



THE PHILOSOPHY OF NEW CHURCH EDUCATION BY GEORGE DE CHARMS

Revised and Edited by Angela Rose



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BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		page
	<u>Preface</u>	
	<u>Introduction to the 1979 Transcription</u>	
<u>Part One</u>	<u>Swedenborg's Theory about the Mind</u>	5
<u>1.1</u>	<u>Consciousness Results from the Meeting of Two Worlds</u>	5
<u>1.2</u>	<u>The Natural and Spiritual Minds</u>	9
<u>Part Two</u>	<u>A New Philosophy of Education</u>	13
<u>2.1</u>	<u>Religion and Education</u>	13
<u>2.2</u>	<u>Defining Education</u>	14
<u>2.3</u>	<u>Instruction and Spiritual Purpose</u>	22
<u>2.4</u>	<u>Religious Education for Children</u>	24
<u>2.5</u>	<u>Remnants: Essential Influences in Childhood</u>	26
<u>2.6</u>	<u>Knowledge as Foundation for Spiritual Truth</u>	28
<u>2.7</u>	<u>A Task for New Church Educators</u>	29
<u>2.8</u>	<u>Vocational Training</u>	30
<u>2.9</u>	<u>Learning and The Affections</u>	31
<u>2.10</u>	<u>The Work of a Teacher</u>	36
<u>Part Three</u>	<u>The Ultimate Goals of Education</u>	38
<u>3.1</u>	<u>Free Choice</u>	39
<u>3.2</u>	<u>True Rationality</u>	43
<u>3.3</u>	<u>Conscience</u>	50
<u>3.4</u>	<u>Character</u>	54
<u>Part Four</u>	<u>Organizing Knowledges to Prepare the Mind for Spiritual Truth</u>	57
<u>4.1</u>	<u>The Relationship Between What is Spiritual and What is Natural</u>	57
<u>4.2</u>	<u>The Difference Between Natural and Spiritual Thinking</u>	60
<u>4.3</u>	<u>Seeing Higher Truth</u>	61
<u>4.4</u>	<u>Developmentally Appropriate Religious Instruction</u>	64
<u>4.5</u>	<u>The Direct and Indirect Use of Revelation</u>	66
<u>4.6</u>	<u>Developing New Church Education</u>	68
<u>Part Five</u>	<u>Teaching About and From Revelation</u>	71
<u>5.1</u>	<u>Correspondences</u>	71
<u>5.2</u>	<u>Correspondences, cont.</u>	
<u>5.3</u>	<u>The Doctrine of Genuine Truth</u>	76
<u>5.4</u>	<u>Divine Revelation and Absolute Truth</u>	78
<u>5.5</u>	<u>Using the Imagination in Education</u>	83
<u>5.6</u>	<u>Reverence for the Word</u>	84
<u>Appendix A</u>	<u>Key to the Retitling of Chapters</u>	87

PREFACE

I first came across *The Philosophy of New Church Education*, a collection of lectures by George de Charms, when I was a student at Bryn Athyn College in the 1980s. De Charms had been a teacher at Bryn Athyn College decades before I arrived, and the lectures he gave in the 1941-42 school year had been transcribed (see the introduction below). I am a professor at Bryn Athyn College now, and I have revised and edited de Charms's lectures to make them available to students in my education courses. Large portions of the transcribed lectures are quoted directly, but in places I updated the language or paraphrased the text to eliminate redundancy or achieve greater clarity. Occasionally I added transition sentences to stitch paragraphs together more smoothly. The 1979 transcription of the lectures, which is available in Swedenborg Library, is 194 pages long. This revised version is less than half as long.

The revised version of *The Philosophy of New Church Education* includes the parts of de Charms's lectures that are most relevant to the education courses I teach at Bryn Athyn College (Ed 272, Child Development; Ed 202, Moral Education, and Ed 128, An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Education). I have omitted a lot of text, but I have also added material from audio recordings of de Charms delivering these same college lectures in 1963 (available on newchurchaudio.org) and material from de Charms's own lecture notes (unpublished). **Blue font** indicates the material transposed from the 1962-63 lectures. **Green font** indicates text taken directly from de Charms's lecture notes, which, although written in outline form, unfold into prose rather nicely.

I have changed some chapter titles to better align them with chapter content. A table (see Appendix A) shows the changes I made to the chapter titles so that interested readers can easily trace and compare the revised version with the source material. Within each chapter I added subheadings to break up the text and guide the reader through de Charms's progression of ideas. At the end of some of the chapters I have included relevant quotations from the teachings for the New Church given in books written by Emanuel Swedenborg. In most cases the quotations are ones that de Charms identified as references.

My goal in revising and editing de Charms's lectures is to make his work more accessible and to preserve and pass on key principles of New Church education. As indicated in the introduction below, the 1979 transcription was produced for people already familiar with New Church teachings. This revised version of *The Philosophy of New Church Education* is intended for all readers. I hope you will find the ideas as inspiring as I once did as an elementary school teacher and still do as a college professor.

Angela Rose

April, 2018

INTRODUCTION TO THE 1979 TRANSCRIPTION OF
THE PHILOSOPHY OF NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

This material was originally given as lectures by Bishop George de Charms. It was part of the first year of his two-year course, "Growth of the Mind," which he offered in the Academy College over a period of years. These particular lectures were given during the school year 1941-42. Mrs. Raymond Pitcairn arranged to have them taken down in shorthand by Mrs. Avery. They were then transcribed and a limited number of copies circulated.

The present reproduction is made from a selection of lectures of that year which are not so fully covered in the printed volume of *Growth of the Mind*. The members of the General Church Schools Committee believe that many people in the Church today will be served by having access to this worthwhile and inspiring material about the philosophy of New Church education.

There has been a small amount of editing of these lectures, done by Nancy Woodard. While it may lack some final professional polish, we trust that the present form will serve the purpose of a wider sharing of this valuable material.

The General Church Schools Committee

Nancy H. Woodard
Yorvar E. Synnestvedt
Frederick L. Schnarr, Chairman

April, 1979

PART ONE: SWEDENBORG'S THEORY ABOUT THE MIND

1.1 CONSCIOUSNESS RESULTS FROM THE MEETING OF TWO WORLDS

The whole of Swedenborg's theory about the mind rests on the hypothesis that there are two worlds—a natural world and a spiritual world. Unless there were two worlds there could be no such thing as consciousness, for every conscious sensation consists of two things—a perception of form and a perception of quality. The perception of form comes from the natural world; the perception of quality from the spiritual world. These two things cannot exist apart from one another. We cannot have any perception of form that is not accompanied by a perception of quality. Perception of quality is what we call affection, and there are distinct degrees of sensation or perception. We begin with the sensations of the body, and from these we derive imaginations in the thought, and finally perceptions. There are affections that are associated with each one of these different kinds of mental activity. Indeed, if it were not for the affection there would be no sensation on any of those planes. By affection we mean a sense of delight or undelight. Everything that affects our senses from without is perceived as agreeable or disagreeable, as giving pleasure or pain in some degree. When the affection is one of delight then at once the whole system of the mind is opened to it. There is an effort, an endeavor, to retain that sensation or to regain it and repeat it and increase its power. But when the affection is undelightful, disagreeable, or painful, then at once there is a closing of all the vessels of the mind against it—an effort to avoid it, to shut it out, escape from it. That is the mainspring of all our actions—of everything we call the will. What we will, what we want, is always prompted by some affection that is delightful, or on the other hand by some affection that is undelightful, that makes us want to get away from it. So, when we speak of the affections, we are speaking of the will. When we are speaking of sensations—perceptions of form—we are speaking of the understanding. These two things are what make the mind and its life: will and understanding—or affection and thought.

Bodily sensations

Now what about these different degrees of sensation and the affections that belong to them? The lowest are the bodily sensations. The sense of touch interacting with the forces and objects of nature around us affect the body and its life. These are felt as delightful or undelightful, according to whether they are in harmony with the life of the body or against it. We may perceive them as sweet, sour, soft or hard, rough or smooth, warm or cold, melodious or discordant. Every one of the senses reacts instinctively with pleasure to something that is in harmony with the body, and with pain to something that is out of harmony with it. This we have in common with animals. But animals have an instinctive recognition of things that are in accord with their life and an ability to distinguish them from things that are against their life. Human beings don't have that instinct. For the most part we have to learn what is in accord

with our life and what is against it. Nonetheless, we do have a sense of pleasure or of displeasure, according to whether things hurt us or not.

Imagination

Imagination gives us the ability to picture in our minds some purpose or desire and hold it there, cultivate it, and seek to attain it. Children begin with what we call daydreaming, picturing themselves in desirable situations. A child's play is all that. They are always playing that they are this, that, or the other thing they would like to be. Imagination is delightful and we go on with that kind of play throughout life, only we change the things that we think are delightful. All ambitions of grown-up people are of a similar nature. They imagine pictures of things that they would like to become or do, and holding that picture in the mind opens all the faculties to grasp everything that would lead to that attainment and to draw in from the world around it every sensation that would help to achieve it. We may imagine that we want to win a game, imagine that we become rich or famous, or that we are successful in any field of activity that we may choose, and because this affection of the imagination is more powerful than the mere physical sensations of pleasure or displeasure, then for the sake of higher delight we are willing to undergo physical hardship, displeasure, pain. We are willing to train our muscles to achieve a goal. We are willing to work hard and persistently, to give up external pleasures of the body for the sake of our work. Because of the imagination, we have the picture of a higher delight that means more to us than the pleasures of the body, and this picturing in the imagination is what determines our sense of free choice; these affections of the imagination guide our life.

Reason, abstract goals, and moral virtues

Now there is something deeper than that. There are affections of thought or of reason that go beyond any concrete achievement such as we have pictured in the imagination. They seek abstract goals, look to moral virtues—to honesty, justice, what is honorable and upright—and that carries a still greater delight, a still more powerful affection. For the sake of that higher achievement—what some have called self-respect—people will suffer hard things; they will give up not only their physical pleasures but their ambitions and hopes for the achievement of their ideals. They will suffer even death to protect their sense of honor. That would not be so unless human beings were endowed with an affection for these abstract things stronger than their physical and imaginative affections. We should note that this affection of the reason or thought may be either for the sake of self or for the sake of our use to others. People may cling to a sense of honor and justice for the sake of what others think. The respect of others may be necessary to the attainment of their real goal, which may be wealth or power or reputation or external success. Two people may stand for what is just and right and honorable, and one would do it for the sake of selfish purposes and the other would do it for the sake of an unselfish purpose. One would be prompted by self-interest, and the other prompted by a

regard for Divine Law and a concern for others. We cannot tell the difference in outward appearance. But there is a great difference in internal actuality.

Perception of truth

In the one case everything that activates a person is the attainment of some natural, worldly, external goal of the imagination, and so it is all prompted from without. In the other case the motivation is from the affection of the pure intellect, the affection coming from a perception of spiritual truth from the Word—the delight of seeing and understanding spiritual truth and good from the Word. This is a delight in heavenly and eternal goals, purposes that are in accord with the order and life of God. They lead to a love of good and of truth for their own sake, not for the sake of self. From them comes the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong; to recognize what is true and distinguish it from what is false. This is the origin of that ability to see what is above reason or logic.

This ability to recognize what is right and wrong, to see truth and recognize it as truth, underlies all of these affections. It is this that makes us human and distinguishes human beings from animals. Animals have corporeal sensation and their delights are in accord with the order of their life, but they have no ability to distinguish right from wrong. They have no perception of truth and good, but only of what is harmonious and satisfying to their bodily appetites. Human beings are born for a spiritual life. They are born to live in a spiritual world and are therefore endowed with the ability to recognize what is in accord with the order of that spiritual world, just as animals, born merely to live in the natural world, are born with the ability to recognize what is in accord with their natural life. This ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to perceive truth, is the secret of all our ability to learn, to develop what we call the mind, on every plane. It is the secret of our ability to speak. The ability to learn depends upon the fact that a person is endowed with an affection of truth. People can be affected by truth and feel it as delightful. If it were not so then they would be unable to acquire knowledge, to build up intellectual understanding, for all learning has its origin in an affection. We know this from trying to teach. We may tell but not teach, because the degree to which people learn depends upon the degree to which they are affected from within by delight.

Consciousness grows according to delights

That ability to be affected with delight is native with everybody, present even with little babies, but it becomes conscious only gradually. Babies are affected with delights—heavenly delights, spiritual delights—but they don't know it. They are conscious only of corporeal delights and undelights—the delights and undelights of the body—nothing else. Within these bodily delights there are heavenly delights of which they are unconscious, but that nonetheless lead them on, lead them to look for something more, and therefore open their minds to learn to grow. If it were not for the presence of those heavenly delights within their bodily delights, they would not develop any more than animals do. The heavenly delights are there because they have an

internal mind, a pure intellect which is affected by spiritual things at the same time as the body and the brain are affected by material things.

The consciousness of spiritual affection, the ability to distinguish it and separate it from purely physical sensations, grows only gradually with little children. At first little babies just know bodily sensations as delights. Later on they begin to develop imagination and become conscious of those higher delights that are on the plane of the imagination, delights which come from the ability to picture in the mind things that are not immediately present. And as they grow older, there comes the ability to picture abstract things and thus to develop thought and to become conscious of the delights of thought. Finally, with the opening of spiritual life at adult age, there begins to be consciousness of spiritual delights, the sensations of pure intellect, and so the mind develops step by step in accord with the quality of the soul that was present from the beginning.

The meeting of forms from without and affections from within

Sensations are not merely perceptions of the forms of things around us; the perception of those forms may be altogether different according to the affections that come from within. Different people react differently to the same sensations; at different times we ourselves may react very differently to the same sensations. We may develop very strong feelings about things that are not at all to be explained by the things themselves.

The only explanation that satisfies the facts is to recognize that there is another world from which those forces originate, that we are in contact with it, and that our minds are being affected by forces from that world as well as from this world. If we realize this to be the case, then we can understand and explain rationally these differences in our reactions to the world around us.

That is the essence of Swedenborg's whole philosophy of the mind which begins with the postulate that there are two worlds and from that postulate explains what we see, what we feel and experience in our mental life. If there is no other world, where does a sense of justice, uprightness or honor come from? Certainly not from any physical sensation—not from any material object or natural force. There is no possibility of supposing that such things could produce what we call a sense of justice. It must come from something else, and according to the philosophy of the New Church it comes from the fact that God is love, that the spiritual sun, which is the first of His creation, is pure love and shines with the light of truth and warmth of love upon human spirits and minds of people and angels, and that it conveys to them the ability to see and feel spiritual things, just as the light and heat of the natural sun enables people to live in a material world and sense the things of nature. This perception of spiritual things is what comes to our consciousness as a sense of honor, justice, uprightness, as a recognition of what is true as against what is false, as an ability to understand abstract things, and as a delight in this understanding of abstract things that is stronger and more powerful than the physical delights that come to us from the world.

