

SWEDENBORG AND LORBER

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO REVELATIONS¹

by Rev. Thomas Noack, Switzerland

The works of Swedenborg and Lorber both want to be considered as Divine revelation. From this it follows that they both want to testify to the same Divine truth. Nevertheless, the unity of their doctrine is debated. Every imaginable theory is presented. One says Swedenborg and Lorber agree completely. Another sees close similarities as well as differences. A third group considers Swedenborg and Lorber as opposites that cannot be united. In what follows, I formulate my own standpoint in this matter.

The fact that such different views are represented is an indication that these comparisons or burdened with special problems. The most important seem to me to be: first: the volume of the works of Swedenborg and Lorber. There are so many that as a result there are only few individuals who are thoroughly acquainted with both bodies of teaching. Second: the character of revelations. It leads to the question: Can the truths of revelations be proven at all? Or, must what comes from above be accepted as given? This is the problem involved in the critiquing revelation.² Third: the difference of their character. Swedenborg is in no way simply a precursor to Lorber, and Lorber in no way only a new edition of Swedenborg. The character of both works is unique. The originality of their character cannot be overlooked or glossed over. However, how is it to be judged? Are the observable differences contradictions or are they two mutually broadening ways of looking at one truth, which is accessible

¹ This is a translation of a German essay originally published in: *Offene Tore* 3 (1998) 140-155.

² Friedemann Horn, »Zum Problem der Offenbarungskritik: Am Beispiel von Swedenborg und Lorber,« *Offene Tore*, 1975-1977. Th. Noack, »Offenbarungskritik: Ein Problem der Wahrheitserkenntnis,« *Das Wort* 3 (1994), 138-152.

to us only in its appearances?³ Does the spirit's reality permit itself to be expressed in only one way? Or, for the sake of our perception must it not resolve into various aspects? Paradoxical aspects, which, indeed, must be expressed now in this way and now in that if the whole is to appear on the level where it can be grasped? I am reminded of light - which as known, corresponds to truth: it can manifest itself as a wave or a particle. A contradiction! But in the interest of the higher reality of the light, this paradox must be set aside. Fourth: the problem of communication. Since the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, the arguments of New Church theologians with Lorber's writings have been highly polemical and dismissive. They began to become more factual first in the middle of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it was believed that one could not pass judgment on the spiritual content of Lorber's writings, so again no very interesting discussion on the subject arose. Furthermore, any Swedenborgian who expressed an openness and/or positive attitude towards Lorber's writings quickly opened himself to the reproach of being a Lorberian. This also explains why in spite of obvious parallels - although the history of the Swedenborg's influence has always been a subject of research - Lorber's writings have never been deemed worthy of any thorough investigation. On the other hand, there has been an acceptance of Swedenborg in Lorberian circles. This often happens, it must be admitted, because of the impression that Lorber's revelation has a higher value, and this acceptance is certainly to some extent selective and one-sided. It is derived, nonetheless, from a fundamental acceptance of Swedenborg. It is consistent with the numerous positive comments about Swedenborg in Lorber's work. The problem of communication arises from the ones-sidedness of the reception. Swedenborgians should develop an independent access to Lorber's work. The character of a New Church person's approach can be seen in the [Latin] phrase *nunc licet*. Above the door of a New Church temple of worship in the spiritual world, Swedenborg saw the inscription *Nunc Licet*, meaning, »now it is

³ I refer here to Swedenborg's concept of appearances of truth. In *Arcana Coelestia* 2053 he writes, for example, »No pure intellectual truth, which is Divine truth, resides with man. Instead the truths of faith residing with man are appearances of truth.« This, moreover, is the original meaning of dogma: that which appears as true (from the Greek *dokein* = to appear). It was not until a decadent time that dogma was seen as a rigid theorem. Swedenborg treated the problem of rigidity under the heading "Confirmations" (confirmaciones).

permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith« (TCR⁴ 508). The age of enlightenment has dawned (AC 4402).⁵ The rays of the dawning sun [in Lorber's words] are already falling into the valleys and hollows of the world (that is, into the outer thought) (GS⁶ 1.16.3). Thus, it must also now be possible to make a judgment regarding the spiritual content in Lorber's writings. Seen in this way, for Swedenborgians this is a test case of *nunc licet*.

