Otherwise known as the Silver Age.

## **ANGEL**

A person in heaven. All angels are people who have lived in the natural world first and who entered heaven at some point after death.

## **APPEARANCE**

Term used to distinguish pure truth from its received forms. Every person sees truth according to his or her finite and present state. The natural world is full of appearances which deceive the natural senses. In heaven, there are 'real appearances' since things there appear as they really are.

## **AS OF ONESELF**

A central concept; a person is to act 'as if self-powered but at the same time to acknowledge that all power to act is from the Divine.

## **CELESTIAL**

Term used in two distinct ways. Firstly to describe a type of being, whether spirit or person, who responds immediately and intuitively to what is true. This is in comparison with a spiritual type of being who sees an idea as true from reasoned thought. Secondly, celestial is a term used to describe those in the inmost or highest level of heaven, whose prime or ruling

love is of the Lord. This love is present and acting in everything of their life.

#### CHARITY

Used in a different sense to the understood meaning of providing relief. Used to mean a sense of spiritual love and care for others, an understanding of their need, a desire to serve them, without reward as an end.

#### CHURCH

Very occasionally Swedenborg does mean a building or an organisation, but for the most part, this term is used to mean the state of spiritual life within a person. A spiritual person, therefore, is a "church".

#### COGNITIONS

Knowledges that are organised into ideas relating to deeper or interior levels of understanding.

#### CORPOREAL

A level or part of the mind which is closely attached to the physical body and its sensations. Preoccupied with sensations and physical pleasures.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

As above, so below. Higher forms find a correspondence in created forms which mirror, match or agree to what is higher. The correspondence is in the use or properties of the lower form. For example, water corresponds to truth because it is transparent and is essential for life, etc..

#### DISCRETE DEGREES

Distinct levels, one higher or more internal than the other, yet contained within it.

#### DIVINE HUMAN

The representation of the Divine nature within the human form, so visibly.

## EVIL

Is the inverted form of heaven, being the negation of love, use, goodness, and opposition to the Divine and heaven. Evil in a person is hell within him.

## FALLACY

A deceptive appearance which produces illusion or an untrue picture of reality. Can be relatively harmless, but when it is joined with evil motives, it becomes harmful.

## FREEDOM

To think and will from affection and to act freely according to what seems reasonable. Heavenly freedom is true freedom, which stems from self-compulsion. The more a person lives in and from the Lord, the more free he feels himself to be himself.

## GOOD OF TRUTH

A phrase meaning spiritual good. The state when truth in a person is expressed in acts of love and goodness, by which the truth becomes good.

## GRAND MAN

The term used to show how the whole of heaven and all its communities is in the human form by function and organisation, and is in correspondence with the physical body. Sometimes called "universal human".

## HEREDITARY EVIL

Those self-centred traits which we inherit which are not actual evil but tendencies towards what is evil.

## INFLUX

All power to act and live flows into all creation from the Divine constantly and unceasingly.

## LIMBUS

A level of being drawn from nature and retained after death to provide stability and permanence in the spiritual world.

#### LOWER EARTH

In Swedenborg's spiritual world framework, the lower earth is a region below the world of spirits but above the hells, in which those who need to go through vastations (see) are temporarily placed and held.

#### MEDIUM

That which connects one state to another and provides the means for the two to be connected.

#### MOST ANCIENT CHURCH

Refers to the earliest people in the Golden Age. Its quality and development is described symbolically in the Garden of Eden story.

#### NATURAL(PERSON)

Usually referring to the lowest and more external level of consciousness.

#### NEIGHBOUR

Not only other people, but also the Lord, the Church, one's country etc., are to be seen as the "neighbour" which is to be loved according to the good from the Lord which is present.

#### PERMISSION

What is tolerated or allowed by the Divine but not necessarily desired by the Divine. Is allowed for the sake of preserving human freedom.