1.2 THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL MINDS

Consciousness is possible only because there are two worlds and only because there is a dual mind. This leads to many very interesting things about psychology and gives us quite a different mode of interpreting the actual experience of mental life. But before I speak of that, I wanted to call attention to this fact: because all consciousness requires the combination of these, we never live entirely in one world or in the other. While we are living on earth, we are continually receiving influx from the spiritual world, and after we die and go into the other world we must be continually receiving afflux from the natural world.

So, as long as we live on earth, and while we are receiving sensations from the spiritual world, together with everything we sense from without, the focus of our attention is upon the things from without. We see an object and all the emotions that arise in us we ascribe to the object because our attention is focused on the outer world, and we think it is the object that produces all the affections that we feel. The result is that we think that all the things that give us satisfaction are in the world around us and that we will increase our happiness if we multiply them. Children think that the more things they have, the happier they are going to be. They are ready to grab from others and resent anything being taken away from them. Why? Because they attribute the delights they feel when they sense these things to the objects themselves. It is only by growth and education and reflection that we come to realize the truth—the more things we amass, the more we will want and the less they will satisfy our cravings. The very fact that the possession of things in the natural world does *not* satisfy us is proof that the mind is feeling or sensing something else in which it takes delight, besides these material objects.

Everything is alive to little children

While very little children ascribe all their sensations to outer objects, their real delight is in what comes from within from the spiritual world, and that is the reason why they care less about the objects themselves. Their whole delight is in the sensations that they derive from those objects around them, and the sensations are those of life. The result is that they ascribe life to everything. They ascribe love to everything. Everything is personified—a doll is a person, animals are persons—and they ascribe to them the qualities that they feel within their minds. This doesn't come from the objects themselves. For little children everything is living and that is where the delight lies—not in knowing how many chemicals are mixed together to make it or in what form they are put. The thing that means something is that it arouses human emotions in their minds. It is the influx from the other world that arouses those emotions, and while they are looking and ascribing all those feelings to the objects around them, they are really living in the delight and enjoyment of that spiritual influx. Only by degrees do they come to distinguish between these two. Only by degrees do they begin to concentrate on the objects themselves and on what we call facts, and as they do, they begin to place reality more and more in the accuracy of their external bodily sensations and to consider the inner feelings that had meant so much to them to be imaginary, babyish, something to get away from. They now have to be scientific and accurate. That is the way grown-up people are and they have to grow up and be

like them. They think they are being extremely scientific, but the truth is they are still in their imagination.

Achieving accuracy in scientific observations and spiritual perceptions

Children live in the world of imagination, which is a world, after all, where the things that come to us from without are vitally modified by what comes from within. It is not just a photographic reproduction of what comes from without. That is the reason why it is so difficult for us to get one accurate scientific idea, even when we are grown up, even when we set our minds to do just that. It is very difficult to eliminate this element of imagination that modifies the impress that comes from without. Just reflect on how different things appear to you in different states of mind, what different conclusions you reach from exactly the same premises, from exactly the same external circumstances and conditions, when you are in different states of mind. Take two people going through exactly the same set of experiences; they can come to opposite conclusions.

What we call consciousness is not a direct touch of either world. It is always a combination of the two because what comes from without is always modified by what comes from within, and what comes from within is always modified by what comes from without. And if we are speaking about this natural mind where the attention is focused on the natural world, then we can say that accuracy results to the degree that we can remove any extraneous modification of what comes from within and perceive directly what comes from without accurately. Scientific accuracy is a perception of the material world apart from all human emotions. It is where the mind is abstracted from any question of personality and merely is trying to find the facts.

It's the same with our consciousness of spiritual things. We have to remove all the appearances, all the confusing appearances that come from the senses if we are going to perceive correctly what comes from within, and the whole purpose of our striving for spiritual perception, for the understanding of spiritual truth, is to remove the mind from the distracting influences of the outer world and receive impressions directly from the spiritual world.

Two foundations of truth

The teachings for the New Church tell us there are two foundations of truth. The one foundation of truth is nature, and the more factual our information—the more accurate the reproduction of the forces of nature—the more scientifically true is our concept. The internal foundation of Truth is the Word, Divine Revelation. The more accurately we sense the spiritual message of the Word, the message of Love and its activity, not modified by the appearances of the senses, the more true is our spiritual perception. Two foundations of truth. And so we have two minds—the natural mind, where our focus is upon the natural foundation of truth, and the spiritual mind, where our focus is on the spiritual foundation of truth.

We can check our sensations of the outer world by scientific experiment. We can check them by going back to nature and testing over again those sensations under varying circumstances and conditions and as observed by many different people. We can also check our perceptions of spiritual things because the true nature of spiritual things has been revealed in The Word, apart from our individual feelings of them, and therefore the Word becomes a fixed thing outside of us by means of which we may check and test our inner feelings, our emotions. It can be checked and tested by many minds observing and investigating the teachings of the Word.

But note this: there would be no test or proof as to our sensations of the outer world unless men acknowledged that the outer world was a fixed reality, independent of our own sensations and feelings, and therefore that it was true. Unless men acknowledged that the world of nature contains truth on which we could depend, there would be no possibility of checking. For instance, suppose man had the idea that nature itself was always changing, that there was no universal law by which nature operated, that there was no understandable mode by which nature produces her results, that everything was just a haphazard effect; then we would have no check or proof because however many times we went back to nature, and however many times it happened to come out the same way, we would still say, "That just happened, so it was not necessarily true."

As a matter of fact, that was very much the way people thought about things in ancient times. Nature was to them just a miracle or a whole lot of miracles. It was simply the manifestation of some arbitrary acts of God who was all-powerful and could do anything He pleased. And therefore they could not consider that He was bound by any laws, and for that reason there was no common basis by which an understanding of nature's laws could be built up. But with the beginning of the modern era of scientific thinking, the following great contribution was made to human thought: all things in nature take place according to a fixed law, which is never changing and is something we can rely on. Then there was a possibility of checking our sensations and ideas that we get from nature, checking them against nature herself, with some assurance the check would lead to actual proof of a truth.

Religious-minded people throughout the world do believe in some other reality—do hold to an idea of some kind of spiritual existence. Yet more and more there is felt to be no assurance as to the reliability of our feelings about these spiritual things, nothing by which they can be measured or tested, or checked. Here again this is largely because the idea is that God in spiritual matters operates by Divine power without regard to law, as if, when it came to spiritual things He acted arbitrarily and there was no way we could be sure that what we perceived as true today would still be true tomorrow. God might act differently then! The idea was that all spiritual things are miracles beyond our comprehension and therefore we should not attempt to understand them. We should be satisfied if we can come to some understanding of the operations of nature where the laws are fixed and certain. And so while people cling to an idea of the reality of spiritual things and the holiness of the Word, regarding it as something sacred and to be held in reverence, yet there are few that hold it as something to be really

understood. They do not look to the Word as something that can check and prove our spiritual feelings and sensations. Indeed, religion is often regarded as purely an emotional thing, something that we suddenly feel, perhaps in a state of conversion.

The philosophy of the New Church is based on the idea that we cannot sense the spiritual world with our outer senses and therefore cannot subject it to the same kinds of experiment as we can the things of nature and that with regard to this spiritual world, the Lord Himself speaks to us and teaches us. The Lord Himself puts the real truth within human range and does so by the inspired writers of the Word throughout all the ages, and that therefore if we go to that Word as to a standard of measurement by which to test our feelings of spiritual things, we can be given to know with assurance spiritual truth about which there can be just as much of a common perception as there is about natural truth tested by scientific experiment. Why? Because we have a mind that is just as capable of directly touching and feeling that spiritual world as the senses are capable of directly touching or feeling the material world, and both worlds are independent of our minds. And if we go on touching and feeling in different times, we will discover that factual truth about the outer world that is independent of our personal feelings. If we go back to the Word, we will be able to arrive at a concept of spiritual truth that is just as reliable, just as proven by the common perception of many people as is the truth of nature.

We have to keep going back to the Word of God with a recognition of our own fallibility and ignorance and submit our minds to be taught by the Lord. Just as we have to continually go back to nature, acknowledging our ignorance and our need for a wider view, submitting our mind to be checked by actual experiment. It is only by an acknowledgment of our own ignorance and a desire to learn directed to both foundations of truth, the Word of God on one hand and nature on the other, that we can come at last to any sure and reliable solutions that will build up a mind in accord with the truth both of the spiritual world and the world of nature.

PART TWO: A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

[Editor's note: Blue font indicates quotes from de Charms's lectures on educational philosophy given in 1962-1963.]

2.1 RELIGION AND EDUCATION

All instruction and all education, however focused it may be on preparation for the work force, cannot help dealing at the same time with the spirit of the human being, for everything we learn exerts an influence on our spirit.

Throughout history all education was regarded in relation to religion and was centered in religion. In fact, the primary purpose of education was to teach the Word and the doctrine of the church. That was the Christian idea in earlier times and it led to the establishment of schools. All our modern schools that have any length of history were originally religious schools. In recent times, however, the need for a sharp separation between church and state has led to the separation of religious and secular education.

The idea which has become paramount in this country is that there must be freedom of religion and that education is a function of the state. If that is true, then there is no other way than to separate religious and secular education—the state to undertake secular education and leave religious education to the church—and that is the universally accepted philosophy in this country. So, the prime purpose of education has come to be regarded as preparation for citizenship. Love of country has become the highest ideal, and to prepare for citizenship, the highest goal of education.

People suppose that such things as spiritual truth, virtue, and morality can be inculcated without reference to religion or to Revelation. They think you don't have to have any special belief in order to be honest and upright. It is supposed that the public schools can do all that is necessary in teaching morality to children who have a great variety of religious beliefs. It is even supposed that the public schools can do a better job in moral and spiritual education than churches can because public school education eliminates all theological differences and just presents the simple fundamentals on which all religions agree, and this is deemed a sufficient basis for the moral and spiritual training of children.

[Editor's note: In the following chapters de Charms tests the supposition that religion is not necessary for teaching morality by exploring the definition of education and investigating religious education as compared with secular education. See especially chapters 2.2, 2.5, and 3.3]

2.2 DEFINING EDUCATION

People have been trying to define education for a long time, and there are almost innumerable definitions and none of them entirely satisfactory, so if you hit on one that *is* entirely satisfactory, you will make a name for yourself. Why should that be so? Education, the development of a human being, is as complex as life itself and the varieties of this complexity are as numerous as individuals, and therefore the question, “What is education?” is a larger question than a single mind can grasp with any sureness.

Education is the totality of influences on the human mind

You begin by saying that education is a training of the mind. Now if you reflect a moment, you will realize that a great deal of learning and development comes without any training at all. Education goes beyond training. Much education, and in many respects the most vital part of education, lies too deep within the recesses of the human mind for us to discern it. If we are observant, we will find that education goes forward right before our eyes in ways that are altogether unexpected and surprising.

Just about the time we think we are training our children, we find they have been developing in another direction without our knowing it. A great deal of education takes place when both the teacher and the learner are quite unconscious of what is happening. When the teacher’s back is turned, the students may learn something. When the students’ attention is fixed on something else, they may learn something because a large part of education is affected by forces that are invisible to us, forces that come from the spiritual world—the influence of spirits and angels—that is vital but unseen.

All these influences—the direct and immediate influence of the Lord flowing through the soul, the influence of spirits and angels—are present in varying states with children. The influence of the environment over which we have no control, the influence of the things children delight in, and finally the influence of formal school teaching and training—all these have to be considered if we are to understand how the mind develops.

Of course, as parents and teachers, we are specifically concerned with what we can do by conscious effort, but we must see that in its relation to the things we cannot do if we are going to understand it properly. The greatest mistake educators can make is to think they can do it all and not see clearly the limitations of what they can do—where their responsibility begins and where it ends. We must not take in too much territory. For if we do, we fail to make the best use of those things that *are* required of us, of that part of education that *is* in our hands.

Children will have experiences of their own. We will not environ their whole life with our influence, and much of our influence will be unconscious to us, so there is a wide field in which education will be beyond our control. As a matter of fact, many of the things that we try to do will have an effect directly opposite to that which we hope.

The essence of education, which involves the guidance of the human individual toward an eternal destiny, is held within the hands of God and guarded against the clumsy and ignorant mishandling of teachers. If it were not so, we'd surely make a botch of it. The most important attitude for any teacher is one of humility (de Charms, 1963).

The influence of our character and attitude

When it comes to those influences that are beyond our control—but which are not beyond the control of the Divine Providence—our concern is the direction of our own life, our own character, performing our duty, and fulfilling our responsibility, allowing the Lord to use that in whatever way He sees best for our children. What the Lord can do through us secretly, for our children, at times when we are not able to control the situation, will depend upon our reception of Him, will depend upon the presence of heaven with us, and thus it will depend upon our individual resistance to evil in life. As a matter of fact, those unconscious influences on children are the most vital things in their life. And often we find that while we have been consciously thinking of what is good for the child, consciously trying to instill in him or her certain things that we, ourselves, are not living up to, then we find that the child is far more impressed with what we do than with what we say.

The environment we choose for children

When it comes to the environment we *can* control, we have choices to make. We choose and direct the environment of our children. This environment includes far more than formal instruction. It includes our whole attitude toward childhood and the constant meeting of the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of our children. It includes the whole environment of the home.

Parents have the ability and responsibility to choose for their children what will be in their environment—what experiences they will have and what they will be protected from, what kind of things they will read, what kind of television programs they will watch, what kind of playmates they may have, what kind of order will be established in their life (de Charms, 1962).

Only after considering all this do we come at last to the field of systematic instruction within a school setting following a planned curriculum. We have a school here, we have a teacher, a certain set of lessons; we have the child come to school at a certain place, and we think in that way and by those means we will educate him. We can't do that. That is only a very small part of a child's life—a far less important part to many children. They come to school because they must, stay as long as they have to, thinking about something outside (much more interested in that) while they are there, and they almost say, "Now teach me if you can!" Under those circumstances, we make a great mistake to ignore all other influences and just put children in school and think they will learn there. The result is that we will just pour our mind into his and that is an extremely mistaken idea of education.

It is a harder job than that, fortunately for the children, for as a result of the way in which they are protected, we have individuals growing, not little automatons responding to our limited ideas of what they ought to be! We have individuals who can take what we give them and make something out of it that is directed by the Lord. It is the most fortunate thing in the world, because the most heinous kind of education is the kind that tries to destroy individuality and to stamp on the child the image of our own mind and ideals.

We must always take into consideration the secret forces that are playing on the child's mind, and we must cooperate with what the Lord is doing for the child and not endeavor to become all-powerful ourselves and insist on our own will in the matter of education.

An attitude of humility

We must begin with an attitude of humility. Here are little minds that have been created by the Lord for a use that He foresees, and the Lord is leading them to the fulfillment of that use. He asks us to help. He doesn't ask of us to take it out of His hands and make something else out of it. If we are going to help, then we have to see something of what the Lord is doing for the child and be careful that we don't interfere with that. That is our first responsibility.

Our influence with the child, our formal instruction of the child, will be profoundly affected by our own character, our own attitude towards the Lord and Divine Providence, by our personal ideals of life and thus by our spiritual associations. The angels and spirits that are present with us, and the sphere of our thought and love will deeply impress the child, will more deeply affect him than anything we say or do.