Still, how can what are professed revelations to be judged regarding their value as truth? In my opinion, this cannot be done in a way that uses a series of questions to arrive at the realization that something is true (scientific or methodical doubt). Swedenborg stands in another tradition, in that old tradition that sought to proceed from belief to understanding what is believed. This is associated with the names of Augustine (b. 430) and Anselm of Canterbury (b. 1109). Augustine minted the motto *credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order that I may understand). And Anselm formulated the motif of scholasticism, *fides quaerens intellectum* (belief seeking understanding). And lastly, Swedenborg saw the already mentioned slogan of the New Church, »Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.« Swedenborg is the fulfillment of the hope of the Occident, the hope that belief would one day be made clear in the Light. Swedenborg's thought is thought from belief. Only in this way does revelation open itself to us. Swedenborg wanted to and could lay out »heavenly secrets« in a way that could be grasped by the understanding because in advance he approached the revelation in the Bible with believing faith.

SWEDENBORG: »As with the Word, doctrinal matters concerning faith were in many instances such that, without perception, they could not be believed; for spiritual and celestial things infinitely transcend human comprehension, and this is why reasoning enters in. *But the person who*

⁴ The abbreviated references to Swedenborg's works are as given in the original text of this article. Trans.

⁵ In AC 4402 Swedenborg writes, »The time is coming when there will be enlightenment« (*venturum est tempus quando illustratio*). The tense chosen here by Swedenborg means the future beginning to dawn. Those who confessed themselves members of the New Church in Sweden chose these words in 1888 for the memorial plaque they posted at Hornsgatan (the place of Swedenborg's house in Stockholm).

⁶ GS = »Die geistige Sonne« (The Spiritual Sun).

refuses to believe those things until he comprehends them is never able to believe.« (AC 1071, emphasis added.) »Regarding the doctrine of faith from rational ideas occurs when someone does not believe in the Word, that is, in doctrine drawn from it, until he is persuaded on rational grounds that the thing is so. But regarding rational ideas from the doctrine of faith occurs when someone first believes in the Word or doctrine drawn from it and then confirms the same by rational ideas. The first approach is an inversion of order and leads to belief in nothing, whereas the second is genuine order and leads to greater belief ... There are therefore two basic attitudes of mind, the first leading to utter stupidity and insanity, the second to perfect intelligence and wisdom.« (AC 2568) »As long as men are locked in controversy about whether a thing even exists and whether it is so, they cannot possibly make any headway into wisdom at all ... Yes, learning at the present day does not go much beyond these limits, that is to say, beyond discussion of whether a thing exists and is so, and therefore as a consequence precludes people from an intelligent understanding of truth.« (AC 3428)

Here a dilemma manifests itself. One can want to understand the revelation that came to Lorber from the standpoint of belief and in so doing calls upon Swedenborg. For belief is the beginning of understanding. In making this decision, however, one is confronted with the objection that every so-called revelation should be believed. But this is not the case. Even those who make this objection do not in their actual activities follow every revelation, and they should ask themselves, Why? Apparently because they have allowed themselves to be led by their affection for truth. Certainly it is a subjective decision - and one that can mislead us too - a decision that should evolve; however, it is the compass for our search for truth. Belief is the beginning of understanding; but that does not mean that we should eat the whole smorgasbord of possibilities. What it means is that the intellectual method of setting things in question results in no progress in the matter of the wisdom of life. Or to formulate this in a positive way, we can only trust our affection for truth., Nevertheless, since this is subjective, any argument about how developed or undeveloped this affection is with one or another person is unproductive. On this account, for the sake of discussion I am limiting myself to the requirement that every person should make his own spiritual standpoint clear. My position is that I am ready to believe in both revelations and the attempt to view them together so far as understanding

allows. The starting point in this undertaking is belief, its limit is understanding. The question to be tested in the laboratory is, Is nunc licet practicable? Or is this vision perhaps still only an illusion?

