

A NEW RELIGION
by Jan H. Weiss

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INTRODUCING YOU

Are you seeking a different way of life, or perhaps new ideas for your life? Are you seeking common sense answers to nagging questions? Or do you have many questions that have not been answered yet, and for yourself or for your partner you need and seek these answers?

In this book you can explore new concepts that could radically change and improve the spiritual health of your life, of your marriage, of your family, and your society! I will try to explain these ideas as best as I can!

The religion I practice is one of religious freedom. I will not try to persuade you. I want you to make informed and educated decisions, after you have acquired extensive information about this new religious faith and life. We would love to help you find a different and improved way of life with this knowledge, but in your own time, in full freedom, and without any persuasion. Follow your own interests and needs.

HERE ARE A FEW POSSIBLE SUBJECTS

What is a Religion. The Lord wants to communicate with us. What is Divine Revelation like. How can we get into revelation. How to understand revelation. People need to speak to the Lord. What separates God and people. The Lord allows evils and sins. Living, now and after death. The reality and nature of the spiritual world. We live immediately after death. No one has ever come back from death to tell us about it. The nature of men and women. Marriage, now and to eternity. Various religions relate to each other. Various countries relate to each other. Getting to know our Lord. Finding our way to heaven. The importance of the Love of God. The curse of expectations. The Second Coming has taken place.

WHAT IS A RELIGION?

We are in a religion, not because we need an explanation for what we see, not because we do not know what will happen to us after death, not because we are fearful.

A religion is a relationship of love between God and a human being, and so is very personal. For while God is the same for all of us, and does not change, all human beings are different from each other, and each human being changes from moment to moment, so each relationship is different from all the others.

Each love relationship with God has a start, and then grows. It becomes stronger and more intimate. So it is with love relationships between people. They have a beginning and then they grow.

But there cannot be a beginning and there cannot be growth unless the following conditions have been met:

1. Each partner to the relationship has to feel an initial desire for such a relationship. From this desire the partner explores the other, tries to become acquainted and causes the other to become acquainted. Such a desire has to start and grow in total freedom. Manipulating and compelling the other kills the relationship. In this there cannot be any compromise.

In courtships we sometimes see how a man or a woman tries to force the other to such a desire. Of course, it can be tried, but it will never succeed. It always leads to pain and frustration.

Similarly God should not force any of us to love Him. If He did, your love would die. You would start to hate Him because He took your initiative and spontaneity, and you feel like a puppet moved by strings. So the Lord never does this. Love and freedom are inseparable companions. Love cannot exist and cannot be called love, unless there is total freedom. This principle has tremendous consequences.

2. The second condition deals with communication. Love cannot start, exist, and grow without communication between the love partners. The Lord needs to talk to human beings, and human beings need to talk with God. The Lord's talk to us is called Divine Revelation and our talk to God is called prayer.

3. Love dies unless It is acted out all the time. Love needs to be expressed in word and deed. There are two types of deeds of love. There are deeds that express love, and deeds that protect love. Between these two deeds there is a strong connection.

4. Expressing and acting out love is to do good things, things that come from love to the Lord and love to the neighbor.

5. Protecting love is to shun selfish or evil actions, - actions that come from hatred to the Lord and hatred towards the neighbor, actions that come from the love of self and the love of the world. By shunning evil actions you protect your love relationship with the Lord, with your spouse and with your neighbor.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOVE OF GOD

The love of God is very important to human beings. We may not know it, or we may not believe it, or we may even deny it, but it is. The main reason why love of God is so important is that He keeps us alive. Regardless of

what we do, how self destructive we may be, He continues to give us life and love.

We have a place in the universe of His creation regardless of what we think about Him, regardless of how we feel about Him. The Lord never strikes back. He never takes revenge. He never punishes. He loved us from the first moment of our life and even before, and He will love us forever. His love is important to us because it preserves our freedom. This is the most basic aspect and effect of the Lord's love. But there is more.

There is another love that is very important to us. That is our self love. We cannot exist, and we cannot be happy unless we love ourselves. How we feel about ourselves and about our existence is very important. All psychologists have recognized this. They say that the key to mental health is our feeling of self esteem.

Some religions have branded self love as evil, but this is not right. The Lord said: Love your neighbor as yourself". Love to the neighbor is defined in terms of the love of self. We cannot understand love to the neighbor unless we first understand the love of self. To be good to another is impossible unless we love ourselves. To be good is to love another as much as ourselves. To be evil is to love ourselves MORE than others, or even to the exclusion of others.

The Lord created the love of self into us from the beginning, and He sustains it every moment. Normally we do not think about this very much. We just live from moment to moment. But there will come moments or there already have been moments in our life that our self love grows weaker.

We may have failed in life a number of times, or we may have been rejected by many people, and we may begin to doubt ourselves. We may begin to wonder if we are worth anything at all. Such thoughts can lead to a mental breakdown. Feelings of self doubt and rejection are devastating to the human mind. But if we realize that we were created by an all knowing and loving God for a definite and unique purpose, we have the seed of a comeback. When in the depths of despair we realize that nobody loves us, but that the Lord does, we latch onto this thought. Especially when we begin to realize that He knows us so much better than any human being, we regain our self respect and we begin to live from a different emotional source than before. In a word, the Lord is the source of our self esteem and when it is, it is legitimate and very effective.