What we teach in our regular courses will also have an effect profoundly influenced by what we teach in informal moments, in casual remarks, in attempts to meet a sudden situation that we have not foreseen nor prepared for. We do more educating that way than any other, as a matter of fact. If we look back over our own past education, what is it that stands out? Do we remember anything specific, any lectures our professors gave us? Can we repeat them word for word or outline them? No! But we do have an impression of certain personalities that we came in contact with—what their principles were, what they inspired us to strive for. That is what sticks.

All these influences taken together make up the totality of a child's education; formal systematic teaching is but a small part. We must have some idea of these larger effects—these wider fields of influence—if we are going to have that small part of formal education wisely planned and intelligently used.

If I were to give you a definition of education in its broadest sense, I would say that it is the totality of influences—Divine, spiritual, human, and material—the totality of influences playing moment by moment on the child's mind, rousing it to conscious life and stirring in it loves and interests, in the exercise of which it grows.

Now you will tell me at once, what is the use of such a definition as that? It is too broad to be of any practical value. Saying “all the influences on a child’s mind have a formative effect” would not help us to teach anything. I would agree such a definition is inadequate, yet the teacher must begin with these concepts in order to understand the practical things a teacher is required to do.

Education is preparation for heaven

Another broad definition of education that was characteristic of the beginnings of the Academy says that education is preparation for heaven. That definition is the same as saying that education is the whole work of the Divine Providence in its guidance of a human life, from beginning to end, from the first consciousness throughout the whole of life. That certainly is education, but it is education under the Lord’s guidance, not anything we can control. What we have said—that education is the totality of the influences—is the same as saying that education is preparation for heaven. Given an individual soul and mind with its particular qualities and native abilities, the whole stream of Divine Providence is directed toward the perfection of that mind until it becomes imbued with angelic wisdom and love and ready to perform a heavenly use.

Every child born comes under the guidance of the Lord as the Divine Teacher, and every influence which is permitted in Providence plays some part in the work of preparing that mind for heaven. This is true whether the influence be good or evil, for evils in us must be seen and acknowledged. They must be brought out in life and recognized if they are to be overcome. The whole of life from beginning to end is a process of education under the Lord Himself as the Teacher.

This definition that the purpose of education is preparation for heaven is of value not as a practical working formula because it’s too broad, too indefinite—but as an ideal that reminds us that education is in the hands of the Lord. Everyone will agree that we educate children for life. But the kind of education we give will be determined by what we think the purpose of life is. What is its goal? There’s where the ideas of educators widely differ. What is the real goal of life? The value of recognizing this first and universal goal of education that all education is preparation for heaven is that we may see that our part in education should be an aid to the Divine work of salvation and it should have the same final goal (de Charms, 1962).

Education as we think of it in the professional sense, however, does not have to do with our whole life but with that period of growth and development that precedes adult age, or at least precedes a full entrance upon the responsibilities of a career. What we call adult age is not determined by a calendar but by a state of mind. There are two general divisions of life in the world. One is before we have reached maturity and one is afterward. The one is during the time we are under the guidance and control of parents and teachers, and the other is after we have attained the state of independence. During both these periods the Divine work of education is going forward without a break, and a thousand forces are playing upon the mind every second.

But there is a great difference in the operation of the Lord upon the human being between these two periods; a difference that is vital to our understanding of education.

During the time of life preceding maturity, the child acts according to the forces that play upon the mind from the outer environment. The child has no individual will or determination of free choice yet. The child doesn't realize this, but if we think about it, children are the product of something they have experienced or something they have been taught. After maturity, the environment operates in the same way upon the mind, but the Lord also operates from within through conscience, individual judgment, personal decision and responsibility. So, there is a great distinction between the Lord's education of a person during minority and during adulthood.

Education is preparation for regeneration

If we regard the period of minority as distinguished from the whole of life, then we come to that more focused definition that was given by Bishop N.D. Pendleton when he said, "Education is preparation for regeneration," whereas Bishop Benade had defined education as "preparation for heaven." Regeneration can only begin in adult age and is what prepares people for heaven. So, the purpose of all education leading up to adult age is to prepare for regeneration.

That is still a very broad definition of education and includes far more than parents or teachers can do consciously for children. It includes all the forces playing upon them—their environment in both worlds—but from this definition there arise certain interesting and inevitable conclusions. In the first place, it indicates that education must be essentially religious if its purpose is to prepare for regeneration. Surely to prepare for regeneration is something that cannot be accomplished apart from religion. If this is the case, it becomes clear that education is more essentially the work of the church than the work of the state.

The common idea of religion is that it is an emotional reaction to some dogmatic belief or faith. But if we examine more carefully what religion really is, we see that religion is the very center of human life. It is the fundamental love that dominates all our thinking and actions. A person's religion may rightly be called that which a person loves above everything else, no matter what it is. Whatever people love above everything else is what they worship and *that* is their faith and religion. The purpose of a religious education is that the thing a person loves above anything else, shall be the real Creator, Ruler and Preserver of the universe—Good itself and Truth itself.

When we say education is to prepare a person for regeneration, we don't mean it is to prepare them for some kind of monastic meditation. It is to prepare them for the kind of life in the world—in a business or profession—that will lead to regeneration. This is where secular training and religious education can come together—in preparation for use. Use includes all our external service to the neighbor by means of our business and employment and profession, and at the same time it means our spiritual relation to our fellow man.

So, it is possible to see secular education and religious education as mutually interdependent. Either one by itself will fail to achieve the purpose of education. If we just give a religious education without preparation to meet the needs and requirements of life, we are not preparing for regeneration because it is only through a life of usefulness in the world that people regenerate. On the other hand, if we prepare for the practical needs of external life without any idea of the spiritual values that are involved, we are not preparing for regeneration.

Now we must consider what contribution parents and teachers can make in the period of life that is preparation for regeneration. Think of the difference between children whom we know who have been subjected to careless, vicious, or unwholesome influences and children who have been carefully brought up. What is it that children must derive from parents and teachers that they cannot acquire in any other way? That is the real question: "What does the Lord expect of us when He puts children into our hands and gives us the responsibility of them?" The answer to this question will bring us closer to a practical definition of education.

Three things children need from adults

Children derive from parents and teachers, and from all their contacts with adults, three things that cannot be derived from any other source. The first thing is the spheres of their lives—that is, the spiritual associations that adults have around them that affect children. Children have not yet chosen or been able to choose their spiritual environment. They live in the sphere of the adults around them and are continually affected by that sphere. This influence of the spheres of adults is perhaps the most powerful agent of education there is. Within the influence of this sphere, delights are implanted and ideals are established. These fundamental attitudes of mind and life are formulated and inaugurated in the minds of children far more in the spheres of our life than by anything we consciously teach them. Children feel much more than they can articulate, and what they feel is simply the sphere of our life. That is the first thing that can only be given by adults.

The second thing is the guidance of rational judgment. Children have no rational judgment of their own. They have not the knowledge, the experience on which to base it. They must rely on the guidance of adults. The adults who have charge of them must make wise decisions for them and children not only need that, they crave it. They become utterly lost if they do not have an adult to whom they can go to relieve them of the necessity of making decisions that are beyond them. [One of the great mistakes of modern educational philosophy is that children should be asked to form rational judgments for themselves. Children need guidance from adults whom they trust. That's where their security lies](#) (de Charms, 1962). The decisions we make for our children may exercise profound influence over all their thinking and feeling later on. Our judgment as to what children may or may not do, where they may or may not go, what they may or may not see determines the environment that is going to form the child's mind. That is the second thing that only adults can do.

The third thing that only adults can do is to provide for children the knowledge and experience of the past. Placing before the minds of children a rich background of knowledge opens the gates of opportunity. It gives an introduction that may stir interest. There is something that the child has been born to love. What it is we don't know. It is different with every child. But so long as that spark of interest has been lit, then there is a difference. Then the child begins to learn something. Then you have an education that leads to individual investigation, study and experience. All our efforts to educate children can do nothing more than open an opportunity. Our challenge is to give that opportunity to every child, no matter what their form of mind or gifts or talents. We must try to arouse whatever interest is there, so they will begin to learn from their own initiative.

By these three things—the spheres of our life, the guidance of rational judgment, and the knowledge and experience of the past—adults cannot help exercising a profound influence upon children either for good or bad. Therefore, we are faced with the inevitable question: how shall we do it so it may be good and not bad?

Free development under the Lord's guidance

It is just as important to know the right thing to teach at the proper age of a child, as it is to know what kind of food to give babies so they can live and grow strong. It is just as important that the mind has the right kind of food as it is that the body does. By emphasizing one kind of environment and minimizing another we dispose the mind in one direction or another direction, and that is the sum total of what has been given into our hands to do.

We define education as the rational control and direction of a child's environment so that the child's mind may be disposed to the reception of Divine Love and Divine Wisdom from the Lord. And this definition applies especially to parents in the home, to the church as a community of homes all seeking to create a similar effective environment for childhood, and to professional educators as well (de Charms, 1962).

How any individual child will react to the environment we provide, we can't foresee. That is a matter that only the Lord knows. And here is one of the most important things for us to realize. The greatest errors in all human efforts in education are when we try to take over and do what belongs to the Lord, for then we try to force the life of another into some mold that we have imagined. Then we do tremendous injury to the child. Some fond mother makes up her mind that she wants her boy to grow up to be so and so, without any regard for the fact that he has an individual mind created by the Lord for a use in the other world.

Our whole objective is to cooperate with what the Lord is doing for children, to recognize that their highest welfare lies in a free development under the Lord's guidance, not under ours. How different an ideal of education that is from the kind that tries to envision what our children are going to be ahead of time.

It has been supposed that in the New Church we have a New Church education for the primary purpose of increasing the membership of our church. That has been supposed to be the Catholic reason for having Catholic schools also. It is *not* the goal or purpose of our education to increase the membership of our church. The goal or purpose of our education is to develop a mode of schooling that will cooperate with Divine Providence so that He may lead them, and it will not take away their freedom of spiritual life by determining their life for them ahead of time. True New Church education has the greatest possible regard for the spiritual free development of children in the next generation.

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1962, December 18). *The interplay of educational influences* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23123>

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1962, December 20). *Definition and aims of education* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23123>

2.3 INSTRUCTION AND SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

There is a great deal of effort to standardize the education and requirements in all schools, and to guarantee a certain level of educational efficiency, but along with that goes the danger of standardizing the child, stunting the child's development and preventing the kind of individual care and direction that is really the most effective.

Bringing harmony and a spirit of cooperation through choral work

In a school, many children from different families are brought into cooperation and harmonious choirs. Much is said in the teachings for the New Church about choirs. It is especially taught that children in the other life must be brought into choirs in order that they may be perfected (de Charms, 1963). Heaven is a harmony of many, thinking and willing together with the greatest variety but also the greatest unity—variety of form and unity of purpose. All who come into the other world are brought into such a harmony by means of choirs. They learn to think, speak, sing, and act together, and it is said that this must especially be done, so far as possible, in childhood when the mind is still impressionable and in a state of innocence. If we analyze the school as to its effect on the minds of children, we find a similar work is going forward of giving children the opportunity to work together.

The way we teach molds the spirit

We are living in a world in which spiritual objectives are ignored by educators and educational research. But the subject you are teaching, whatever it may be, is molding the spirit every day according to the way it is taught. The whole question of instruction and how it is to be organized and presented will depend upon our philosophy of life. What is it all for? What are we trying to do with it? What is the purpose of doing all this teaching? That purpose will certainly modify the way we teach. It will do so largely to the extent that we come to understand what *is* the contribution of this or that type of human knowledge to spiritual development.

Don't force early instruction

The curricula of our modern schools are developed out of the experience of what children are capable of grasping. The general tendency has been to give them as much as they can possibly grasp. The question is not asked what is it that children most need at this time—but what can they be made to understand? That's what needs to be changed.

We must come to understand why children are so created that certain things delight them at certain ages and therefore can learn them more rapidly and spontaneously. As soon as you try to force instruction, you have to labor to pound things into the minds of children and they're not ready for it. That kind of education is quickly lost. It's impressed only on the memory and it's forgotten. I believe the time will come when the content of our curriculum will be greatly modified over what it is now because it will be based on a study of what it is that children really

need and respond to spontaneously. New Church education is just in its very beginnings. And what a great opportunity there is for its development (de Charms, 1963).

Our central purpose in the study of education

Our central purpose in all the study of education will be to find out what is happening in the minds of the children who are given into our care, what is happening in their minds step by step as they grow, and what the effect of our teaching is upon that mind, what effect every subject on the curriculum has. Why is it important that we teach arithmetic, that we teach grammar, that we teach literature, history, geography, music, art—what is the real importance of it?

In our present-day world, with our own minds so largely built up on the basis of a purely materialistic philosophy, it is difficult to see what these subjects may have to do with spiritual welfare. What does arithmetic have to do with spiritual welfare? Or what difference does it make to spiritual welfare whether you teach typewriting or stenography or any other subject?

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1963, January 8). *Religious and secular education* [Audio file].

Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23124>

2.4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Just what is it that we in the New Church are attempting to do? We are attempting to direct a child's environment in such a way that his or her mind may be disposed to the reception of Divine Love and Wisdom.

The distinctive characteristic of religious education is that its material must be drawn from Divine Revelation. Knowledge concerning God, the life to come, and the laws of a human being's spiritual life cannot be derived from any observation of nature. No scientific experiments will reveal them. Only the Word of God can give us knowledge of spiritual things. The Word is like a world recast in a form that reflects and mirrors the Kingdom of Heaven. It is so formed that spiritual truth may shine through and reach our understanding.

Nature was the first Word of God

The whole world of nature was created by God for the sake of the human being's spiritual life—to contribute to the human being's understanding of God and spiritual things. To ancient people, nature was a theater representative of the Kingdom of Heaven. Nature itself was the first Word of God to human beings. But that book of nature that spoke immediately of spiritual and Divine things to ancient people has become a closed book. Human beings have turned away from spiritual things and focused on the things of earth, so that they are unable to penetrate the secrets of nature to the point of seeing their spiritual import. This is why a written Word had to be given; a written Word in which the things of nature and of human life were reordered in a form that might still reveal spiritual truth when nature itself had become opaque to human beings.

Bible stories

The literal teachings of the Bible describe historic places, times, people and events, and to children they are similar to the stories they learn in history and geography and all their other studies. But with this difference: Bible stories tell about the Lord, and they are regarded as holy. The fact that these stories tell about the Lord in ways that even children can understand opens the way to spiritual faith and understanding. The fact that they are recognized as holy opens the way for the affection and love of spiritual things, to be touched and moved by influx from heaven.

When we are talking to children about heaven, about the Lord, about life after death, about all qualities of human virtue—we call that religion. It is religion to the children, but their whole idea of it is at once brought down to something concrete, something of this world, something of time and place and person. They are unable to grasp what is truly spiritual yet. But what happens is this: when children learn the stories of the Word there is an influx from heaven to their minds which stirs a delight. The angels who are with them do understand the spiritual implications of all these things. They are delighted with them and they impart a delight to the children. The children don't know where this delight comes from. They think it is inherent in the

stories of the Word. They feel delight, and that delight is the seed from which conscience grows.