Differences are not always contradictions. Two models may illustrate this. The first says, One's standpoint determines how one perceives things. By this is meant not only the standpoint of the interpreter but also that of the revelation. Some examples of the relativity of viewpoints are as follows. A traveler on a train cannot quickly tell whether his train or the one on the track beside him is moving. Or, the siren on an ambulance racing past sounds different depending on whether the listener is moving away from or towards it. Or, that the sun rises in the east and goes down in the west is a comprehensible question only from the standpoint of the earth. Whether the glass on the table is in front of or behind the bottle depends on where the one looking at it is sitting. Or, whether the glass is half full or half empty depends on the frame of mind of the one sitting by it. The examples could be multiplied. They show that similar relationships of things can be perceived differently. There is, too, always the question, »From what position does the truth appear to be one thing and not another?« This insight is important for the judgment of certain differences in Swedenborg and Lorber. The second model says: Objects that appear impossible to unite can be united on a higher plane. Thus, a circle and a rectangle cannot be brought into congruence on a plane, however, this can be done on a cylinder. And, in a photo one has only two dimensions in which to capture a three-dimensional building. Consequently, one cannot reproduce the building simply by overlaying photos of it on each other. However, in the mind everyone can picture the whole that cannot be fully captured in the picture. This synthesis is a mental activity that cannot, or cannot satisfactorily be put into words. As I see it, the literal text of revelation and the knowledge constituting faith are merely mental images (engrams) of a higher reality. The synthesis involved is an immediate act of the inner sight. This is perhaps what Swedenborg meant when he wrote that the things one knows are receptacles of goodness and truth that flow in (AC 7920). The fulfillment of knowing is not the faculty of knowing, it is the inner vision arising from the reality of the love and the life in us. Because of this, the view that sees Swedenborg and Lorber as being together lies beyond all possibility of technical proof; it is a creative act, which transforms not only what is known but also the knower.

The synthesis can succeed only if the differences are also known. Therefore, it is not a matter of a simple unification of the revelations; even when this is done looking at only one side of the common characteristics or differences. Looking at the matter with only one eye loses the details of a comparison. What actually constitutes the individual standpoint of Swedenborg and of Lorber? First, Swedenborg discovered the inner reality in the outer sense of the Bible (that is, its inner meaning) and gave a picture of the other world; whereas through the inner meaning Lorber received a picture of the outer or visible reality. The concept of outer reality as the object of revelation made through Lorber requires explanation. What is meant by this is the mode of presentation that uses historical events, dialogs, and visible scenes. Thus, a history is told of the life of the Most Ancient Church (in a work titled »Haushaltung Gottes« [God's Housekeeping]) and of Jesus on earth (»Jugend Jesu« [Jesus' Youth], and »Das große Evangelium« [The Great Gospel]). In this meaning, the works of Lorber about the next world describe the outward, visible reality of the world to come in the form of biographies from that world. And these insights are always unfolded in dialogs. These opposing directions in which these considerations run have an effect on the face of the reality of the truths in Swedenborg and Lorber. The mirror relationship cannot but produce reversed mirror images: the seer Swedenborg looks from the earth to the immeasurable breadth in the spiritual world. The question that interests him is: Where is man and mankind bound? Lorber, on the other hand, looks more in the opposite direction: Wherefrom does man, mankind, and the whole drama of creation come? Certainly, the wither is not absent in Lorber. However, a characteristic of the work of this scribe is his interests in the material realm of creation. Even before he first heard the inner word, he hiked to a hill (called »Schlossberg«) in Graz with his telescope and examined the planets and starry heaven. His biographer Karl Gottfried Ritter von Leitner noted: »He also harbored a special interest in astronomy.«⁷ Lorber beheld an immeasurable depth in the natural world. Third, Swedenborg and Lorber wanted to reach different perceptive organs. Swedenborg wants to appeal to the mind's understanding (»Now it is permitted

⁷ Karl Gottfried Ritter von Leitner, »Jakob Lorber: Ein Lebensbild nach langjährigem, persönlichem Umgange«, Bietigheim 1930, p. 12.

intellectually ... «); Lorber wants to put the answer in the heart (HGt⁸ I.1.1). Both turn themselves to the spirit. However, its location is fundamentally different. Swedenborg, who came from brain research, found it in the brain; although one must add that he was not a highbrow. The musician Lorber found the spirit's emotion in the heart. Fourth: Swedenborg's writings are exegetical and present systematic theology; Lorber's writings are in the nature of dialogue. In dialogue, truth makes itself known, not through lecturing but by discovery, when one brings oneself and one's questions into the conversation.