There are other times in our life where the love of God is very important. In certain moments we are totally alone. We may have people who love us, but they cannot be there, and we are without any support. Hostages experienced it. People who had accidents, were wounded and were left alone without any help for a long period of time, have experienced it. Political prisoners have experienced it. History tells us that in such cases people have reached back to the strong realization of the Lord's love for

them in a very personal way, and they have succeeded to survive, and maintain their self esteem. When a person is left alone, and he can do nothing but pray to the God who loves him and gives him life, that person will come out on top. To be aware of God's love for us and our love for God are the key to a life of happiness and self esteem.

WHAT SEPARATES GOD AND PEOPLE

In every love relationship there are things that conjoin the two, that bind them together, and that help them to become more and more intimate in the communication of thought and love. There are also things that can separate the two, and drive them apart, until they are enemies. Here we come to two religious terms that have been around for many ages: evil and sin.

Let us first define. Evil is every act that separates human beings from God, or one human being from another. The Lord never wants to separate Himself from any human being. He never loves Himself more than others. He never does anything that is evil. In this He never fails and is always victorious.

Human beings are in a different position. They are in freedom to either love the Lord and the neighbor as themselves, or to love themselves and material things above everything else. If human beings love themselves more than others, their selfish actions separate them from others. These separating actions are evils. So all evil is from human beings, is created by them, and none come from God. We all commit evil. We are born with a tendency to commit evil. But sometimes we commit evil and we do not see it as evil. When someone brings it to our attention, we are surprised. We find it hard to believe and it takes us time to see the light. Such actions are evils, but they are not sins. We commit a sin if we commit an evil, and we "know" it is an evil. We know we should not do it, but we do it anyway. Evils that we do not recognize as evils may harm the love relationships we have with God and others, but they do not destroy them. But sins separate us from God and other people, and destroy the love relationships we have with them. The Lord PERMITS evils and sins, because He loves our freedom. He does not love these evils and sins. But He never punishes anyone for evils or sins. He only attracts us to heaven. If we are not in heaven, it is because we did not want to be there. It is our doing only.

THE LORD NEEDS TO SPEAK TO US

The Lord always wanted a love relationship with human beings. For that reason He created us, and needs to speak to us. He needs to declare His

love to all people. He needs to tell us how to start and foster a love relationship with Him. He needs to assure us that we are free to enter into such a love relationship. When the Lord speaks to us, He must do it in such a way that we are in total freedom at all times.

How can we have a relationship with the Lord unless we know Him, and how can we know Him unless He reveals Himself to us and we have the ability to read and understand that revelation?

Communication is only successful if we speak the other person's language. We have to couch our ideas in his terms and his language. So it is very meaningful if we ask the other person if we have made ourselves understandable, if we have spoken the other person's language!

As human beings we cannot understand God on His level. We do not think His thoughts and we do not speak His language. God has to overcome this tremendous barrier, before He can relate to us.

But God's desire for a love relationship with us is divine, He is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present (omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent). So God is bound to be successful in speaking to us, in revealing divine thoughts to us.

How can the Lord speak our language? When we speak, our thoughts pick up human words. We have learned them in the past. We string them together in sequences, and we try to check if our meaning comes across.

The connections between our thoughts and our words are not static. They change continually. If I write a book today, it will reveal a certain person. But a year from now that person does not exist anymore, because that person has changed. Now a different person communicates.

This is totally different with God, for God does not change. God's thoughts are the same, now and forever, especially because God is outside of time. God is in our present, in our past and in our future at the same time.

So when God approaches human beings, God is first aware of the time frame in which He enters our awareness. Then God takes on the words of people living at that time, arranges them in sequences, and causes these words to be fixed in some way so they are outside of us. He does this by taking over the mind of a special revelator. This produces an "objective" revelation that is available to all of us.

Using that revelation the Lord then reveals Himself in a personal way to each one of us, and this happens as soon as we begin to read His objective revelation, think about it, and use it in our daily living. Then it has become a "subjective" revelation.

When the Lord approaches people and speaks to them, the Lord wants to do it from the outside, so humans can separate their thoughts from God's thoughts, and accept or reject them in freedom. The Lord first speaks to angels in the highest heaven. Then He descends to the lower heavens, and

lastly He speaks to people on earth. This process of coming down gives Divine revelation a certain construction and a certain nature. Once we know this nature, we can recognize it in all revelation, and thereby know for certain what is divine revelation and what is not.

This is important, for now we can be sure that the Lord is speaking to us in a certain book. When the Lord says that He loves us, we can be very certain about it. So we need to learn to recognize and understand divine revelation, and then how to talk back to God.

WHAT IS DIVINE REVELATION?

Divine revelation on earth appears to us like a man, whose body is clothed everywhere, but whose face and hands are bare or uncovered. This concept is important for us to know, because with that concept we will be able to understand that Divine person in the right way.

When the Divine Man stands forth to all of us, we can see His face with His eyes full of love. It is so important that we see His love, because otherwise we may misunderstand what He is saying. His mouth is speaking His truth, that is easy to understand, leaving no doubt in our mind about its meaning.

His hands are helping us to do, what we cannot do by ourselves. They are there to touch and move us, and help us to move with Him. These hands give us power to resist evil or selfish actions.

But then there is also a part we cannot see, because it is covered or clothed. Even in those clothes there is Divine power, that we can touch and receive His healing power, like the woman who just touched the Lord's garments and then was healed.

Divine revelation looks like human writing because it consists of human words. Together all this human writing is called "the sense of the letter of the Word". That is the man who is clothed but whose face and hands are bare.

Many people believe that divine revelation is just like human writing, and that all rules of interpreting human books can be applied to Divine revelation. In reality, Divine revelation is a divine creation, just as the universe is a divine creation. There is much more to divine revelation than can be seen at first glance, just as there is much more to nature than what we see at first glance.