Religious teaching must be concrete

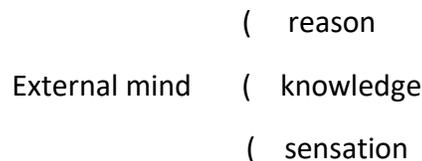
Because children are only able to visualize things concretely, religious teaching must be concrete. It is a great mistake to attempt to impart to them abstract spiritual ideas. You always fail because they are not able to visualize them. That is why the Word has been given in such imagery, in stories that children can understand and grasp, but stories that contain a spiritual meaning. It is a mistake to teach children the doctrines for the New Church and think we are giving them a New Church education by teaching them that water corresponds to truth and a mountain corresponds to love.

Religious education consists in meeting children on the plane at which they are living; meet them there and provide the specific things which will prepare them for the reception of what is spiritual and heavenly. That is the purpose of religious education.

[Editor's note: the final two paragraphs were originally part of the next lecture.]

2.5 REMNANTS: ESSENTIAL INFLUENCES IN CHILDHOOD

In every mental experience there are two things: an impulse that comes from without through the senses and an affection that comes from within from the spiritual world. These two come together to produce consciousness. Here is a diagram of the external mind that is active with children showing everything that enters from without:



At first children have sensations of objects around them, then knowledge about the things around them—what they are and what they are for. Finally they develop reason as they learn to form abstract concepts of all the things in the environment—what they feel, what they hear, what we tell them, what they read.

Angelic presence changes as children grow up

Very little children are in innocence, which means they are willing to be led. They are not rebellious because their will to be self-guided is not yet active. There are celestial angels with these children and whatever they see and hear and sense delights them, and within that delight there is the delight of heaven and that delight remains. It is a delight in trusting those that have care over them.

But as they grow, their sense of self increases, and when they are no longer children and they have knowledge instead of mere sensations, then the celestial angels can no longer guide them. They want to assert themselves. They don't want to be guided by someone else, and so they insist upon an appearance of guiding themselves. However, they can still be led and guided, and they begin to understand why they should do certain things. Spiritual remnants are stored during this time. Celestial remnants form the highest and spiritual remnants form the middle.

When they pass beyond this stage and come to the age of reasoning, then the spiritual angels can no longer lead them. They come under the influence of natural angels. The willingness to be led is more deeply concealed; they want to assert their independence.

All these remnants—celestial, spiritual, and natural—are implanted by the Lord from within to balance the inborn natural tendencies of self-love and love of the world. Every child is born into a tendency of self-love, and unless remnants are stored up to balance that tendency, reformation and regeneration will not be possible in adult age. The natural tendency of all children is to do what they please whenever they want.

Building a conscience

The obvious process of education is a matter of teaching children to control their instinctive impulses and to restrain their selfish loves for the sake of conformity to social norms. Imagine children who grow up and are not taught to obey and cooperate with others. They would be incorrigible. There would be no possibility of their taking part in society.

But restraining natural impulses for selfish reasons—fear of what would happen if we don't, fear of the disapproval of others or the loss of some help that others might give—will never lead to building up a truly religious life. There must be something more that doesn't come from without or from others. It must come from within by the building up of conscience. In a truly religious life, we see what is right and love to do what is right. We have delight in it.

Those delights are possible because of remnants. Remnants flow in from the other world as children grow. They can't be implanted by any other way. We can't put them in; we cannot instill delight in what is right, which is the essence of conscience.

The role of religious stories in moral education

But religious education has a part to play. The teaching of stories of the Word that give children a picture of the Lord and of how He led the children of Israel, a picture of His Providence and how they must look to Him for all things, a picture of His law and of how all prosperity and happiness depend on obedience to His law—these are things into which angels inflow and children delight in. That gives the very beginnings—the seeds—from which a true conscience can be developed. It can't be done in any other way.

Quotations from *Secrets of Heaven on Remnants*

(NCE) AC 1050¹ Each of us is called a living soul from a living quality in us. Not one of us can live—still less live as a human being—if we do not have something living inside us. In other words, we need to have a measure of innocence, charity, and mercy, or at least something that resembles or approximates it. This measure of innocence, charity, and mercy is something we receive from the Lord in childhood and adolescence, as can be seen from the state of children and the state of adolescents. What we receive at those ages is preserved in us. What is preserved in us is what the Word calls a remnant, or survivors, and it is the Lord's alone in us. These preserved traces are what makes it possible for us to be human when we arrive at adulthood.

[2] The fact that the states of innocence, charity, and mercy that we experienced in early childhood and in the years when we were growing up make it possible for us to be human is plainly evident from this: We are not born into any life skills, the way brute animals are, but must learn each and every one of them, and what we learn is then turned into habit and second

nature by our practicing it. Unless we learn how, we cannot even walk, or talk, or do anything else. When we practice these activities, they become almost instinctive to us. The case is the same with a state of innocence, charity, and mercy—virtues that we likewise absorb from early childhood on; if those states were not present inside us, we would be much lower than animals. But they are not acquired by education. We receive them as gifts from the Lord, who preserves them in us. These states, along with religious truth, are what are called a remnant, and are the Lord's alone. To the extent that we suffocate them during adulthood, we become dead. When we are being reborn, these states are the starting points of the process, and we are led into them, because the Lord works through the remnant.

2.6 KNOWLEDGE AS FOUNDATION FOR SPIRITUAL TRUTH

[Editor's note: the text in green is from the (unpublished) lecture notes of George de Charms.]

The proposed goal of education as conceived in modern thought is:

1. To prepare for complete living
2. To fit a person for their place in human society
3. To train mind and body to a skill in a specific occupation.

From the standpoint of the New Church, education is designed to do all this and more. We may accept these three aims if a higher one is added to qualify them, and they are interpreted in accord with that higher aim. Complete living must include spiritual life and spiritual use as its goal.

Training for complete living includes training to love truth for its own sake. What do we mean by that? It means training to seek to understand, not superficially, but with a desire to get at the real basic truth that lies deeply within; to penetrate to causes and thus unveil hidden secrets of nature; to trace them to their origins and to their purpose and use. We are intended to do that. That is the real end and purpose of the highest cultural training, as we would regard it in the New Church.

The training for complete living includes a love of Truth, that is a love of penetrating to causes, that the wonders of Nature and of human society may be understood as to their origins and relations. This involves an attitude of mind seeking true Wisdom, not merely a memory cataloging of observed facts and phenomena. Thus, the mind is led back, irresistibly to the realm of causes, to the forces of the spiritual world that can be known and understood only by means of Revelation. All knowledge is intended in the last analysis as a foundation for spiritual Truth and the understanding of spiritual life. It is intended to form a clothing and embodiment for heavenly perceptions.

The spiritual truth, the heavenly perception lie indeed in the realm of religion and theology. But the acquirement of natural knowledges and the arrangement of them to receive and reflect heavenly light belongs to secular education. The recognition of this higher purpose within external learning will profoundly affect the mode of teaching, the mental attitude of the learner, the angle of approach, and the emphasis and arrangement of the materials. This aim should qualify the whole system of education.

2.7 A TASK FOR NEW CHURCH EDUCATORS

Why do we place such a high value on artistic appreciation in New Church education? Beauty in all its forms—color, movement, grace of action, speech, thought—are representations of what is good in itself and true in itself.

Our purpose must be that spiritual values should live in and through artistic values. A sincerity that has its roots in religion has to be within the teacher who is trying to develop artistic appreciation. The teacher must understand how artistic values serve the spiritual character of human beings and society. Recognizing the centrality of religion in artistic expression affects the *way* we teach, not *what* we teach. We will teach the same technical skills, of course, but we must teach them so that they will make an impression on the mind of the student as to why they should be learned and how they should be used.

In my view the task of New Church educators is to put a spirit of sincerity into their teaching, a sincere belief that what they are teaching has a spiritual value. They must have a determination to find out what that value is and transmit some knowledge of it to their students. I think that so far as this is done, it will make a tremendous difference in the results of education.

The ambition to bring together spiritual and natural values is like finding out how to make glass out of sand, glass which by the arrangement of all its particles will allow the light to pass through it, the light of heaven. All the facts and all the experiences and all the knowledges that we can gather from the material world are like grains of sand. They are intended to minister to our spiritual intelligence, to our ability to understand spiritual things. They are intended to let the light of heaven through, and that can be done if they are arranged in the order of heaven. If they are not, they become opaque and we only see the grains of sand and nothing through them. I think that no New Church teacher should be satisfied with any course of instruction unless, to some extent, that is being done. The actual facts and knowledges are so arranged that they allow the light of heaven to shine through, so that right in those facts, not in theological abstraction, but in those facts, in the very experience of learning them, we come to see something of spiritual truth, something of the purpose behind it all.

That is a very good theory you will say. It sounds all right but how are we going to do that? I am quite prepared to admit that it is not so easy. It is going to be a slow and gradual process. But

then everything of value is achieved by a slow process of learning, fired by a determination and inner vision of what can be accomplished.

Let's not make the mistake of supposing that because we have a Divine Revelation in the books Swedenborg penned that we already have New Church education. We have not. We have just learned something about it. We have an idea of what it might be, a vision that will inspire us. It is only by undivided application and effort that New Church education will ever come into being.

2.8 VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Vocational training in its beginning was merely a formalization of what had been done before through apprenticeship, by getting training under those who were actually doing the work. We learn a great deal, and gain a great deal in mental development by application to physical skill. The more modern development developments are in the direction of combining intellectual training with mechanical training. Yet here again the final attitude toward life, the recognition of spiritual values, makes a great difference in the type of education for those who are preparing themselves for a specific occupation. If we look no further than external success, that does not present a very exalted type of education. Nor does it produce results that will make for the truest welfare of society. Unless we recognize that the proficiency in an occupation is not a means merely to a personal return, but a means toward performance of a higher use, unless we recognize that, then our concept of vocational training will fall short of what is needed.

What is needed is a respect for work as a use to others and use as a spiritual thing. Anyone who really loves their work finds delight in the quality of whatever they produce and in giving a full return for whatever recognition they receive from society. Then real character is developed.

All people cannot be educated in the same way and there is a need for different kinds of schools adapted to the different kinds of minds.

2.9 LEARNING AND THE AFFECTIONS

Apocalypse Revealed 618 says that “to learn is to perceive interiorly in oneself that a thing is so, which is to understand and thus to receive a knowledge. He who learns in any other way learns and doesn’t learn, because he doesn’t retain.” Let me repeat that because it is very important: “To learn is to perceive interiorly in one’s self that a thing is so” (not only to hear it in one ear and let it slip out the other), “perceive in one’s self that a thing is so, which is to understand and thus to receive a knowledge. He who learns in any other way learns and doesn’t learn, because he doesn’t retain.”

The most important question for the educator then is, what is retained? How can we be sure that things that are really important shall be retained? How can we know what should be retained? This has a great influence on our answer to the question what we should teach at any given age or period and how we should teach it. And this all depends upon our answer to the question, “When can certain things best be retained, what should be retained at a given age and how can they be taught so that they will be retained?” Children cannot learn in this sense those things for which the mind has not matured to the point where it is able to perceive them within itself. This is really a matter of growth, not a matter of education. A matter of growth and maturation. We may tell things to children many, many times, and they may be impressed on their memory, but they won’t be able to truly learn them because the children will not see them in themselves. They will not really understand them. They will just remember them as a formula.

Trying to force premature understanding is a mistake

One of the greatest difficulties in education lies in the fact that we very frequently try to teach things for which the mind is not yet prepared. We try to force an understanding prematurely, and so we waste a tremendous amount of effort trying to do something that can’t be done. Therefore, the most important thing—if we want to get at the immediate effects of our teaching—is to study the capacity of students so that we may be led to teach the things they are capable, in some measure, of understanding.

You can force plants by putting them in a hothouse and having them bloom before their time. And you can do the same thing with human beings. That bloom is going to be abnormal. It’s not going to be the real thing. Education is fundamentally a matter of mental growth (de Charms, 1963).

Now this doesn’t mean that we must confine our teaching to those things that a child can *fully* understand. Children won’t understand *all* that is involved in what we teach. As a matter of fact, we ourselves understand only a very little of what we are teaching, if you reflect on it. But there must be an element in what we are teaching that the child *can* understand and that is where we focus the child’s attention. Children get hungrier for more when they perceive something of the mysteries still buried in the little they have learned. But there must be at first

a meaning they are prepared to grasp which gives them a delight, a revelation, an opening of something in their minds that gives them joy.

What determines a child's capacity to learn?

Now let us ask, "What determines a child's capacity to learn?" Most fundamentally it is determined by the form of the mind with which he or she is endowed from birth. It is also determined primarily, not by experience, but by growth and maturation and the affections (the loves) that are active at the time. That is what determines capacity. Experience is the means of awakening those affections, and out of experience we find the means to arouse affections in the classroom by illustrations of things that the child has experienced and that have given delight. But what children will learn, in the sense of perceiving interiorly, will depend upon the affection that is aroused, the delight, the interest.

The deepest learning occurs during infancy

Educators understand this law in a general way, and they make a great deal of arousing the interest of children, motivating their learning, as they say. But behind all of this lies something much deeper, having a great effect on them, and that is the spiritual associations of the children. Infants, because they are in innocence are surrounded by celestial angels. They are in the sphere of celestial affections and, because those affections are aroused in them by the celestial angels who are present with them, it is possible for them to learn the very deepest truths; to *learn*, mind you, in the sense of perceiving within themselves the very deepest truths, and to acquire a *perception* of things that later they can't *learn* because they are no longer in those celestial associations. The only time when those deepest truths can be learned is at the time that the Lord has provided for that purpose, during the state that is called infancy. That is what infancy is for in the sight of the Lord above everything else—to learn certain things that are going to be permanently important to their later life, especially to their spiritual life after death. When those children grow older their innocence wanes, their sense of selfhood begins to appear; their attendant celestial angels retire and are replaced by spiritual angels. Then those deepest things can no longer be learned, but other things important to their life can be learned.

Learning can't happen without affection

The capacities of children to learn at any given age are not so much dependent on their experiences as upon the affections that are developed by growth, and these affections are the result of influx from the spiritual world. They are produced by the spiritual associations of the angels. These associations change as children grow, and this change in spiritual associations is what produces the difference between infancy, childhood, and youth. In infancy celestial angels are present. In childhood spiritual angels are present, and in youth natural angels are present, and each produce different affections which are the ground for intellectual development and interest on the part of children. Only that which is received with affection remains.

Only things received with affection are learned and interiorly understood, and these are the proper food of mental growth. Mental food, like physical food, must be given according to the ability to digest, and the ability to digest advances with growth, with age. The digestive agent in spiritual things and mental growth is the affection. Affection takes up whatever is presented and absorbs it into the system, assimilates it, so that it becomes part of one. As the affections change with growth, the interests also change, and so we have the inclination and power to assimilate knowledge. Thus there are certain interests and affections that are normal for children at each different age, and to know these is of primary importance if we are to teach well. For only what is taken up by these affections will be learned. Everything else will be “learned and yet not learned because it is not retained.”