Proceeding from these fundamental considerations, I now want to turn to the concepts of God presented in Swedenborg and Lorber and their logical consequence, which is the question: how does the idea of the spark of spirit (Lorber) relate to that of influx (Swedenborg)? The limitation to these two central themes is technically justified, for the idea of God is the soul of all theology and permeates all that follows (AR 839, TCR 5) and thus too, the concept of man.

In *The True Christian Religion* Swedenborg writes, »It is the leading theme (principal object) of this book that the Divine Trinity is united in the Lord« (TCR 108). This desire has its reflection in Lorber's writings. In »*Jenseits der Schwelle*« (The Other Side of the Threshold) it is said of a person dying: that he firmly believed that »Jesus is Jehovah himself, for he learned such things from Swedenborg's works.«⁹ And another spirit from the other world wanted to know from the Lord, »If in your [grace] there is some truth in the divinity mathematically proven by a certain Swedenborg in the 18th century« (RB¹⁰ I.17.12). These reflections of Swedenborg's primary concerns mirrored in Lorber's works allow one to assume that his conception of God certainly cannot be so very different from Swedenborg's.

The faith of the New Church that Jesus Christ himself is the one God, the Lord from eternity, who has assumed human nature and glorified it (TCR 2), is also a fundamental idea in Lorber's work: »Jesus Christ is the only God and Lord of all the heavens and of all worlds!« (GS I.74.14). »Jesus is

⁸ HGt = »Haushaltung Gottes« (God's Housekeeping).

⁹ Jacob Lorber, »*Jenseits der Schwelle*«, 1990, p. 28. The quotation comes from the death scene of a Swedenborgian.

¹⁰ RB = »Robert Blum«

the true, only, real God as man« (GS II.13.3). »I Christ am the only God!« (GEJ VIII.26.7). The apostolic faith that was pushed aside at Nicaea (325 A.D.) and renewed by Swedenborg knew no Son from Eternity (TCR 175) but understood by the Son rather »the human by which God brought himself into the world« (TCR 92-94). This faith also permeates The Great Gospel: »I, as now a man in the flesh before you, am the Son and no one ever bears witness to me than My Father, and for that reason I am the Father from eternity« (GEJ VIII.27.2). »I [John] recognize ... His body as the Son only in so far as it is a means to an end« (GEJ IV.88.5). The battle cry of Nicæan orthodoxy, »One essence in three hypostases or persons,«¹¹ which in the Middle Ages lead to increasingly gross depictions of the Trinity (e.g., pictures of God with one body and three heads), Swedenborg and Lorber likewise rejected. Swedenborg: »God is one in essence and in person« (TCR 2b). And Lorber: »The Lord« is »one,« »and therefore also only one person.« (GS I.15.15; cf. also GS VIII.27.2).

The mistaken idea resulting from the concept of a Son removed into a pre-existence, which developed after the conclusion of the debate about the Trinity in the 4th century, was the doctrine about the two natures [in Jesus] in the 5th century. Swedenborg replaced this with his doctrine of the glorification. According to this, one cannot speak of a human nature received through Mary continuing to exist intact; rather, He put off this human nature and put on the Divine Human (TCR 94). This dynamic christology is present in Lorber, although not so deeply worked out because, as said, Lorber's work is more interested in the story of Jesus' outer life. Still one reads: »This being [God's love] is the Divine human, or it is God, who is incomprehensible to you, who is in his essence a perfect man.« (GS II.60.16) »Accordingly I said after Judah's going away, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified and Him, so also God will glorify Him in Himself, and will soon glorify Him!' [John 13.31] This is: The Son of Man will be truly God, and God will soon unite Himself with Him to all eternity.« (GEJ XI.71) »This human nature I also will now ... yet in this world ... transform into My fundamental divinity and ascend into My God, who is in me« (GEJ VI.231.6). This overview ought to show that Swedenborg and Lorber are

¹¹ Described in detail in Carl Andresen (ed.), 1982, »Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte«, Vol. 1, Göttingen, p. 213.

very similar, especially in their conception of God, which is determinative for all else.