When look at nature, we see matter and objects and plants and animals and people. But when we begin to look closer, we see so much more. What we see and feel is composed of things we do not see and feel. There are cells, molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles of various kinds. Actually, all matter we see and feel, is nothing but an appearance of energy.

Nature does not immediately reveal its complexity. We do not see the intelligence behind the external face of nature. However, the more we penetrate nature, the more intelligent the Creator appears to be.

We see the same thing in revelation. A first reading does not reveal complexity and intelligence. Parts of revelation seem even dull and boring. But inside revelation there is a great deal of wisdom and love.

In the external sense, in the sense of the letter, in what we see first, there are also other and deeper senses. There is deeper wisdom. There is a great deal behind the “clothing” of the Divine Word.

These “internal senses” deal with “love relationships”. The most internal sense deals with the love relationship between God and humans. A more external sense deals with love relationships between people. The most external sense deals with the church on earth.

Seeing this nature of divine revelation is very helpful in two ways. We can see what books are divine revelation and which ones are not. We see more clearly how to understand and interpret divine revelation.

HOW WE CAN UNDERSTAND REVELATION

The Lord's wisdom far surpasses human wisdom. This is no surprise. At birth we know nothing and have no wisdom. But this does not mean that we cannot learn. How can we have a love relationship with the Lord unless we learn to know the Lord?

The Lord wants us to know Him very intimately and deeply. So He gives us the mental equipment to get to know Him, and then the Lord reveals Himself to us, and hopes we will make the effort to understand Him in His revelation.

Before we can begin to understand that revelation, we first need to decide what books are from the Lord and which ones are not. We need to decide which “canon”, which list of books, we accept as divinely inspired books.

In the Jewish Church people do not know. In the Christian Church people do not know except that the inner voice of the Holy Spirit tells them. The Catholics know it because the church tells them, and by the church is meant the Pope. For many centuries these opinions were the best people could have. There has been no better way to determine the divinity of a book.

A Jewish person cannot believe in another revelation, because he will point at Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32 where it says:” Do not add to the word which I command you. Whatever I command you, you shall not add to it nor take away from it”. From these passages the Jewish person understandably concludes that there cannot be any revelation after the Old Testament. So

when the Jews look at the New Testament, they believe it was written by men and not by God.

But then there are Christians, who accept the New Testament as a divine revelation. They do not draw the conclusion that the Old Testament is the last revelation. And yet, they then claim that the New Testament is the last revelation, and to explain that claim, they point at Revelation 22:18 and 19 where it says: "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life".

This passage, Christians claim, clearly teaches that there will not be any revelation after the New Testament. So when Christians look at a claim that a writing outside the New Testament is a divine revelation, they will say it is impossible because of the passage in the Book of Revelation.

The Lord honors all our efforts to establish a love relationship with Him, as long as we are sincere, and as long as do the best we can. He does this regardless of what books we accept as divine revelation, even if we have no certain way to distinguish divine writing from human writing.

When we look carefully at the Deuteronomy and Revelation passages we notice it says that "MAN cannot add to divine revelation, but it does not say that "GOD" cannot or will not add.

Nowhere in the Bible does It say that the Lord has ceased to give new revelation beyond the Bible. If anyone claims there is a revelation after the Book of Revelation, then we all have to decide for ourselves if that is true or not. Today there is a better and more certain way to arrive at a list of divine books, which is given by God, and this can be done through a new revelation.

Let us now focus on the better way to determine the "canon" of divine revelation. The three internal senses of the literal sense have already been mentioned. A book of the Old Testament or New Testament is divine revelation, if it has these three internal senses continuously from beginning to end.

Once you see these internal senses, you begin to see the divinity of all books of the New Church canon. They fit together and they appear to proceed from the same God. Some people see this very quickly. Others take several years. Never worry how long it takes.

A very interesting sideline consequence of the internal sense aspect of divine books is that we can have more light on the problem of translation. The first input is from the various manuscripts that are available to us. The second input comes from our translation experts. The third new input comes from the internal sense aspect of a book. From the first two inputs we may have several possible translations, but then the internal sense input helps us choose only one possibility.

HELP FROM THE GRANDMAN PROGRAM

Basics

The Divine Man consists of three revelations, the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Writings of the second coming. Together these amount to some 30 volumes of printed books, occupying forty inches on a book shelf, in well over 40 million characters, or some 30 megabytes. So we have a great deal more revelation, which is much harder to face, penetrate and handle.

Admittedly, communicating with the Divine Man is not easy. In over 90% we do not see how He feels or what He says. The bare parts are not easy to find. The sense of the letter is not always easy to read, and many parts in the Writings are hard to read, because of the many quotations that are given. Then in our old age we may not be able to see the letters as well.

In all these problems the GrandMan Windows Program can be a great help. It makes the Divine Man more approachable, visible and understandable. Ministers are the first to face these problems. Communicating with the Divine Man was a time consuming task. To reach into the 64 books of the Bible we used one book. To search in the 30 volumes of the Writings we were helped by a six volume Potts Concordance. The famous Searle's Index gave us the connections between the Bible and the Writings. This searching involved a lot of paging, reading, copying and moving book volumes between the shelves and the table.

How could lay people be expected to do so much work? Men work many hours in the position where they earn family income. Women have to deal with all the activities of the family. Even getting into the 30 volume set of the Writings is too ominous a task. Getting to the internal sense of a passage in the Bible is undertaken by very few. Hardly any people in the church read the Writings.