If we study the ages of infancy to childhood to youth, 1 to 7, 7 to 14, 14 to 21, respectively, we discover dominant affections that characterize each age with all children. And if we study more minutely we will discover progressive stages of those affections in their rise, their noon-day and their decline. There is where we can find the key to education, to the kind of food that is necessary to each period and how it may be palatably and attractively prepared and presented. We cannot intelligently determine what should be the subject matter of education at any age without a knowledge of these successive stages of mental growth.

It has been much emphasized in modern education that all instruction must have some immediate application; must be seen by the child to have some use; and must be applied immediately so that the child can do something with it. And this is emphasized against the older method of cramming the minds of children with knowledges that they had no idea of what they were all about or why they should learn them. They just had to learn them as a task that seemed to the child unreasonable, and to which he could only be compelled by fear of punishment or by reward. There was no attempt to appeal to delight of any kind in the learning itself. A revolt against that kind of education helped develop the modern view.

It is now widely accepted that children must find delight in learning if it is to be valuable to them and so must see some use, some purpose. That is all true. The only criticism I have is its narrowly utilitarian interpretation that doesn't take into account the whole range of the child's development, spiritual affections as well as purely natural delights. The tendency is to confine efforts largely to practical applications which are obvious to the child and to leave out those deeper delights that are the result of spiritual associations. We shouldn't ignore the storing up of remnants [see chapter 2.5], which have nothing to do with purely utilitarian objectives and reach deeper to the inner states of the child.

A knowledge of those internal states of children is necessary if we are to truly meet their needs at any age, for in these internal states of children lie the most important purpose in their growth in the sight of the Lord. All their external interests are merely means to build up their internal life.

Children are not inherently good or inherently evil

Some people have the idea that children are naturally inherently good. They think if we just give them an opportunity to develop in their own way children will develop good qualities and will overcome evil ones. That position is a revolt against the old idea of the utter depravity of human nature, but it doesn't express the truth because children are no more inherently good than they are inherently evil, and they will not spontaneously develop the good. The only way in which children can be led to develop what is good and reject what is evil is by the building up of those internal states which come from the influence of angels.

To found educational practice on the view that a child is inherently good can introduce practices that do subtle injury. A reliance on self and pride in one's own achievement can slip into contempt for others and for older people. An attitude can develop of resistance to any guidance from older people. This closes the mind against the reception of the influx from the angels which is the very means by which the Lord is attempting to develop what is good with the child.

Appealing to the affections of each developmental stage

That which is of most use to a child—real use—at any stage of mental growth is that which most fully enriches the reception of heavenly influences of those angels that are present at that stage. This is the real use—not learning to take delight in something that truly belongs to adults.

The ideal of education should be, first, to appeal to the good affections that are normal to a child at each age due to influx from the angels who are present; and, second, to have children, as it were, discover these affections for themselves, feel them in themselves as if they were their own, and thus struggle to retain them and return to them whenever they come into selfish delights. This means that we recognize education as a process of immediate living, not something that is just getting children ready to live after they grow up. They have to live now, and as they live, so will they grow. It must be a kind of living now that is appropriate to children and not a kind of living that we impose on them that belongs to adult years. That is the important thing.

Human beings are so formed that they must grow from infancy to childhood to youth in order to attain adulthood. Why? Because each step in this development makes a necessary contribution, something of vital importance and eternal value that the Lord foresees and is providing for.

Infancy, childhood, and youth are marked by certain characteristics that are universal to the human race. There may be infinite variety among different nationalities and races and individuals; one may advance more rapidly along the road than another. One may linger here and hasten there. There may be millions of differences of disposition and temperament, circumstances and environment. But in spite of all these differences, there is a marvelous

uniformity that marks each step of growth the world over. Just observe children in different parts of the world, children of different races, children of utterly different backgrounds, of education and environment, and see how similar they are. They play the same way, do the same kind of things. It is astonishing!

Each step of mental development is providing something of lasting value. The Lord foresees the future and in every way He lays the foundation for those future things during all the years of immaturity. In His sight nothing is trivial or inconsequential. Every least thing that is characteristic of infants, of childhood and youth, is important for us to know, necessary for us to understand if we are to cooperate with the Lord.

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1963, May 2). *Philosophy of natural learning* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23135>

Quotes from *Arcana Caelestia* on angelic presence with children and a child's capacity to learn

AC 3982³

The Word may be read with pleasure even by children and by the simple—the end in view being that when these persons take delight in the historical sense the angels present with them may enter into the holiness of the internal sense; for the internal sense is suited to the intelligence of angels, while the external sense is suited to that of [people in the world]. In this way people are in fellowship with angels, though they are not directly conscious of it.

AC 1895

It is the degree and the quality of a person's affection that determine the degree and the quality of the rationality that is developed in him. In themselves facts and cognitions are nothing other than things that are dead or instrumental causes, which are made alive by the life that belongs to affection. That is how everyone's [rational] is conceived.

2.10 THE WORK OF A TEACHER

In every stage of our educational work we have to see the contribution of every subject on the curriculum. Why do we teach this and not that? Unless everything we teach is helping to accomplish the fundamental aim and purpose of that age, what is the use of it?

In modern education, to a very large extent, the purpose is to pass examinations to get to the next grade, to meet the requirements of the high school, and from the high school to meet the requirements of the college, and every subject is determined accordingly. This isn't sufficient.

Suppose there is something wrong with what the high school requires, and what the college requires, in relation to the things that are really essential for the child to have at the time. Suppose in order to meet the requirements of the high school or college we have to do something for little children that is not the best for them at their age, which is very often the case. Many educators have revolted against this tyranny of the high school over a lower school, imposing goals that are not in accord with the real best interests of children.

Studying curriculum

If we are not going to follow that path, then we must have some other goal which is really based on something that we clearly see and understand. To do this we have to study each subject on the curriculum and determine why it is there, why it should be taught at a certain age, what its relation is to the other things we are teaching, what is the specific contribution that this subject can make that the other subjects cannot. That is not a simple matter, I assure you. It is not easy to reach such conclusions and have them clearly defined in our own mind. Yet only in the degree that we do this, will we be able to develop a rational system of education and not just follow custom or what other people have done.

We have to arrange a curriculum year by year, month to month, week to week, day to day. We have to meet the states of children as they arise. We should study the human mind to know its characteristics at every stage of mental growth, and to know the relation of one stage to the next, especially those universal things in which all children are alike. There are affections, interests, delights which naturally belong to each age which are inherent in the age itself. If we understand these and their use in later life, then we can come as near as is humanly possible to an understanding of what is the essential to be taught at each stage and thus how we can best cooperate with what the Lord is doing.

It is along these lines that we have been struggling in our New Church schools. The differences that we find in our curriculum, particularly in the curriculum of the Elementary School as it has been worked out, represent a first attempt to go in that direction, and to understand what we are doing from the point of view of following the indications in the teachings for the New Church.

Seeking to understand individual children

Now supposing we have done all that, then we come face to face with a class of children, and at once we have to interpret all that with reference to the particular children we have before us. We shift our attention to attempt to understand particular children and to see how this philosophy of education is to be applied to these children—not to any others—but these particular ones. Unless we can reach the heart of the children in front of us, unless we can touch their loves and affections, all our philosophizing will be wide of the mark. It won't accomplish its purpose. We might have a class that is very carefully prepared for all children, and it would not reach the particular ones we have at all.

When I speak about studying the qualities that are common to all children, it is not in the least with the intention of minimizing the importance of understanding the varieties. We can't in any other way understand the varieties. When we come to study our own children that are right in front of us, and seek to understand their change in states, the affections that actually stir them, the interests that can be appealed to—that is when we come to discover a child's purpose.

Now you may think this is impossible, and often it is or seems to be impossible. The truth is that it is so complex we can't assure ourselves that we will do it. We can try to do it, and with help and guidance from the teachings for the New Church we can approximate it from time to time, but the states of children are too complex for us to analyze. We cannot see deeply enough into their little minds to exactly see the affections that are stirring them. We will often be mistaken in what we attempt to appeal to in them, and the result is that the real guidance of their education is kept by the Lord in His own hands. While we are trying to do our best, the Lord frequently does something else with the child, and in the child, than what we had intended. What He does is infinitely better for the child than what we can do, but that is no reason for us to get discouraged. Let's be satisfied that it has to be so, and that the real guidance of the child's life shall be in the Lord's hands and not in ours. But let's try by all means to exert our influence in the right direction, to cooperate with the Lord. That is the ideal of education as I see it.

PART THREE: THE ULTIMATE GOALS OF EDUCATION

[Editor's note: The first three paragraphs were originally at the end of Part Two, Chapter 10.]

While it is by far the most important thing to provide for the present and immediate needs of children, we will be unable to do this unless we clearly see the distant goals toward which the Lord is leading. Unless we have a clear idea of the future, we cannot guide the present. We may be sure that if the immediate effects of our education are in accord with the Divine Order and Divine Providence the future will take care of itself. Of that we can be sure. But if we do not have any idea of what the future goal is, we can have no assurance that our immediate effects are in accord with it. To understand what is best for the child in his present state, whatever that may be, and thus be in a position to cooperate with the Lord's education of the child, we must foresee the future to some extent and consciously prepare for it. We must have ultimate aims in our education and have them continually in mind, even while we are seeking to promote the child's immediate welfare. Something has been revealed as to the successive states of childhood, and whatever has been revealed to us about them must be central in our thought and effort to educate. Something has also been revealed concerning adult life toward which all education points, and the understanding of this is of extreme importance to the educator—the understanding of what adult life is and how it is distinguished from infancy, childhood and youth.

What are those special characteristics that can't be attained in infancy, childhood or youth, but that belong only to adult age, and yet are the fruit that is to be garnered from all the seeds which are planted in infancy, childhood and youth? What is the result that we want to accomplish when children have completed their education and have started on their own lives? Educators have faced this question through all the ages: "What kind of man or woman do we want to make by our education?"

There are certain things that have been revealed about adult life, certain things pointed out in the teachings for the New Church as being essential to a person's regeneration. If it is true the supreme purpose of growth and development is a preparation for regeneration, then we ought to try to understand these revealed qualities and characteristics, and something of how education can prepare for them.

3.1 FREE CHOICE

[Editor's note: blue font indicates quotes from the college lectures on educational philosophy given by de Charms in 1963.]

One of the most important things in educational philosophy is to understand the difference between the free choice that exists in childhood and the free choice that belongs to adults. Confusion about this is one of the great difficulties with modern educational philosophy. It is almost accepted that children are capable of making the same kinds of choices as adults.

We are told in the teachings for the New Church that the free choice of children imitates the free choice of adult age and approximates it more closely as children grow older, but the great distinction between the two should not be lost sight of. They cannot be confused without going wrong in our judgments about children.

The difference between choice in childhood and choice in adult life

The essential difference between free choice in childhood and free choice in adult life is that children have no fixed point from which to make a judgment for themselves. They make their choice according to the way they have been taught, according to the opinions that have been given them by adults and according to the sphere of the adults that surrounds them. Thus, the free will of childhood is a result of environmental forces, modified by nothing except the natural inherited tastes and dispositions of the child that are, as it were, instinctive. Free will with children is just the result of these environmental forces, modified by heredity, but not modified by rational judgment.

It may be said that children are constantly in a saturated solution of emotions, out of which saturated solution one or another impulse may be precipitated, and whichever one happens to be precipitated carries that child along with it as on a current because there is no internal opposition except what comes from heredity, which with the child is nothing but another emotion. Children are stirred in any direction by the winds of emotion and when they are carried along on a current of emotion in which they are saturated at the time, it appears to them that they are going the way they want to go, and that therefore they are free. They are really just yielding to the delight at the time that is imposed upon them from without.

The only thing that offers resistance to their environmental forces, as I have said, is their inherited nature and disposition—whatever its quality may be, and it can be very, very various—nonetheless all rotating around self as the center. Self is the center of our inherited universe.

Children have no internal resistance of their own

The problem of education is far more than a problem of simply telling children what is right and what is wrong. We may tell them and they may clearly understand, but when they get out of the sphere of one who believes in what is right and into a sphere that is contrary to it, they

have no internal resistance of their own. They have no lever, no fulcrum, with which to hold one against another. We see that all the time. That is the reason why we have to be careful of our children's associations. If they are allowed to come under the influence of people who are leading them the wrong way, then we are putting them in danger because they have no internal power of resistance against that sphere as yet. Educators all know this, but sometimes their educational philosophy doesn't allow for it. They attempt to put children into a position where they have to make a choice of their own as if they did have the power and the ability to resist the spheres around them.

When children make a right choice in the sphere of adults, they can appear to do it from themselves. They can feel that they are doing it from themselves, and this is the choice that emulates free choice. This is the essence of education—to have children surrounded by such a sphere. Not an obvious one that causes them to feel pushed, but a sphere of delight imbued with a sense of freedom. Then the influx from heaven is felt consciously with delight by the children, and that delight grows in power with them as they make choices, feeling them to be their own.

The importance of children choosing as if for themselves

By leading children in the sphere of adults to choose as if for themselves, we do all that lies in our power to secure the desired end, which is for children to choose in the right direction.

True Christianity 74 says “the Lord in His leading touches but does not do violence to a person's free will.” If we reflect, we will see this is just the kind of leading we are expected to emulate in our training of children. The ideal for the educator is to touch the free will of children—touch it so as to give an impulse in the right direction, but never to do violence.

We must lead by love, not fear. It is by touching the free will of children with a gentle pressure in the direction of what is highest and best, without destroying the appearance of free choice, that the will is trained in the right direction, and there is no other way. When we check by punishment, we break a temporary state which needs to be broken, but in so doing we are not training the will.

Four tools: the adults' sphere, direct teaching, habits of obedience, and punishment

This touching of the will in the right direction without breaking it can be done and must be done by the conjunction of four things in the right proportion: the sphere of adults in the right direction, direct instruction, the habit of obedience, and punishment. Each one has its part to play.

The surrounding sphere introduces children into a stream or current of delights which carries them along, and if they are in that stream of delights for some time and enjoy it, they may seek to return to that stream later. When the children seek to return to it, they become conscious of it and, as it were, choose it for themselves. That is the most powerful influence of all in touching the will.

The second thing is direct teaching. If we have children surrounded by a proper sphere of delights, and in that sphere we have put into their minds an image or picture which represents an influence from heaven, then we have given them something they can remember when they need it. Then they can seek to return to those delights because they have something in themselves that can recall that influence. It doesn't matter how much we teach children what is right and what is wrong unless those knowledges are associated with the right affections. So, these two things, the sphere of adults and direct teaching, must go together.

They are not, however, enough by themselves. There must also be a habit of obedience. A habit of obedience puts the mind and the body in an order that is representative of heavenly influence. One last thing to consider is punishment. What does it do when administered properly? It breaks a state that a child cannot break on his or her own and opens the way to a return of an orderly influence from heaven. These four things in their right proportion provide for a training of the will in the right direction.