Nevertheless, in this there is also a difference, which find its counterpart in Lorber's picture of man, in the idea that there is a Divine spark in him. How is the incarnation to be thought of? The first element, common to both Swedenborg and Lorber, is the idea of God's sun. Swedenborg: »The Divine love and the Divine wisdom appear in the spiritual world as a sun« (DLW 83). That sun is not God but it is a going forth from the divine love and wisdom of god-man; (DLW 93). And Lorber: »God dwells in inaccessible light, which in the spiritual world is called the 'Sun of Grace.' This Sun of Grace, however, is not God Himself, but only the effect of His love and wisdom.« (GEJ VI.88.3; cf. also RB II.283.13). Swedenborg mentions this sun in connection with creation and the spiritual world; for Lorber it also explains the incarnation. For the »essential-center« of God (GS I.13.2) became man: »I, the infinite eternal God clothed Myself with flesh as the main center of My Divine being, in order to present Myself to My children as a visible, tangible Father« (GEJ IV.255.4; cf. also of GEJ IV.122.6-8 and GS II.13.8). Thus, in Jesus »dwelled all the fullness of the God-head bodily« (Col. 2.9), there being a trinity in His person: the Essential-center, Jesus' soul, and His physical body. It is in this way that the paradox of the incarnation is explained in Lorber's works.

Swedenborg, too, must explain Jehovah's incarnation. For him it cannot be limited to mere inspiration. For then the transcendent God would not be imminent in Jesus. But how did Swedenborg structure the soul-body schema he had available? The answer can only be put as follows: the soul of the Lord was Jehovah (HD 298). Indeed, Swedenborg often writes, the soul (and accordingly also the soul of Jesus) stems from the father (a patre, DP 277). However Jesus' soul was not only Divine in nature, i.e., a Divine derivative, it was the Father himself; »He was conceived of Jehovah and had no other inner being, that is no other soul, than Jehovah« (AC 1921; cf. also 4727). This is substantiated by the indivisibility of the Divine: »The Lord's soul and life were from Jehovah God, and because the Divine cannot be divided, all the Father's Divine was itself His soul and life« (TCR 82). Thus, Swedenborg solved all the problems of incarnation by identifying Jesus' soul with Jehovah. From Mary Jesus received only a body. Swedenborg states explicitly that »the son that Mary bore is the body of His Divine soul, for in Mary's womb nothing else was formed than the body conceived and thus derived from the soul« (TCR

167). Clearly, according to this, Christ is understood by Swedenborg using a dichotomy (soul-body), whereas Lorber uses a trichotomy (spirit, soul, body). In the interest of working out the fundamental lines of thought, the details have actually been simplified, for on closer consideration Swedenborg's dichotomy allows a further differentiation into anima (above consciousness), mens (conscious will and thought), animus (beneath consciousness), and corpus (body). As regards history of doctrine, one can place Swedenborg in the alexandrian logos/sarx category (in connection with John 1.14 - the Word became flesh/sarx); Lorber on the other hand, fits in the antiochian (logos-anthropos) category (the Word became man, that is, soul and body). These placings are, nonetheless, to be taken with a grain of salt. They are intended to make the outlines of these perceptions of Christ visible. One can ask the question of Swedenborg, How does he explain Jesus' feelings? Did Jesus really not have a human soul? How is the mental life of Jesus to be considered? What precisely was made Divine? Only the flesh? What did Swedenborg understand by the bodily element? What by the human? And as regards Lorber, the question that appears interesting to me is? How does the Jehovah-essence of Jesus' soul relate to be Essential-center? But I cannot pursue these questions here.