Searching

The GrandMan Program has brought great changes. To give one example! Now you can type in the Query Window of the program the words "lead us not into temptation" and with the push of one key you can bring to the screen the two passages in the New Testament and the five passages in the Writings where these words are given and explained. In one key stroke we can have the material for a sermon.

In a moment the program can take text data and put it on your computer screen. You never need to take books from the shelf. All you need to do is

manipulate a few keys on a key board, and you can bring before your eyes any part of the Divine Man.

You can search all three Revelations for the occurrence of a word or any combination of words or phrases, and you can do this in the whole of the Word or in selected books or chapters, thereby replacing the famous Potts Concordance, and all its opening and closing, and moving from and to a shelf. So I gave the Potts Concordance, Searle's Index and all of the Writings to a library. Others have called GrandMan a very powerful program! But there is more!

Linking

GrandMan allows the user to go from any part of the Bible to the passages in the Writings that explain it. Where the Writings quote the Bible, you can quickly go back to these passages in the Bible. You can also find links to related passages. There are over 100,000 such links, so there is no need at all for Searle's Index.

Not all numbers in the Bible and the Writings link this way. This is indicated by color, but the easiest way to know which number links, you need to bring the mouse pointer to a number. When a little hand appears, you know you can link.

Special Nfo Bases

When you are in the program and you click on File and then on Open, you will see four nfo bases: Full.nfo, Grandman.nfo, Index.nfo, Sindex.nfo.

In the Full.nfo base you will find the Folio Manual.

In the GrandMan.nfo base you will find the Bible and the Writings.

In the Index.nfo base you will find a number of books from which you can learn a good deal of New Church doctrine:

1. COMPENDIUM of Swedenborg's Works by S. M. Warren.
2. Topics by Bishop W. F. Pendleton
3. Concordance to the Writings
4. List of Bible Books.
5. Bibliography of Swedenborg's Works.
6. About New Church Outreach.

In the Sindex.nfo base you will the shadow file of Index.nfo.

Shadow File Feature Described

The data files that contain the Bible, the Writings and the special nfo bases are all fixed, and cannot be changed by the user. But the program also has the shadow feature, where the whole of the fixed base can be copied, and there we can make many changes of all kinds.

We can color the text. We can add notes in the text. We can change the fonts in the text, so the letters can become a different font, or a larger and thicker font.

We can delete words and change words. Each shadow file can be given its own file name, and can thereafter be saved forever, and copied and transferred to other users of the GrandMan Program. This capability has numerous applications. Here we will give a few examples.

The Divine Man has in its sense of the letter bare parts and covered parts. The bare parts are the simple truths that we can easily understand, and that we need to live the life of heaven. The covered parts cannot be interpreted literally, but we have to go to the internal sense given in the Writings.

The Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Writings all have bare and covered parts, but the problem is how we show where these parts are. Here the GrandMan Windows program brings a great solution. For the bare parts can be given a certain color, and the covered parts another color, and with the query facility we can race through the sense of the letter of the Word to find both parts quickly and easily. We can bring in notes anywhere in the text, so we can describe the reasons for our choice of colors.

In each shadow file we can delete or change part of the text. This facility has many applications. We can change, enlarge and thicken the fonts. Any shadow file can be saved and transferred to other users of the GrandMan Program anywhere in the world, either on disk or over internet. So if a minister gave the bare and covered passages different colors, from then on the rest of us can have that shadow file forever.

In Teaching Situations

This program could revolutionize any New Church Theological School. Studies on various subjects can now be put on shadow files and transferred all over the world to any theological school. It can change the teaching of courses there, and the teaching of sermon writing.

In addition it can impact the teaching of religion to students in colleges and high schools. There we can teach them how to handle the program, and enable every student to easily approach the Divine Man for the rest of their life.

The Grandman Program is eminently suited to be used in groups by pastors. They can produce their own shadow files, which they either give to their parishioners, or show on a screen in a group meeting. The GrandMan Program should be in every New Church library.

In Private Situations

With this program lay people can do simple reading. If you want to read with your spouse, you can transfer the text to another monitor in a simple way. If you are reading the Bible, you can click on the number of each verse, and get to the internal sense immediately. And if your eyesight diminishes, you can enlarge and bolden the fonts, so you can see again.

How GrandMan Was Produced

Part of the GrandMan Program is commercial software, produced some 15 Years ago by the Folio Corporation. The other part is software written by Walter J. Weiss. The necessary text changes to enable the linking process were effected by Jan H. Weiss. Finally, Mark H. Weiss produced the 80th Birthday Edition of the Grandman Windows Program. It is on one CD, and you can download the program from your disk drive to your hard disk. No more need to keep the CD in your CD drive.

Learning GrandMan

We can do so many things with the program, but then we will have to learn how the handle the GrandMan program. So we have written a Manual for people who know little about computers, so it will be easy to learn and handle the program. In the manual we first tell you what you can do, how to download the program, and how to start once it is on your computer. Then we show you how to search and how to use the links. You can find the Manual on the web site of New Church Outreach in the section on computers.

Ask Your Minister

Ask your minister to show you the program, and if he does not have it, suggest he get himself a copy. New Church Outreach will get him a free copy. Help spread the good news about this program and all its facets!

Tell Your Friends

Tell your friends in and outside the church! Give them my email address (nco@secondadvent.net) or my web site address (<http://secondadvent.net>).

GETTING TO KNOW OUR LORD

When a person begins to think about God, the strong perception is that there is only ONE God. This idea makes sense! But when we begin to read writings that talk about God, we find many different names for God. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament we find the same thing. It is easy to see how people get the idea that there is more than one God.