The beginnings of choice in infancy

When first born, infants have unconscious sensations with no control over them. No choice whatever. It's like you are when you are sleeping and dreaming. Things go through your mind but you have no control over them. That's how it is with children when they are first born. They have a dream life, but no control over it. Choice begins when attention can be focused.

Infants have nothing except sensations. Those sensations are everything to them. Parents can protect infants from dangerous sensations by teaching and training, and infants can learn from their own experience. To children what is true and good are the sensations they are allowed to have, and those sensations are bad that parents forbid. They only know what mama says yes to and what mama says no to, and they also become aware of the consequences of disregarding the no. And so they begin to have a choice between disregarding the no and insisting on doing what they want in spite of what mama says. That's the choice of children to begin with; it's the only choice they have. It's a choice between different kinds of sensations. And those sensations are the very lowest plane of the mind. They have no thoughts, they have no knowledge of things, they have no abstract ideas. They only have sensations. So, whatever choices they make are on the plane of sensations. So far as they can be taught what is true and what is good they can begin to have a choice on a higher plane and that plane rises as a child grows.

[When children resist what their parents tell them, they are expressing their self-will.] That self-will is ours by heredity. Our heredity is anchored in self-will. We are born wanting to do what we please and with a strong tendency to insist upon our own will.

Requiring obedience from a child has to be done in such a way as to encourage the child's delights of obedience. Not stressing punishment to the point where the child will always be struggling against something that takes away freedom. The kind of training that is merely negative and that insists on obedience with sternness and not affection will lead in the opposite

direction and will encourage a child's resistance because of the child's deepest instinct that is implanted in every human being—the desire to be free.

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1963, March 28). *Free Will* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23131>

Quotes from *Arcana Caelestia* about Free Choice

AC 9586

Doing what is bad, when one loves and delights to do it, seems like freedom; but it is slavery, because hell is the source of it. Doing what is good, when one loves and delights to do it also seems like freedom; and it is freedom, because the Lord is the source of it. It is slavery therefore when a person is led by hell, and freedom when a person is led by the Lord.

AC 1937

Within all compulsion towards what is good a certain freedom exists, which is not recognized as freedom while a person is exercising self-compulsion, but is nevertheless inwardly present.

3.2 TRUE RATIONALITY

[Editor's note: blue font indicates quotes from the college lectures on educational philosophy given by de Charms in 1963.]

Liberty, or free will, and rationality are the two great faculties of human life. Free choice, by which we mean the ability to choose what is really good and true—not just being able to choose whatever we want—that's the ultimate goal of the training of the will. And that does not mean instilling certain habits or teaching them to react to situations in certain approved ways. Our idea of developing a free will to choose what is right is quite different from that. It involves opening the mind to the influence of heavenly affections from which there will be free and individual action in the right direction even in a new situation. So, rationality is the ultimate goal of the training of the understanding, as free will is the ultimate goal of the training of the will (de Charms, 1963).

The two faculties of liberty, or free choice, and rationality are so intimately related that we cannot properly understand the one without understanding the other. We cannot have a clear idea of free choice until we have some concept of what is meant by rationality. These are the two faculties that are characteristic of human beings that make them to be human—liberty and rationality. The two great aims of education are that human beings may have liberty and rationality. Neither is possible until adult age, and so they are the ultimate aims toward which education is pointing. What is meant by these terms is differently understood in the New Church from philosophic concepts that you will find elsewhere, and it is most important that we have a clear idea of that difference.

Educational leaders of the present day regard free choice as the result of habit formation. According to the definition given in the teachings for the New Church, no action from habit is from free will. In order to be from free will, it must be from rational judgment. Rationality is also differently understood in the educational world. The ordinary idea of rationality is the ability to reason logically and accurately from a given premise. The concept of rationality given in the teachings for the New Church is the ability to recognize truth and good and see them in spiritual light. Unless we see this difference in definition and understand it, we will have no clear concept of the real difference in our educational objectives.

Children appear to have rationality

Rationality, like liberty, cannot be given in childhood or youth, and yet the appearance is the other way. I have had many raise the question with me as to whether it is really true that rationality cannot be given until adult age. The appearance is very strongly the other way, especially to children and young people. The fact is that *the ability to reason* begins in early childhood and increases with knowledge and experience. As the memory is stored with knowledges, the material of reasoning, the mind naturally and instinctively puts them together in ordered relation. That is what we call reasoning—putting things together in ordered relation. That happens spontaneously—instinctively—because the ability to put things together in

ordered relation is inherent in love itself. Love just naturally does it. Love carries with it the ability to order knowledges in such a way as to achieve the end that is loved. [That's why we have the saying, "where there is a will there is a way"](#) (de Charms, 1963). But what we call reason and logic is a far cry from true rationality.

As a matter of fact, children pass through a stage where they argue everything ad nauseum, and any adult who sees a little further than the child realizes that their arguments—while they may be logical from their premises—are not rational, which requires something more than the ability to reason logically from a premise. [Children can do a lot of arguing without being rational](#) (de Charms, 1963). Something more is indeed needed!

We are told about this appearance of rationality in the teachings for the New Church—this ability to reason in childhood—and it is called the “first rational.” It is a rational that is not based on any ability to discern and recognize what is true but is merely an ability to reason in favor of the things we want, the things we love, whether they are true or false. When children want something, they can have a thousand reasons why they should have it and no reasons whatever why they should not. Of course children also, by careful observation, learn the reasonings of their teachers and parents, and they can express logical conclusions sometimes very well, as if they were their own. They can recite what they have learned, what their parents have told them. And they are quick to apply what they have learned to *other* children. They can tell *other* children where they are wrong.

Children can think only from the loves that are active with them, and in most cases those loves don't stray very far from home, so that in any given state, children use their ability to reason primarily to confirm and excuse what at heart they want, and they mistake that for rationality.

Genuine rationality

Genuine rationality is reasoning from spiritual light, from the actual vision of truth. We don't arrive at that truth as a result of reasoning. We see the truth and reason from it. We see the truth in the light of a love. And the one love that gives us a sure vision of truth is a love of use. The love of use is the basis of all genuinely rational thinking. I don't mean by this the love of something we want to do or want to accomplish. I mean a love of genuinely desiring to be of service to others, forgetting ourselves. The basis of all truly rational thinking is the light that comes from this love.

The human being is created with the capacity for receiving spiritual love, the love of God and love toward the neighbor. When we are in a state of love to the Lord or love to the neighbor, then our mind is enlightened by the same love as that which created the whole universe. Divine love has created all things, and the very order that love induced upon all creation is what we begin to see when we become rational. That is what rationality is: seeing things in true relation. All things were created by the Diving Being for the sake of use, use to the eternal welfare of the human race. Therefore, the love of use, which is the same as love to the Lord, is that which puts things together in truly rational order so that we see their real relation. Nothing else will do it.

In the Golden Age, when the human race was in an unperverted state, children had a natural tendency to see things in their true relation; so as they grew, their minds were formed to be receptive of rationality. After the fall, this wasn't so. Little children are born into ignorance, and from ignorance into innocence, and as long as they are in innocence they receive sensations in order. Yet as they grow and their self-will comes up in opposition to innocence, the tendency in the mind is to put things together to get what they want, not from a love of use.

The purpose of New Church education

The whole purpose of New Church education is to strengthen the original order into which the human mind was created, as against the hereditary tendency to think from self-will. Thus it is to lead children, as they grow, into the love of use, so that they may think from the love of use and thus come into true rationality. The love of use cannot be instilled with children before adult age. They can begin to learn about it, but they cannot inwardly understand what it is except by maturation, a growth of the mind to a point where they can begin of themselves to assume individual responsibility. It is out of individual responsibility that an inner vision of use is born—not otherwise. Yet education during childhood and youth can do much to promote true rationality in adult age. It can do much to form the mind in such a way that it will more easily come into true rationality. Education can also do much to interfere with this, if it is the wrong kind of education.

The purpose and aim of the New Church is not merely to teach students to reason logically from given premises. That is not enough. The aim is to teach students to think from religion, and thus from love of use. Without this, logical thinking can be very mistaken, and it is from the Word and only from the Word that we can have this vision of truth from which to think. We must come to see and recognize that a thing is true, not because somebody has told us or the rest of the world believes it, but because we inwardly see that it is true.

A love of learning

The preparation to think from a love of use is effected in childhood by means of the love of learning. Learning is the business of childhood. And it is by appealing to these natural affections of learning in little children, that the mind is brought into that order which leads to a love of use in adult age. It is, therefore, as children are introduced into their use—into the love of learning—that the rational is formed. Then when children become adults and ready to assume individual responsibility, they have the basis of true thinking because what has been cultivated in them is a love of truth—not a love of themselves or what they want, but a love of truth.

This can make a great difference in the way everything on the curriculum is taught. Things should be taught so as to inspire in children the love of truth for the sake of use, which is to instill in them the seeds of true rationality. This new rational is not really born until adult age is reached. It can only come into being when people assume individual responsibility for their lives.

Responsibility

One of the great elements of growing up is coming to a realization that we have a responsibility to fulfill to other people. Focusing on how we will be of service to others gives a center from which to think because we become associated with people in the other world who are in that same love. Thinking from a love of use takes us out of ourselves, makes us forget ourselves, and enables us to think in accord with love to the Lord and charity to the neighbor. That can happen with people who have no religion or with people who have false religions. When they come to a point where they have to take responsibility, when they have to decide what they're going to do in life, what they're going to be in life, that has an effect on their thinking, on the ability to "think straight" as they say. The teachings for the New Church tell us that the love of use is the real origin of rationality. And that cannot take place until children grow up, until the mind is developed and they know to some degree what their abilities are, what they can do, what they love to do, what they want to do. They have to come to a point of mental maturity when they recognize their responsibility in life in order to begin to think rationally in the New Church sense of that word.

But that's not all that is needed to think rationally because one can think from a use and still have nothing but the love of self behind it. A person can be all for oneself and one's own advancement. The love of an occupation that starts to make a mind rational is not necessarily one that will lead to regeneration. But it does focus the mind and bring the mind into external order in such a way that a person can think rationally on the natural plane. Wouldn't you say that is the distinction between adult-thinking and child-thinking? People grow up and become adult whether they have religion or not. You can become naturally adult without becoming spiritually adult. A great many people go through life without becoming spiritually adult.

Ideally, children are raised in a situation where they are naturally introduced into a sense of responsibility. Children raised on a farm or children raised in a home where they feel some responsibility toward the family have a situation that does more to mature their minds than anything else. That of course can be extreme and more can be demanded of children than is healthy. But it is equally true that where children grow up without a sense of responsibility, where there is no need for their help in the home, they are at a disadvantage. A poor little rich child can grow up without any sense of responsibility because the family has everything. That's a loss.

A sense of responsibility can begin very early and should begin very early, but it should be tempered to the child's state and not overdone. It should be increased as a child grows. This is part of our philosophy of New Church education, but there is something more. Because we want to teach our students to think from something outside of themselves, and especially to think from Divine Revelation, from the very earliest childhood, we emphasize reverence for the Word. We emphasize the idea that the Word is the Lord's book and what the Lord says is true and whatever the Lord says we must do whether we want to or not. This emphasis on the Word

from the very earliest ages of childhood is a central idea of New Church education because the ultimate goal of our education is genuine freedom and genuine rationality (de Charms, 1963).

By a process of growth in which education assists, there is a successive ascent through degrees or steps to this genuine rational of adult age, and this ascending approach gives the appearance of rationality before that. The ascent is through the three degrees of the natural mind, called the sensory, the imaginative and the scientific rational. The sensory, the imaginative, and the scientific stand in general for infancy, childhood, and youth.

Infancy: the sensory level of the mind

Infancy begins in a state of ignorance. There can be no freedom whatever in a state of ignorance. Infants are utterly helpless and utterly dependent upon those who care for them. But as they learn and advance in knowledge, they gain the ability to do things for themselves, which gives the appearance of freedom. But their judgment is based entirely on what they are told is true, so the faith of infancy is the faith of whatever they are taught to be true. This is always a mistaken faith even when we teach the truth as best we can, because their ability to understand is limited by their own experience; and judging from that limited experience, they understand what we tell them in a very primitive and imperfect way. The ideas they form are frequently humorous, even ludicrous, and only gradually can they be changed by experience.

Even if we teach the truth, every little child has at first an idolatrous faith. It cannot be otherwise, for by idolatry I mean mistaking the outer appearance for the inner reality. The child mistakes the outer appearance of things for reality, and therefore will associate what we say about God with external appearances of people, places and things. The only choice that little children have is between what they are told—as best they can understand it—and what they want. But which one wins depends upon the state they are in at the time and how far they are under the influence of adults. It is not a matter of free choice. They are carried along on the current of their emotions and those emotions can to some extent be influenced by those around them.

Childhood: the imaginative level of the mind

As children grow out of infancy into childhood, they come into the imaginative degree of the mind, and they can come to understand what external truth and good are. That is, what truth and good are on a natural plane, or in civil and moral life—what is right and wrong from the standpoint of what is fair. This is in a childish way, but nonetheless they can understand fair play, and then their choice is between the truth that they can understand and what they want.

Youth: the scientific rational

Finally, when it comes to youth and the scientific rational of the mind is opened, they can know what spiritual truth is. They can understand it logically, although they don't yet perceive its quality, and they can come into a belief in that truth—a belief, however, that is based largely on emotion. It is based on loyalty to those who have taught them. It is based on tradition. It is

based on custom. Out of this can be formed a persuasive faith—a natural faith that still does not distinguish interiorly between what is spiritually true and false. In this way many, many people grow up and become strongly imbued with whatever religion they have been taught. They accept it. They have been taught in a certain way from certain premises to certain deductions, and therefore they are satisfied. They go along believing that faith, never realizing that it all started from accepting certain premises without examining them and that all their thinking has come from this.

In youth they have the choice between this kind of belief and revolt against it from the basis of what they want. This is a youthful revolt against the traditions of what they have been taught, against accepted customs—a striking out for themselves with a desire to establish what they want, to be able to think from what they want. This is the only choice there is, unless they can see deeper than those premises they accepted without examination. The higher level cannot be achieved until they have reached a certain age and assumed the responsibility for coming face to face with “What do I believe?” If they are willing to face that question frankly, then there may be true rationality. They begin to examine what they believe, not for the sake of establishing what they want, or from their own self-love, or excusing what they are trying to do, but from a love of truth that will go back to the Word, to Divine Revelation, and test even the premises that they have been taught.

The basis of true rationality

Heaven is rationality—true thinking. But hell is a madhouse—a spiritual insane asylum. All thinking from self-love leads to irrationality and insanity. The only true thinking is when we get out of ourselves and think from love to the Lord, from charity to the neighbor and love of use. That is the only true thinking there is. I’m not saying that youth who think logically from what they have been taught are insane. They can be taught to think according to true rational principles, but within their own minds this is not a genuine rational that is operating unless they see the truth before they confirm it. The point is that the whole purpose of New Church education is to develop this kind of a rational. It is not to confirm our young people in what we teach them, or persuade them to grow up in our religion and just encourage them to accept our faith when they become adult without further investigation. Our whole object is to teach them when they become adult to think from Divine Revelation, to go back to Divine Revelation as the origin, and to examine what the Lord has revealed, and this for themselves. This is the only basis for true rationality.