To conclude the matter something must still be said about that »spark in the center of the soul« (GEJ III.42.6), an idea that as such is not to be found in Swedenborg. It is the anthropological consequence of Lorber's understanding of God in Christ (see GEJ VIII.24.6). Swedenborg appears to reject this thought: »I once heard the voice of one saying from heaven, that if a spark of life in man were his own, and not of God in him, there would be no heaven, nor anything therein, and hence that there would not be any church on earth, and consequently no life eternal« (ISB 11).

But from the context (which one can read in the work Intercourse of the Soul and Body) Swedenborg's actual purport is unmistakable: the old idea of the soul as a spark (visible already in the 3rd century in Plotinus) was to be rejected if it meant that the soul is life itself and therewith a divinity. For Swedenborg and all the angels it is the opposite of this, it is »an organ receiving life from God« (TCR 470-474); and it is exactly this for Lorber too. The »Divine spark« (GS I.52.2) for him is not something separated from God to the side of man, but on the contrary even has clear reference to what Swedenborg calls the Divine influx into the soul of man (TCR 9). The spark of spirit and the theory of influx are not exclusively opposite to each other, they are mutually broadening ways of seeing the higher reality

of the presence of God and of spirit in human kind - similar to light, which manifests itself as a particle (spark) or wave (influx). This assessment will now be substantiated from Lorber's works.

Lorber often states that the soul is an organ receptive of life: »The soul is indeed only a container of life from God, however, it is no longer Life itself ... Since the soul can only reach eternal life on the path of Divine virtue ... it cannot possibly be life itself but only a container for receiving life itself« (GEJ III.42.6). »Thus, I have created man so that he may receive life. He is not created into the fullness of life; he is only capable of receiving it into himself more and more « (HGt II.126.18). »The Soul is the organ of reception for all the endlessly many ideas of the original Cause from which it has come forth like a breath.« (EM¹² 52.4). In addition, according to GS II.79.12, the soul is »a substantial, ethereal organ, that ... possesses every capability of receiving life« (GS II.79.12). One cannot speak of the soul possessing divinity.

The spark of spirit can certainly be termed »man's spirit« (GEJ III.53.11); nevertheless, strictly speaking this is the »spirit of God in man« (GEJ III.48.7). The Lord said expressly to a citizen of the other world that his spirit is actually »My love itself in you and thus My very own Spirit« (RB I.146.9). Jesus expressed himself in the same way in the Great Gospel: »The spirit, however, of which I speak, saying that it may be yours, is precisely also My spirit in you« (GEJ V.236.10). This spirit power is Jesus' love, which no one can truly ascribe to himself. »I [Jesus] am indeed the real life in man, through the love for Me in his soul; and love is My spirit in every man. The one whom My love awakens, awakens his spirit given him by Me; because to eternity there is no other Spirit of life apart from Me; he is then simply awakening Myself in him.« (GEJ II.41.4-5) Since God is, of course, love, He very much wants to give himself to us, as if He were actually our own: »Love desires to communicate itself to others, yes, as much as possible. What will not the Divine love then do, which is infinite?« (DP 324; see also AC 4320 and DLW 47)

The spirit of God or Christ in us is a ray of the Divine sun; and therefore this »little spark of the purest Divine spirit« (GEJ II.217.5) is only the other side of an influx, for what flows in must be attached and yet also

¹² EM = »Erde und Mond« (Earth and Moon).