In the history of religion we find three approaches to the many names of God. People may see three Gods (tritheism), or they may see many Gods (polytheism), or they may see one God (monotheism).

The concept of three Gods is found in Christianity. The ideas of many Gods is found outside the Jewish, Muslim and Christian Church. The Jewish concept of one God was developed by Abraham when he came from the polytheistic area of the Euphrates. Mohammed proclaimed there was none besides Allah. Polytheism occurred in ancient times but also occurs in contemporary non Christian areas.

In the early Christian Church with the early Church fathers there is a strong perception that God is one. This can be seen in the Apostolic Creed. In that one God there is a trinity. Exactly how that worked was not clear to them. Later on, the idea of a tripersonal God was developed, and expressed in the Athanasian Creed. The Nicene Creed is a development in between the Apostolic and Athanasian Creeds. There we see three persons of God, who are somehow one. That there are three persons becomes clear when we see how they are separated in terms of function, in terms of what they do. The Father creates, the Son coexists with the Father, but is sent to earth in the form of Jesus, the son of Mary, and He dies for the sins of mankind on the cross, after which the angry Father accepts that sacrifice from the Son, and accepts the salvation of all men who accept this sacrifice by the Son. The Holy Spirit is the God who proceeds from the Father and the Son after the Son died and returned to the Father.

The Writings of the New Church teach a divine trinity but it is not a trinity of persons but of person, so in that church there is only one God. This trinity can be compared to the trinity in humans, for each person has a soul which we cannot see (the Father), and a body which we can see (the Son), and words and actions that go from the body (the Holy Spirit, or the Divine Proceeding).

FINDING OUR WAY TO HEAVEN

Whenever a person has a love relationship with God and the neighbor, he is in heaven. He is in “his” heaven. In that heaven he has reached happiness and peace. In that heaven his happiness will increase for evermore.

This heaven is from the Lord, It is not from man, for man cannot create heaven. All man can do is to shun as a sin against God everything that goes against his love relationship with God, against the sphere of heaven.

First man has to decide by himself and for himself and as of himself that he wants to shun evil. Then the Lord can enter with His divine power to repel the strong influence of evil spirits. The spiritual reality is that a person cannot do this by himself.

This way to heaven is a real way or road. It is a step by step process that begins with the first step of spiritual rebirth, a spiritual change, and that change goes on for the rest of one’s life, even to eternity.

In this process the key ingredients are the Ten Commandments and the Two Great Commandments. Vicarious atonement does not play a role in it, for the Lord Jesus Christ our God, is ONE. We are indeed “washed by the blood of Christ” but by that blood is meant the Lord’s truth.

This salvation is not accomplished by the Lord through intimidation and fear tactics. The Lord does not act like the TV salesman who threatens people to act now or they may never have the opportunity again. He is not like the crusade evangelist who scares people by reminding them they should make the decision because they may die tomorrow. All the Lord does is to attract with infinite power of love, always giving us freedom to choose.

PEOPLE NEED TO SPEAK TO THE LORD

The Lord has spoken to us in a divine revelation. Otherwise we would remain ignorant and could not have a love relationship with Him. But should we talk to God? No doubt His revelation speaks about the need for prayer. While on earth, the Lord Himself taught us to pray a prayer.

And yet, we acknowledge that the Lord knows our every thought and desire. The Lord probably knows before we do. We do not need to keep the Lord informed. But emptying our heart and mind to the Lord could have a useful psychological effect on us. It could calm us down, it could crystallize our thoughts.

Some people believe they can ask the Lord to do things which God otherwise would not have done. It may take persistence, but they eventually succeed. But in the Lord’s prayer we are taught His will be done.

Some people believe they can pray others into heaven. They think they can ask the Lord to stop a person from doing evil. But the Lord will not stop a person from doing evil unless this evil will interfere with the spiritual welfare of another person. Of course, the Lord wants to bring all people into heaven, but the Lord will not do anything with a person if it is not wanted. Prayer is not to manipulate God or deprive others from their freedom.

Prayer is for the person who prays. It is to help that person in his regeneration. A person may pray for truth and wisdom, so he may be enlightened. A person may pray for power from on high to shun evils as sins against the Lord. He may pray for the influx of good.

THE LORD ALLOWS EVILS AND SINS

When the Lord created the universe and humankind, He gave us the freedom to choose for or against a love relationship with Him. If He had not done this, we all would have been like puppets on a string, expressing love to God on His command. How revolting this would have been!

So every time we think about God, we can be happy that His love is not selfish, and that the attraction of His love is wonderful, but not compelling. When He gave us freedom, He allowed evil and sin into the world. He gave up the possibility of interfering with that freedom. He gave up the idea of capriciously stopping people from committing evils and sins.

For example, many people are totally selfish and continually destroy love relationships with others. They commit adultery, they murder, they steal and they lie. We see this happen today and in all the past.

Of course, this behavior has its victims. Every day we are burying abused children, raped women and gang murdered innocent bystanders. Every day the news tells about people who have been burglarized and cheated.

If the Lord were to interfere with every evil act and stop it, we would not have any crime victims, but we also would not have our freedom. Without that freedom we can not establish a love relationship with God, we can not change and improve, we cannot reach a state of heaven. Therefore, the Lord permits evil and sin and all its horrible consequences but **ONLY IN SO FAR AS IT CAN BE BENT TO GOOD!**

No evil or sinful act is allowed if it would interfere with the victims love relationship with God and with his fellow creatures. Evil brings pain and misery, even to those who did not commit it, but this pain can still be used to bring about positive results. "Our scars can become stars", if victims work with God, they can turn their pain into gain. To know and clearly see this, brings happiness and peace.