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1963, April 11). *Rationality* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurcaudio.org/event.php?event=23132>

Quotes from Arcana Caelestia on the Rational

AC 6240

Very many in the world imagine that a rational person is one who can reason with skill on many subjects and link one piece of reasoning to another in such a way that the conclusion he draws seems to be the truth. But that ability occurs even in very wicked people who are expert reasoners and can make the deduction that evil things are good and false ideas are true or that good things are evil and true ideas are false. But anyone who stops to reflect can see that this is wicked imagination and not rationality. Rationality consists in seeing inwardly and perceiving that what is good is indeed good, and from this that what is true is indeed true; for such vision and perception of these things comes from heaven.

AC 1893

Rationality does, it is true, appear to exist in children; but rationality does not in fact do so, only something of the first beginnings of it.

AC 1944

The rational is said to be in the womb, and to be born, as soon as a person starts to think that within him evil and falsity are present which contradict and show opposition to truth and good, increasingly so when he wishes to remove and subdue such evil and falsity. Unless he is able to see and appreciate this, he does not have any rational, however much he imagines that he does. For the rational is the means which unites the internal man to the external, thereby perceiving from the Lord what is taking place in the external man. The rational also brings the external into a position of obedience—or rather raises it up from bodily and worldly interests in which it immerses itself—and causes the person to be truly human, who as a result looks up to heaven where he belongs by birth, and not, as animals do, solely down to the earth, where he resides merely temporarily, and certainly not down to hell. These are the functions of the rational, and therefore unless a person is such that he is able to think in this manner, he cannot be said to have a rational.

Nobody ...can be said to have a rational merely on account of an ability to reason. Indeed, those who do not have a rational usually speak from sensory experience and factual knowledge with far greater skill than those who do have it. This is absolutely clear from evil spirits in the next life who, though they were considered to be the most rational of people during their lifetime, are nevertheless more insane than those who are obviously so in the world, when the external restraints which had been responsible for their correctness in the things they said and for the pretense of honorableness in the things they did are removed, as such restraints usually are

with all in the next life. Indeed, they plunge without shame, fear, or horror into everything that is wicked. Not so when external restraints are removed in the case of people who were rational when they lived in the world; they are saner men still because they have internal restraints, which are restraints of conscience, by which the Lord has kept their thoughts bound to laws of truth and good, which constituted their rational concepts.

3.3 CONSCIENCE

[Editor's note: blue font indicates quotes from the college lectures on educational philosophy given by de Charms in 1963.]

The only place from which anyone can get truly spiritual insight is from Divine Revelation, so if people are to develop a spiritual conscience as adults as the end result of our education, we must lead children back to the Word itself. Now that is really done by the Lord, not us. We can't do it, but it is done so far as the things we teach them to be of conscience are based on a rational understanding of the Word. So, we should be always reviewing and recasting our own ideas of what external things should be associated with conscience. If the things that children associate with religion and conscience are truly representative of spiritual things, then they become a basis for spiritual conscience in adult age.

How conscience develops in children

The conscience of a child depends on mental development. It begins with sensations. Babies are delighted with the things they touch, see, and hear. That's where their lives are centered—the delight of touching. The first conscience regards the things they are allowed to touch and not allowed to touch. That's the only plane on which any conscience is possible. When they grow a little older and they can learn the difference between what is right and what is wrong in a more abstract sense than just sensation, then they can have a conscience on the plane of the imagination. When they get still older, they can have a conscience on the plane of reason according to the way they have been taught.

Children gradually realize higher delights for which to strive. There is a constant alternation between struggling for something higher and falling back into what is familiar. Times of work and rest and play have to alternate with one another. But new delights will inspire children and lead them to strive for something higher. The natural tendency with all of us is to be lazy, to rest in what is easy and to resist what is hard. There is always a vacillation, an alternation of state; now the new delights will dominate, then the old ones will return. But gradually the new ones will be more frequent and more powerful and the old ones will successively lose their

appeal. This struggle between higher and lower delights is what represents the conscience with children.

Nagging children does not help them develop a conscience

Conscience is developed primarily by that which children do as if of themselves. All children must be taught what is right and wrong. And in this our philosophy of education differs from that of the progressive school of education which assumes that children should learn everything by their own experience and should not be taught didactically by other people. We believe that children must be taught; they must receive direct instruction and must be led by command and there must be an element of compulsion to establish good habits. But all this is only a help, because the end in view is that children in the sphere of adults may choose higher delights as of themselves. This is what lays the foundation for rational choice later in life—choosing what they know to be right over what they want.

In other words, you do not help to develop a conscience by always nagging at children and insisting that they do what is right without giving them any chance to apparently make choices. Nagging is very detrimental because it rouses the instinct of self-preservation and the longing for freedom. Nagging induces opposition. Always being told “don’t do this, don’t do that” is harmful. Children must have the opportunity to do what is wrong—within limits—in order to have the opportunity to do what is right as of themselves.

The role of religion in moral education

It is important that children’s choices to do what is right be associated with religion. Mere moral and ethical teaching will not lead to a religious life in adult age. And yet children’s choices are only on the plane of what is ethical and moral; they can’t see anything else. But what is ethical and moral can be associated in their minds with what is religious, with what the Lord says, with what the Word says. That’s why we begin very early instilling a reverence for the Word and why we turn the child’s attention always to the idea that what the Lord says is good, what the Lord says is right. And that is how children can be raised so that when they are grown up, they can learn to shun evils as sins against God. Not to shun them because it’s to their advantage to do so, but because they are sins against God, which makes all the difference.

Merely ethical and moral teaching that comes to a child only with the authority of tradition or what society has established is not enough to attain a conscience in adult age. Children can only think on the plane of what is purely ethical and moral. That is perfectly true. But they must be taught that it is from the Lord, from the Word. Religious teaching in childhood is moral truth and ethical precepts to which have been given Divine sanction. It is of extreme importance that we give Divine sanction to moral truth and ethical precepts, for it makes a profound difference in the effect on the child.

The Ten Commandments were known in very ancient times. They were known to all ancient peoples as laws expected to be followed. But when they were given on Mount Sinai, they

became the foundation of religious life for the Jews; whereas with all others they were merely the foundation of national, civil, and moral life. [The teachings for the New Church tell us that the Ten Commandments were given to the Jews from Mount Sinai directly from the Divine Being. The Ten Commandments were acknowledged to be of Divine origin whereas in the moral codes of Hammurabi and others they were simply moral precepts, things that ought to be done so people would get along.](#)

[All religious teaching in childhood is moral and ethical teaching; it can't be anything else. But it is moral and ethical teaching to which is given Divine sanction \(de Charms, 1963\).](#)

De Charms, G. (Presenter). (1963, April 18). *Conscience* [Audio file]. Retrieved from <http://newchurchaudio.org/event.php?event=23132>

Quotes from *Arcana Caelestia* on Conscience

AC 9112

Conscience in a person is formed from the beliefs that his religion has given him, depending on how deeply he accepts them.

AC 597

The state of the Most Ancient Church was one in which peoples had from the Lord a perception of good and of truth deriving from it, while that of the Ancient Church, or Noah, came to be one in which it had a conscience concerning good and truth. The nature of the difference between having perception and having conscience is what determined the difference between the Most Ancient Church and the Ancient Church.

Perception is not the same as conscience. Celestial people have perception, spiritual people conscience. The Most Ancient Church was celestial whereas the Ancient was spiritual. The Most Ancient Church possessed immediate revelation through direct contact with spirits and angels, and also through visions and dreams from the Lord.

AC 7935

Members of the spiritual Church do not have the gift of perception such as those of the celestial Church have; instead they have conscience. Conscience existing with them is born and formed from the truths of the Church in which they were born.... They are lodged in the interior memory as though written into it and ultimately come to be like those things which have been imprinted in earliest childhood and after that appear to be fully known and so to speak inborn. They appear to be like a person's ability to speak, think, recollect, and reflect on various things, and like his physical ability to walk, make gestures, and use facial expressions, and like many other abilities which he is not born with but acquires through habitual practice. When the truths of faith have been imprinted in that way too, which happens in the interior man, they likewise become fully known; and ultimately, when they have become as if inborn, they impel the person to think, will, and act in conformity with them. This driving force in his life is called conscience.

AC 1043²

A person is regenerated by means of the things he supposes to be the truths of faith. Everyone supposes that his own accepted belief is the truth, and on this basis acquires a conscience. Consequently once he has acquired a conscience, acting contrary to the things that have been impressed on him as being truths of faith is to him acting contrary to conscience.

AC 3175

For the fact of the matter is that nobody is ever born into any truth at all, not even into any natural truth, such as the commandments not to steal, nor to kill, nor to commit adultery, and so on. Still less is a person born into any spiritual truth, such as the truth that there is a God, that a person has an inner being which will live after death; and so of themselves, people do not know anything whatever of that which has to do with eternal life. Every commandment and truth has to be learned by them, and if they did not learn them they would be far worse off than any animal; for because of their heredity, they are inclined to love themselves above everybody else and to crave possession of everything that exists in the world. Consequently unless the laws of society, and the fear of losing position, gain, reputation, and life restrained them they would without any sense of conscience steal, kill, or commit adultery. The truth of this is absolutely plain, for even a person who has been taught nevertheless acts in such ways without conscience. Indeed they defend their actions and find many arguments to support the lawfulness of them. What would they be like if they were not given any instruction at all?

3.4 CHARACTER

Could you tell me the definition of character? How would this sound? Character is a love of what is just and fair and honest, upright, true and good; a love of that more than of self. Where there is a love of what is right, just and fair, true and good, more than of self, then that love prompts one to sacrifice one's own desires in order to protect and sustain what is right. The opposite of this would be what we call self-indulgence. Doesn't that express the essence of what is meant by character?

Our morality depends on what we've been taught

I was just reading about a little girl in the slums of London and the way she reacted to the German blitzkrieg. A little girl about eight years old. She had been taught that the cops were her natural enemies and that anything you could take without being caught was to your credit if you got away with it. It described how she took advantage of the burning buildings and the confusion at the time of the raid to gather quite a store of valuables. She was caught and she got a licking. Obviously her standards of morality weren't very high. But this same little girl in the midst of all this business got caught in a building that was bombed, and she was pinned under the debris. With her was a little boy who had been working with her and a baby she had to take care of. And so it describes the bravery, the ability to stand pain without flinching and the utter selflessness of this little girl in wanting to see that the little boy and baby were safe. So there you see the strange combination of what we would consider anything but a sign of character and what would be recognized at once as a sign of character in this little girl.

That little girl, while her standard of morality was too low to be what society recognizes as character, was doing the best as she knew how to do. There was nothing wrong in it from her standpoint because she had been taught it was all right to get ahead of the cops if you could. She didn't believe in anything else, and therefore to judge her on the basis of what she did in comparison with those that had been taught differently is not a fair comparison. Character comes from a love of what we believe to be just and right and fair and honest and the willingness to sacrifice everything of ourselves to protect what we believe to be right.

The importance of struggle and three ways to help

As children grow they move from a point where they believe one thing to be right to a point where they learn for the first time that something else is right and that now they must distinguish between what they have been doing and what they ought to do. Then their struggles come in attempting to attain to what is higher rather than remaining in what is easy. And so it is true that what is right for an infant is not right for a child, and what is right for a child is not right for a youth. What is right for each is the best that they can know and understand, and what they can know and understand is less than what they can know and understand at a later age. This struggle throughout childhood is the basis for a spiritual conscience at adult age, and by this struggle character is formed.

There are three means by which we can help children in this struggle. Essentially it is a struggle that the child must make. We cannot make it for the child, but we can help. The first means is instruction. We can give children instruction to help them see what is a higher truth, a higher right that is within their grasp. Secondly, we can help by compelling them to abide by what they have been taught is right. And thirdly, we can help them by putting them in situations where they have the opportunity to abide by that which they know to be right. And this latter is the most important. The other two are necessary, for without them children would never come to a point where they could choose as of themselves. They are necessary, but they are only the means. The goal is that children shall be led to make choices as if of themselves. The ideal is self-compulsion. Self-compulsion in the true sense is possible only in adult age, but self-compulsion under the inspiration, the unrealized influence of adults, is possible in childhood, and this is what prepares for spiritual temptation in adult age.

Everything about our educational processes, methods and modes should be directed to stimulating this self-compulsion. And here is where a great deal of judgment is needed, for if we ask too much of children we discourage them. If we ask too little of children we are not helping them grow in strength. So our demands upon children should be carefully gauged, and that, of course, with reference to every individual.

Adler's approach to education: manual work

Professor Adler saw the truth of this and applied it very concretely to his educational philosophy. He defined education in this way: "Education is the skillful interposition of difficulties." His whole system of education was based on the idea of placing tasks before children that were hard, that would stimulate them to their highest efforts, and yet not too hard so as to discourage them. He did a great deal of training by means of manual work, especially metal work.

Adler tells a story about a boy who was given a task modeling metal. The boy was intensely interested and had unusual talent. Well, he worked very hard and came to the professor with his completed project modeled in silver, and it was a remarkable piece of work. But Professor Adler, instead of telling him it was a remarkable piece of work, said "Well that is pretty good, but you won't really have accomplished anything until you have done that in iron"—an almost impossible task for a boy of that age to do. But here was a boy of unusual talent, so that if he undertook this task, which he did successfully, it would do more for the boy than anything else he could teach him.

Summary

Character—a love of something outside of ourselves that we believe is right and just, and loving it more than ourselves so that we are ready to defend it—appears to need a fighting spirit, an ability to endure suffering and to undergo hardship with perseverance. How are we going to instill that? It takes a great deal of judgment. But the teachings for the New Church point to the fact that we have been born into this world, not for a soft life, but to overcome evils in

ourselves. And the character that will enable us to face that spiritual conflict has to be built upon natural training that comes in childhood—the ability to face natural hardships and trials and difficulties and to persevere in the face of obstacles.

Quote from *Arcana Caelestia* on temptations

AC 3927

Temptations are nothing else than the wrestlings of the internal man with the external, or of the spiritual man with the natural, for each desires to have dominion over the other.

PART FOUR: ORGANIZING KNOWLEDGES TO PREPARE THE MIND FOR SPIRITUAL TRUTH

4.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WHAT IS SPIRITUAL AND WHAT IS NATURAL

All learning during the educational period is natural. The aim and object of all that learning is spiritual. What is the relation between the spiritual and the natural that will give us a clear idea of our educational purpose?

The term spiritual is used in the teachings for the New Church with a special meaning not ordinarily understood. Ordinarily the term is used to include anything that is moral or ethical or beyond the merely material. The teachings for the New Church speak of what is spiritual as having its origin from the Diving Being who is Spirit itself. God is a Spirit, which means He is Life itself. "Spiritual" means what is living, what comes from God Who is Life itself. This life of God is love and it is wisdom. Divine Love and Divine Wisdom as they proceed from God are what is "spiritual." This Divine Love appears in the spiritual world as a sun in the midst of which is the Lord.