#### PROPRIUM

Our individual self-identity and awareness of it. It is neutral in itself, being neither good nor evil. But with regeneration it can become a heavenly proprium, made living by the Lord. When it produces negative states, it can be equated with ego.



#### RATIONAL

The highest level of the conscious mind, forming the bridge between the natural and spiritual levels of the mind. A mental plane on which light from heaven can illuminate what is in worldly light.

#### REDEMPTION

The subjugation of the hells and reordering of heaven as the result of Christ's life. It is a universal event which makes individual salvation possible to the believer.

#### REFORMATION

Part of the process of regeneration. It is the re-ordering of the mind and understanding which leads to good through what is true.

#### REGENERATION

In a broad sense the whole process of rebirth. In a more limited sense, it is the work of regeneration which follows reformation, and is the forming of a new will in a person by the Lord.

#### REMAINS

Impressions or "seeds" of love and truth deeply implanted in a person by the Lord in ways unknown and 'remaining' with the person from infancy through the rest of life and to eternity. Remains are drawn out from the unconscious by angels during states of temptations to assist the person's choices.

#### REPENTANCE

The first stage in rebirth, involving confessing one's sins or wrongs, prayer and turning to the Divine for help and forgiveness, and the sincere effort to lead a new life based on what one now understands as true.

#### RULING LOVE

The strongest love in a person which dominates his or her life and comes to influence and lead all actions and responses.

#### SOUL

A term used in a number of ways. Swedenborg sometimes talks of people or spirits as 'souls'. Elsewhere it seems interchangeable with 'spirit'. One precise definition of the 'soul' is that it is where the Divine exists in a person, a perfect level which is outside our interference or touch.

#### SPIRITUAL

This term is used with various shades of meaning. It is used as a collective term for the level which is contrasted to the natural. It is used to describe the spiritual type as contrasted to the celestial type, as one who reasons in order to perceive. And it is used to describe the middle heaven in which the ruling love of those present is a love towards others, or charity towards the neighbour.

#### SPHERE

An emanation which reflects the sum of the person's loves and states. The angels can detect the whole state of a person from sensing his or her sphere. It is the basis of associations and avoidances.

What we see clairvoyantly as the aura is one aspect of a person's sphere.

#### TEMPTATION

Not allurements, but an attack on what a spiritual person loves. It serves to try or test the person and is an inner conflict which reveals to the person both their character and the opportunity to strengthen it.

#### TRUTH OF GOOD

Truth or wisdom which is infilled with good or love.

#### ULTIMATE

Last in sequence, lowest, most external, most remote. Not used by Swedenborg to mean 'greatest'. The ultimate level or degree is the level of reality and expression. It is stated that there is "all power in ultimates".

#### VASTATION

It is used of the process in the world of spirits (see heading) whereby external evils and falsities are removed from those who are good, and hypocritical good and mere knowledge is removed from those who are evil. Evil can only be removed when it shows itself.

#### WORLD OF SPIRITS

The initial state following death in which people meet, associate, manifest their true natures and ruling love and are gradually prepared for heaven or allowed to take themselves into hell.

## **HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM READING SWEDENBORG**

- some practical hints -

1. Do not try to read too much in one go.
2. Allow your mind to reflect on and become open to the spiritual level.
3. Recognise that spiritual ideas are structured and in orderly sequence as well as being interconnected.
4. Take note carefully of what insights enter your mind while you are reading.
5. Keep an awareness of the main broad spiritual truths upon which all specific ideas are built.
6. Mark the page when you read something which strikes you as significant.
7. Allow Swedenborg's own train of thought to lead you on. You will often discover that he deals in due course with points that you queried.
8. Read under the most ideal and comfortable circumstances.
9. Use the contents or index of a book or a Concordance to follow up your particular interests.
10. See what you read as personally addressed to yourself. Statements should seem personally relevant rather than abstract.



**FOR YOUR OWN REFERENCES, NUMBERS, NOTES  
AND FAVOURITE QUOTATIONS**

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