THE CURSE OF EXPECTATIONS

Expectations are formed when we look into the future and think we are going to have or be something. But then that future becomes the present, and we do not get what we thought we would, and our expectations are disappointed. We look into the future, we see something in our imagination that is not real, and we set ourselves up for disappointments. We do this all the time and how foolish it is.

If we do not look into the future, but just think and do the best we can in the present, we will always be happy and satisfied. We do not compare “what we get” with “what we thought we would have”, and our success rate is 100%. As soon as we form expectations our success rate automatically drops back to at least 50%.

Can we look into the future with any degree of accuracy? I suggest we cannot. Let me picture our life as a person walking on a certain road, If you fly above in a plane, you can see the road with a person on it somewhere. But ahead there are many cross roads and the pilot does not know what choices the person is going to make. These choices have not yet come. We can see the past because the time for past choices has already been. We can rise above the time of the past, but to see the future we must be able to rise above the time of the future, and that we cannot do.

If we cannot look into the future with any accuracy, we are fools to try it. Looking into the future will enmesh us into a web of expectations that we have to deal with later on. The only one who can rise above the time of our future is God. He can see it accurately. By seeing He does not cause it to come about. He does not make our choices. We do.

Newscasters on TV are not satisfied with doing their job, which is bringing news about past events. They talk about what is going to happen, and then they waste our time. A good example is the case of the Soviet Union. For decennia people have been telling us that the Soviets were going to attack us. But in reality that nation was becoming weaker and weaker. Not only was the prediction wrong, but we were blind to the reality of the situation. News people were in the Soviet Union, but they did not see it. Even the CIA failed to see it. Predicting the Soviet future was not only foolish but dangerous. It blinded us to the reality of the present.

Some religionist believe they can predict the future on the basis of Divine revelation. They look at Bible prophecies, and interpret them. They use these interpretations to predict the future. But in actuality they only believe they know how to interpret them. They are not certain they know for sure.

Actually, the Lord does not want us to look into the future and He gives prophecies so we have a general idea what is coming, but we only really understand the prophecies after they have been fulfilled, and we can compare the vague prophecies with the accurate fulfillments. The Lord

keeps His prophecies vague, so we will not become prejudiced. He wants us to recognize fulfillment only when it is there.

Very few people in the Jewish Church understood the prophecies of the first coming. Most misinterpreted the prophecies and did not recognize the Lord when He actually came. The same danger exists today in regard to the second coming. So we counsel against the Dr. Van Impe approach and advocate the investigation of claims that the second coming has taken place. You can do this somewhere in my web site, there it discusses the prophecies in Matthew 24 and 25.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, ITS REALITY AND NATURE

For many centuries people knew very little about the nature of natural substance. We saw matter in its various forms, but we did not know what was behind it. Some sixty years ago science talked about cells and molecules and atoms. These atoms were the smallest building stones of solid matter, but they were still solid and hard. Chemical affinity between atoms was explained by hooks on the atoms of one element and eyes on the atoms of another element. Molecules were formed by the hooks hooking into the eyes.

But this view on the building blocks of matter left too many questions unanswered, and so science developed a new concept. Around 1920 Niels Bohr discovered that the atom was not hard, but actually a combination of many much smaller particles, circling around each other like planets around a sun. Then Einstein came with the idea that matter was nothing but an appearance of energy.

Think of it. What we see around us, what seems so real and solid, is nothing but an appearance of very small particles flying around at high speeds. And what is even more fantastic, we see this with eyes and brains that are made up of the same small particles. We see an appearance of energy with an appearance of energy. At first this seems a strange concept indeed. The reality of matter has become much less real.

These new developments and ideas can help us to get a much better idea of the reality of the spiritual world as well. While energy is the fundamental substance of the natural world, love is the fundamental substance of the spiritual world. Everything in the spiritual world is an appearance of love. This idea is not any stranger than the idea that everything in the natural world is an appearance of energy.

In the past people have found it hard to imagine that there could be a complete world outside the real natural world. But today the natural world has lost some of its reality, and the reality of the spiritual world has become much more visible and plausible.

LIVING, NOW AND AFTER DEATH

When we grow up we are first very much aware of the world in which we live and the body we have. But at some point in life we begin to realize that life in this world comes to an end. We discover death. First we discover it in others, but after a while we begin to realize it will happen to us too. Slowly we begin to accept our own death. It is clearly inescapable.

But what happens after death? People have asked this question all through the ages. Today this question can be answered quite clearly. We go to another world, to the spiritual world. This idea is not new. People believed it thousands of years ago. But this belief was often accompanied by a gnawing feeling of doubt. Did anyone ever come back from that world to tell us?

Today we can have scientific certainty about the fact that we continue to live and exist after death. Because of the many advances in medical science people can be rescued from death. Millions of people have been close to death, have even died, and have then been resuscitated and returned to health and vigor.

After this experience they have described what they saw and heard. There are so many of such reports, that it is unscientific to still dismiss these reports as the imaginations of delirious people. From all these “near death” experiences it has become clear that at times people can see into the spiritual world.

Our spiritual eyes that are normally closed, can be opened and used at certain times and under certain circumstances. It has happened to people in near death experiences, and it has happened to revelators. People like Isaiah, Ezekiel and John had their spiritual eyes opened and described what they saw in the spiritual world.

Swedenborg’s spiritual eyes also were opened, not for a short time, but every day over a period of many years. His observations were recorded and revealed as part of a new divine revelation. The more we absorb these observations, the more we see the reality of the spiritual world, the more we can be certain that after death we will continue to live and love and work.