flow in. Swedenborg himself says that the love and wisdom flowing into the soul is substance and form (cf. ISB 14 in connection with DLW 40). The substantial reality of all that is spiritual is a basic thought of Swedenborg's ontology. Therefore, in the so-called Spark of Spirit I see a substantial form in which influx appears; this Spark of Spirit is not something separated from the Divine from which it originates, only always the hidden possibility of God in us. The Spark of Spirit and influx are inwardly tied together. What is to be noted above all in Lorber's works are those places that tell of the sun, of its rays - and what the rays affect in us. To a soul in the spiritual world who had attained perfection the Lord explained, »In this sun I am completely in My own home. This sun lies in the eternally immutable center of My Divine being. The rays beaming out from the sun fill in their unique way all infinity and in themselves are nothing other than My loving will and the wisdom eternally going-forth from it. These rays are in all respects fully living and are in all respects perfectly like My wisdom. Accordingly where ever such rays fall, I am therefore there, as in the sun, totally perfectly present, not merely simply working but also in person; and this personage is consequently in all respects one and the same.« (GS I.60.1f). When a ray of this sun falls in our heart, there is then a personal presence of the Lord in us. As indeed the earthly sun produces its mirror image in the earth's atmosphere, so also does the sun of the Lord in a corresponding fashion: »One who now knows how to catch an abundance of the life from the heaven's Sun of Grace in the heart of his soul, and then through the power of God's love accept and retain it, forms in himself a Sun of Grace which is similar to the original Sun of Grace« (GEJ VI.88.5). Thus, the sun in the heart without its originating model »in its steadfast center« (GS I.60.1) would be impossible. This emerges also from the story of Oalim. He saw in addition three things in the heart of flesh. The substantial heart of the soul and a shining embryo. As this grew and took on the shape of Oalim, in this new man he also discovered a heart. And then he says: »This heart, however, looked like a sun, and its light was a thousand times stronger than the sun of a day. However, as I kept on looking at this heart-sun more and more, I then all at once discovered in its middle a little image entirely like You, O holy Father - but I did not know how such a thing could possible be. But when I thought it over an inexpressible joy seized me, and Your living picture forthwith opened its mouth and from the sun-heart of the new man spoke the following to me: 'Raise your eyes upward now and you will soon be aware of where and how I am alive in you!'

And I immediately directed My eyes upward, and instantly I beheld an endless deep of the depths of infinity, and as well an immeasurably great sun, and then soon in fact in the midst of this sun, You Yourself, O holy Father! But from You beamed infinitely many rays, and one of these rays fell on the sun-heart in the new man in me and formed Your loving self in me.« (HGt II.72.17-22) How could one more clearly show that the Divine spirit has its origin outside of us and so is not our own but the possession of the Lord in us? As the morning sun glitters in a thousand dew drops and still remains ever one and the same, so God shines into the hearts of His children and still remains ever one in the same. The spark in us is the focal point of the sun's rays: »You know that the spirit of man is a perfect living image of the Lord and bears within itself a spark or focal point of the Divine essence« (GS II.10.14). On account of this, influx and spark are identical: »The pure soul by itself would ... see nothing about itself unless a spiritual feeling ... could in flow into it ... and that is the Divine spark, which is laid in it as spirit« (GEJ XI.10). Consequently, and in language still more closely approaching the language of Swedenborg, its description can be entirely replaced by the words »the continual influx of the Lord from heaven« (GS II.35.6) or the »beneficial activity of love« (GS I.52.2).

In conclusion, we once more ask the question about the standpoint from which one views revelation. Swedenborg leaves more the impression of God as transcendent, Lorber as immanent. Both points of view are possible: Swedenborg himself says: »In successive order the first degree forms a highest, the third the outermost« (DLW 205). Therefore inflow can be described as coming from above or from within: »The lower flows in from above or from within into every person« (TCR 481). Swedenborg's preference for successive order is connected with his position as seer of the other world: »Everything interior will, namely, be detected in the other life as higher« (AC 8325). Lorber, on the other hand, could only discover the Lord from his experience of the inner Word - and he saw: He is an all and all in us. Yet Swedenborg too knew: »In every angel and also in every man there is an inmost or highest degree, or an inmost or highest something, into which the Divine of the Lord primarily or proximately flows ... This inmost or highest degree may be called the entrance of the Lord to the angel or man, and His veriest dwelling-place (domicillium) in them.« (HH 39) »The innermost of man is where the Lord dwells in him (habitat)« (AC 2973). According to TCR 8, the inmost

and highest is the soul. Consequently, according to Swedenborg, the following also applies: the Lord dwells in the soul. Swedenborg, what is more, ventures this formulation: »What belongs to the inner man is the Lord's, so that one can say that the inner man is the Lord« (AC 1594). Influx or in-dwelling? The reality of the spirit is not limited to only one interpretation.