WE LIVE IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH

You have read how some people have come back from the life after death. Actually, death is all around us. We are faced with it every day. This is not

morbid. It is the reality of life. So let us deal with that reality, and then we can be much happier and peaceful.

What does it mean to deal with the realities of life? It means that we see them as they are, that we do not dream they are different. So often you can see in life that a person realizes that death is near. And that person is content with the idea and wants to talk about it. But sometimes relatives or friends go into denial, and flee from reality. It is not nice to do this to the person who is dying. You leave that person in great loneliness.

The reality is that people have come back from death so they went there. There is life immediately after death. This is true for the children that die. It is true for the people who die in old age. It is true for the people who are killed in crimes or war or executions. We who remain behind, should say like the angel on Easter morning: The person is not here, but he is risen, has passed on to the other life. And that person is still very much alive.

It is so comfortable to have peace with death and mortality. We can stop playing games, but live acutely aware of the life after death that is right around the corner. The more we become aware of the reality of life both here and in the other world, the more we can taste it and enjoy it.

The more we become aware of the reality of our relationship with other people and with the material things of this world, the more we can enjoy them and be happy with them. The more we become aware of the reality of spiritual life, the more we can feel it, accept it, and love it.

Facing and learning the realities of life in this world helps us become realists and keeps us from being dreamers. Reading about the life after death helps us become realists, who do not avoid it, but who believe and enjoy it.

NO ONE HAS EVER COME BACK FROM DEATH TO TELL US ABOUT IT

You have heard people make that statement many times I am sure. But it is not a true statement. First of all the most important person in the world has told us. When the Lord was on earth He told us that there were many mansions in His Fathers house. He showed several times how a person can die and then come back from that death. Also, the Lord Himself rose from the grave, and appeared to various people. He came through material doors and disappeared into heaven. The Bible may not deal with the spiritual world in detail, but the Bible leaves no doubt that there is a life after death.

But there is other evidence. Many people have been near death or have even died, and they have come back and told us about it. Read Moody's books about near death experiences, and after a while you will find that this scientific evidence (many witness accounts) is too overwhelming to ignore.

But also the Lord told us more. He promised this at His first coming (I have many things to tell you), and then He did it at His second coming in a work titled Heaven and Hell. You can find Moody's books in any bookstore. You can acquire Heaven and Hell from the Swedenborg Foundation in various formats. You can buy a computer disk with Heaven and Hell on it. But it simply cannot be said that nobody came back from death to tell us about the life after death. You may not be interested to know, but the knowledge is out there.

THE NATURE OF MEN AND WOMEN

Men and women are different. Some people may deny this, but most are convinced. It is obvious that there is a fundamental difference between the male and female body. Today doctors have discovered that the difference goes far beyond the difference in the genital organs. Most people also acknowledge there is a fundamental difference between the male and female mind.

This difference has nothing to do with the equality of men and women. Obviously men and women are equal in the sense that they are equal in the sight of the Lord. They are equal in the ability to improve the spiritual state of their mind. Womanhood is not inferior to manhood, and manhood is not inferior to womanhood. The difference between a man and a woman is to enhance the respect and admiration that one has for the other.

For example, a man respects a woman for her ability to be involved in the process of creation. In her there can be conception and gestation and birth. But a woman admires a man for his ability to start this process of creation. A man respects a woman for her ability to bring love and affection into the marriage and the family. A woman respects a man for his ability to bring reality and judgment to the marriage and family.

MARRIAGE, NOW AND TO ETERNITY

Sexual love between men and women can become a lovely and wonderful thing, but it can also be the cause of a great deal of unhappiness. A committed relationship between one man and one woman in which the two strive to love the Lord and each other is the most important relationship in the world. Such a marriage is the source of much happiness in this world and also in the world to come forever.

Such a marriage gives a positive environment to the children that are born in this marriage. In the world of today we can hear a great deal on TV and radio about the sexual pain of men and women. We can learn how such pain is not limited to adults, but also affects children. On talk shows we

observe the confessions of such pain, and we can analyze the causes of such pain. Make your own observations and see if you do not agree that selfish short sighted behavior is the cause of most marital unhappiness.

The most important mission of the New Church is therefore the establishment of true marriage love on this earth. The most important tool in this establishment is the work on Conjugal Love. You can read this work in the unabridged version in various translations.

If you want to attain a marriage of true happiness you first of all need to pray for it and long for it. When you do not have it as your goal, and you do not have a strong desire for it, you will not be able to reach it. The second step is to avoid all actions that would harm such a relationship.

If you are married, you will need to avoid all adultery. By adultery is meant having sexual intercourse with a person other than your married partner. Adultery harms the other partner and the marriage relationship, but it also harms the partner who commits adultery.

If you are not married, you will first of all need to avoid sexual intercourse with a married person. You will harm the marriage relationship and the married partner who is not involved in the adultery. Adultery with one partner deeply hurts the feelings of the other partner. If you were married and you commit adultery, then you will be hurt as well. Enlightened self interest tells that if you do not want something done to you, you should not do it to another person as well.

The third step is to avoid all violence and deprivation of freedom with a person of the other sex. In marriage two people are in a very intimate relationship. Intimacy means vulnerability. The more vulnerable we are the more we can be hurt. Such hurt will then keep us from becoming more vulnerable and more intimate.

VARIOUS RELIGIONS RELATE TO EACH OTHER

One of the most disturbing and discouraging aspects of religion is the strife and conflict that exists between various religions. Most religions speak about love, because their revelations speak about love. And yet, this idea of love is somehow lost somewhere.

When we probe for the reasons we discover that most religions have people who believe in the concept of exclusivity, separation and aloneness. Reality is divided into two areas, their religion and the outside world. For each religion the outside world then include all other religions.

In each religion there then is the idea that the way to heaven is known only to that religion and not to the outside world. There is the concept of the chosen people, and the concept of the heathen or pagans in the outside world. There is also the idea that all other religions are wrong. Sometimes

there is the feeling that salvation is only available to one religion, and all others need to be converted before they can be saved.

In the New Church, the church of the Second Coming, which is based on the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and the Bible, we find a different viewpoint. In the New Church we believe that people from all kinds of religions can reach heaven. The Lord sees all religions or churches as ONE MAN (Grandman). The various churches all play a useful part in the spiritual history of man, and in the total composition of the heavens.

The Lord does not see the concept of the “only” church or religion. He sees the churches in terms of the various revelations He has given. In the spiritual body of the heavens the church with the latest revelation plays the role of the heart and lungs. The “lungs” absorb divine truth from the latest revelation and the “heart” moves this truth to all the heavens.

In the New Church, following the Lord’s example, we respect all religions who follow the Lord, contribute good to the Grandman of heaven, and lead people to heaven, If all religions could come to cultivate respect and tolerance towards each other, we would see a great deal more peace in the world.

For example, If Christians would respect Jews and Mohammedans, and there would be mutual respect between Jews and Mohammedans, all kinds of conflicts would be resolved, and be avoided.

VARIOUS COUNTRIES RELATE TO EACH OTHER

Why should you love your country? The answer I often get is that I love my country because it is the best country in the world. But what then should people in other countries do? It is obvious this is not the right answer. We should love our country because we live in this country, and we receive a great deal of goods and services from it.

We receive our electricity, gas and water. We receive many other services. And we can see this clearly as soon as any of these cease to exist. But we do not receive these services from other countries. So we should love our country because with its complicated organization of human beings it helps us exist. So we owe this organization gratitude and also service.

THE SECOND COMING HAS TAKEN PLACE

Some of my readers may not know what is meant by the second coming. Others may know that very well, and they are actively looking for it. For the first group I would like to explain what the second coming is, and then both groups will be on an equal footing.

At Christmas the Lord (the Divine) was born into this natural world. This divine incarnation we call the first coming of the Lord. A great deal could be said about this coming, but not at this point. While the Lord was on earth He spoke of His second coming. This prophecy is recorded in the 24th and 25th chapter of Matthew and other places.

Now there is a claim in the Theological Writings of Swedenborg that the Lord has made this second coming, not in person as He did at Christmas, but in divine revelation, and the Theological Writings of Swedenborg are that revelation. This is quite a claim! At least I thought so when I first heard of it.

The best way to approach this claim is with an open mind and a critical wait and see attitude. Perhaps you already have some good ideas from the Writings, then keep reading. You are at the computer and you can walk away any time you want. But suppose there were more good ideas there, then you would not want to miss them. You can even consciously postpone your dealing with the claim of divinity.

There have been others who have claimed to have brought a divine revelation, but no one has connected it with the second coming, and no one has shown in details how the prophecies of the second coming in Matthew have been fulfilled.

When the Lord was on earth He referred to prophecies of His first coming in the Old Testament and how they now were fulfilled. Showing that previous prophecies have been fulfilled and how, is making a very strong case for the reality of the second coming.

I have collected all the words about the fulfillment of the Matthew prophecies in one booklet which you can find in the web site of New Church Outreach, where you can examine it. But many have taken another route. They have kept reading in various parts of the Writings, whatever interested them, and somewhere along the road they agreed that the Writings had to be a divine revelation. They recognized divinity in them. It does not matter how you approach the Writings, just relax and do not rush.

But also I hope you will not come with preconceived ideas. Prophecies are always too vague to tell you what to expect beforehand. Prophecies can only be truly understood at the time of fulfillment. The Lord said He would come "like a thief in the night".

The Lord always comes in two ways. He comes to mankind in an objective way outside of ourselves, so we can see Him separately and objectively. But He also comes in a very personal way into our mind, when we begin to read His revelation and absorb it into our mind.

My experience with this new revelation has been very good. In it the Lord reveals so much more information about Himself, about the way to heaven, how we can become happy, and more connected with our neighbors. It

never ceases to give me new ideas and new hope, and I hope it will do the same for you!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE BOOK

Born in the Netherlands in 1927, Mr. Weiss went through World War II living under Nazi occupation as an adolescent member of the underground forces. After the war, while studying for a BS in Chemical Engineering, he became very interested in the Writings of the Second Coming, and decided to become a minister.

In the U.S. he acquired a BS in Education and a Master's Degree in Theology. He served for six years as an ordained minister of the New Christian Church. Then he went back to engineering and worked for several engineering companies.

In 1986 he founded New Church Outreach to bring the New Christian religion to others. He created some 50 half hour TV programs on the religion, and then produced several computer programs that can search the Bible and the Writings of the Second Coming. He also authored five booklets.

About This Book

This is an easy introduction to the religion of the New Church. It explains why it is so important that God loves us, and what can cause separation between God and us. To seek a relationship with us the Lord has to give us divine revelation, so we can learn about Him. A computer program can be a great help in understanding Him. Then we can learn our way to heaven and how to speak to Him. God gives us freedom, and has to permit us to do evil. We have to learn how to live a good life.

In our religion we learn more about the spiritual world and the life after death. We also learn more about the nature of men and women and about marriage. We show how various religions and various countries should behave towards each other. Finally we learn about the second coming.