This love and wisdom is the cause of all life in the universe. It is the cause of all motion, all activity, all energy. Without it nothing in the whole universe could move. This life inflowing from God is the cause of all forces of nature.

Things that are dead can be created, but activity itself cannot be created. Its origin is God who is Life itself, and all the various activities in the universe are merely modifications of that life.

If it is true that activity is uncreated, then all the invisible forces of nature—electricity, magnetism, chemical activities of all kinds—are in essence spiritual. That is, they are being caused continually by a living force from God, the force of Divine Love and Wisdom. They are nothing but the Divine Love and Wisdom acting on the plane of nature. Seeing that this is so is to see what is spiritual.

When forces of nature are regarded as to their external effects and not as to their cause, they appear as purely mechanical, as forces that are utterly impersonal. They appear as merely blind energy operating according to fixed law—dead forces. When we regard them as merely dead forces, then the spiritual is not seen, only the natural, and all our interpretation of them will lead us away from a belief in God, or from any vision of God. We will confirm ourselves more and more in the idea that there is no Divine Love guiding the destinies of the rest of the created universe. No wisdom of God—only mechanical law.

Here is the difference between a view of the world based on the acknowledgment of a Divine Being and a view of the world that is purely scientific and denies anything that cannot be demonstrated. The spiritual idea goes back to God as the first cause, God who is Love and Wisdom.

The natural is a clothing for living, spiritual forces

The spiritual in itself is always invisible, just as are the forces of nature. The air is invisible, electricity is invisible, magnetism, gravity, and chemical forces are all invisible. What is spiritual is always invisible because it is uncreated. It is the activity of life. But the spiritual clothes itself with forms that make it tangible and visible, forms in which we see its effects, and through the effects we come to know the cause. The human spirit is invisible. The soul is invisible, but clothed in a body that responds to its activities. We can read qualities of the spirit and of the soul in and through the body—its gestures, its speech, its expressions of face.

The spirit becomes visible by means of a tangible clothing. That which clothes the spirit is what is called the natural. The purpose of the natural is that it may be a garment or covering. And the lowest of the natural is called the material.

In general we can distinguish between the spiritual and the natural in the following way: the spiritual is living force and activity and the natural is dead, inert clothing or embodiment. (Read in *Posthumous Works Vol. I, Additions to True Christianity* 695: 1: 3 where it says that all things of nature are like sheathes around spiritual things.) We cannot have a natural world without a spiritual world. There would be nothing to order the dead material of nature so that it would express or mean anything. All power to organize, all power to make matter mean anything, comes from a living force from the Life of God.

In anything in the natural world, what we call the spiritual is present as that invisible force we call life. It is present as a formative soul, as an organizing activity, the effects of which we see in the motions and activities of material things. This is true of mechanical forces and of what we call life, or living forces. It is true of those forces that cause the planets to move around the sun, that cause the suns to move in their orbits in relation to one another throughout the starry heaven. These are mechanical forces, and yet they are so directed as to produce effects that can only be explained by a love that is directing and controlling them, and by a wisdom that has a purpose in view.

Throughout the whole natural world, the spiritual is present, and if we look deeply enough we can see it. We can understand something of it. A body apart from its soul cannot come into being, for the soul is what creates, forms, and organizes it, and as soon as the body is separated from that soul, it disintegrates—falls to pieces. So the spiritual and the natural must always be together.

Human beings are endowed with a body and senses to become conscious of material things so that they can learn to love the Lord; enjoy and appreciate the spiritual things from God; learn to penetrate the veil of nature itself, and through nature see what is spiritual, just as we can see a person's soul or spirit through their body. This power to penetrate the outward appearance of nature and to see what is spiritual within it is inherent in the human mind. The revelation or opening up of a vision of that spiritual comes to us from within. From without we can have only

the vision of material forms, but from within we receive a perception or understanding or insight as to what is meant by these forms.

Ordering knowledges so they reveal spiritual things

The power to penetrate the outward appearance of nature is inherent in the human mind and comes about as a result of growth, gradual learning, and the ordering of our knowledges in such a way that they reveal what is spiritual. And they reveal the spiritual to the extent that those knowledges are ordered around the idea of God or the Lord as the center, the cause of all. If our knowledges of nature are not ordered around the central idea of God as the cause and origin and source of all things, then our knowledge will be confused, unrelated, and will not lead to the perception and understanding of what is spiritual.

This is what makes such a great difference in education. It is not just the knowledge that counts. It is the ordering of it; the way in which it is given so it means something. We can tell children a thousand things, all disconnected—"That is true, this is true, the other is true"—without any relation one to another, and we have not taught them any truth whatever. But as soon as we put things in a certain order so that they mean something, then we have intelligence, understanding and wisdom—the revelation of the spiritual.

Education is the means whereby we can do something of this ordering. Let us not propose to do it all, by any manner or means. For the most part that ordering is done by the Lord in our minds, spontaneously. Because our minds are created to see spiritual truth, the mind spontaneously puts things together to mean something. Children's ability to recognize when things are put together in the right order is the only possible means by which they can be educated.

4.2 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL THINKING

What is the difference between natural thinking and spiritual thinking? Natural thinking and spiritual thinking use the same material sensations, but in one case we are limiting our thought to what comes to us from without and in the other case we are looking at them from within as to their source and origin and use. Material forms regarded purely from below can yield only scientific truth at best. Scientific truth pertains to the accurate reproduction in our minds of form, structure, molecular composition, mechanical energy, chemical make-up. All these are purely natural ideas with no thought as to why they were created or for what purpose. But these same material things viewed from within or above lead us to think, "What is it for? Where did it come from?" We are led to penetrate the appearances that come from without and search into those perceptions of love and wisdom which come from within, so that we think of them not from nature but from God. That is the difference between natural thinking and spiritual thinking.

The teachings for the New Church say that human beings are born sensual and must by growth become natural and then rational before they can become spiritual. Children are building up and forming the natural mind that is capable only of natural ideas. This building up must be done first, before spiritual thinking can begin.

Children learn first to sense correctly and discriminate different sensations. Beginning in infancy, they differentiate forms and colors and sounds. Then they come to a point where they build up imaginary pictures and ideas out of all these sensations. Finally, they come to the question of what things are for and how they are to be used. They need to learn all these things before they can even begin to have any idea of spiritual things.

But within all these natural ideas are spiritual ideas not yet conscious to the child. The little minds doing all this sensing are not created to merely sense things that come from without; they are created to feel love and wisdom from within. And they do feel the love and wisdom that comes from within when they are sensing the forms, colors, and sounds that come from without. But they have not yet built up the possibility of getting a real idea of what love and wisdom are.

Quote from *Arcana Caelestia* on the progression of truth with children

AC 3309

Sensory truths occur with children, factual with those same children when they are growing up, for factual truths cannot exist with anyone before they have received sensory truths because the ideas that make up factual truths are acquired from sensory truths. Then, from those factual truths, other truths even more interior can be learned and grasped, which are called matters of doctrine.

4.3 SEEING HIGHER TRUTH

There are coverings in the mind and each time a covering is removed, a whole new world of truth is open. We cannot remove these coverings from the mind of anyone. The removal of these coverings is a matter of mental development and it runs its own course; we can't force it. It is a process by which the mind, step by step, is opened to see a more and more interior truth, until at last it can come to see the primal cause of all things that we call God. God is the only reality. All created things are coverings through which God is to be seen. They are called appearances, and even the highest angels are in appearances. God cannot be seen except as clothed in appearances, and that is the reason for creation. All the objects of creation provide clothing through which the Lord may become present and visible to human beings. And the steps of approach to that vision of the Divine are what we call the stages of growth. These stages of growth are nothing but the opening of a door that permits the seeing of higher truth that was not, and could not, be visible before.

All truth has a basis in sensory experience

All truth ever possible to human beings is involved in the objects of nature we see with our physical eyes. All the higher degrees of the mind are built up from the things we see in nature around us. There is no other source. We cannot imagine anything that doesn't have its origin in something we have seen or felt or heard or tasted with our physical senses. Therefore all truth must be included, wrapped up in the things of nature.

Arcana 10028 says that when a human being is being purified, first truths are learned as can be apprehended by the senses of the body. Such are the truths in the literal meaning of the Word. The literal sense of the Word is the history or story of people, events and places. Afterward are learned more interior truths such as are collected from the Word by those who are in enlightenment from various passages where the literal meaning is infilled, for example in the parables of the Lord where he speaks in imagery drawn entirely from nature, where there is obviously a deeper meaning. From these, then, abstract principles of truth are drawn—not imaginative ideas, but abstract ideas—which become doctrine for the Church. Angelic wisdom is from truths still more interior.

The passage from infancy to childhood to youth

If you reflect on this, it describes the opening, first, of the sensory mind in infancy, then of the imaginative mind in childhood, and finally of the rational mind in youth. On this basis, then, you have the opening of the spiritual mind, which is the basis of angelic wisdom in its three degrees, and all of these degrees are contained in the senses and the very objects of nature which are impressed upon our senses in infancy.

This removal of coverings of the mind can only take place from within. It is under the immediate control of the Lord. It takes place variously with different children—some rapidly, some more slowly—but it takes place with all that normally develop and in that order: from the

sensory to the imaginative and thence to the rational. Mental growth is nothing else but the successive removal of these veils or coverings of the mind, and this by the Lord.

Infants are sensory; they can understand nothing except what they see, hear, and feel. The center of their whole life is the delight of exercising the senses. They advance from the very beginning of consciousness gathering more and more sense impressions—at first very general ones which grow more particular as they become more discriminating. This is the whole process of infantile mental growth.

Not until children have reached a point at which a door can be opened in the mind can they pass from infancy to childhood. This passing from infancy to childhood is nothing but passing from centering concentration on merely sensing things to concentrating the attention on ideas and imaginative pictures that could not possibly be formed until a great mass of material out of which they are built has been stored in the mind. Imaginative ideas then begin to build up throughout childhood.

There is no possibility of rational understanding until sufficient material has been gathered on this plane of the imagination, out of which abstract ideas are to be built, and until the plane of the mind that is capable of grasping abstract ideas is opened by the Lord. Then the mind is centered, not upon the outward form of things, but on their inner quality. Again, there is no possibility of rational understanding (that is, abstract understanding) apart from concrete pictures in the mind.

The capacity of the rational mind to perceive qualities

We perceive that objects around us possess qualities, and in attempting to express these qualities, to express what we feel about them, we invent abstract terms that will describe them. Abstract terms are merely efforts to express and embody things we inwardly feel, but which we cannot sense because they don't exist outside of us in nature. They exist only in the spiritual world, yet we feel them. So we invent terms to express what we feel. This is abstraction, if you please. When we speak about abstract ideas, we are talking about sensing or understanding or seeing things that are entirely above nature. We say that they belong to the mind and its world and this is really true. They belong to the spiritual world in which the mind is living. They are not just imaginary concepts that are inherent in our own particular mind that have no existence outside of us. If that were so, they would have no value. We can see spiritual things that are true; they are not dependent on just our mood or state of mind, but are true at all times. We can feel them, sense them.

We express abstract things in terms of relation. That is why it is called rational: the ratio or relation of things. For it is by seeing the relation of things that we perceive their quality. What do we mean by their quality? We mean their use, their purpose, the reason why they were created, the effect they produce on other things, what has caused them, brought them into being. These are all qualities. They are all spiritual, and they are what we feel or sense within us as a higher truth. Only when we have reached a point in development where we can see these

abstract ideas and can appreciate them—realize why they are more important than a mere imaginative picture of something outside of us—only then is it possible to begin to become conscious of the spiritual, for spiritual ideas can only be based on the true relationships of concepts.

Developmentally appropriate education

Education is that process whereby we endeavor to assist in this gradual enlightenment of each plane of the mind, and in preparation for the opening of another plane by the Lord, as a child grows. We cannot open these planes. We cannot bring that child to see the higher kind of truth. Only the Lord can do it, but we can provide the materials that are appropriate to that plane of the mind which has been opened, and we can increase the number and variety of experiences on that plane. We can order the things that are there presented in such a way that they will more perfectly serve the higher plane of the mind when it has been opened, when the veil has been removed. That is all we can do. That is what the work of education is all about, so far as the work of instruction is concerned. By supplying material first of the senses, then of imaginative ideas, and finally of rational concepts, we teach infants, children, and youth. We teach them effectively in the degree that these materials are ordered from our own understanding of higher truth, from the truth a child is not yet ready to see and that we can't make them see. We can't yet explain to them in any way they can grasp, but we can present the materials appropriate to their stage of growth from our own understanding of that higher truth. That is what makes all the difference in the world as to what the effect will be on the mind of a child.

Let's consider children being educated by parents who have no belief in religion, no belief in God or in a life after death. The kind of material they will select to present to their children and the way in which they order their presentation will oppose religion and Revelation and will emphasize that the only source of knowledge is sense experience of nature. The kind of presentation they will give for the opening of the mind is a very different one—extremely different. This is a very wide-spread state of education today.

What is the remedy for this situation? There is no remedy except to change our type of education. Is there any subject on the curriculum which we can say has nothing to do with the final opening of the mind to see spiritual things? I can't imagine any, because all things we teach, all instruction is drawn from the things we experience in the world around us and that whole world has been created by God for no other purpose than that we may eventually come to see Him in it, which is to see spiritual truth.

4.4 DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The purpose of all teaching is spiritual, but all *learning* is natural in both secular and religious subjects. This is the inevitable conclusion from what I have been saying about the relation between the spiritual and the natural. The mind is opened during infancy, childhood, and youth only as to the natural degree, and this in a threefold division: sensual, imaginative, and the scientific or rational.

Children think in natural terms

When we are giving religious instruction to children we are not teaching them spiritual truth; we are teaching them *about* spiritual things, and there is a great difference. We will teach them about God. We will teach them about the Word. We will teach them about heaven and life after death. We will teach them about what they must do in order to be saved—all this, but the ideas of God that they will receive will be natural. They think of God as a man. Often they think of Him as a big giant, a powerful man. Their whole idea of him will be in terms of limited human qualities such as they experience in those around them.

We may tell them that God speaks to us through the Word. This in itself is a spiritual truth, but their idea of it will be a purely natural idea of God talking, and any real concept of how Divine Revelation is given is beyond them. They will actually think of the Word just as they think of any other book, think of its stories just as they think of any other stories, except that they will know that it is holy, and that everything in it is true because the Lord has said it.

We tell them that human beings are saved by keeping the Commandments of the Word and they accept that, but the Commandments to them are purely natural things—they must not steal, they must not kill, they must not lie and so on. The external interpretation of those things is the whole of their idea. They can have no real understanding of what it is to spiritually kill, spiritually steal, or spiritually lie. While we are teaching them *about* those commandments as spiritual things, they are learning them naturally as natural truths. It is the only way they can learn.

It was the only way that the Lord could teach His disciples, as is evident in His parables throughout the New Testament. When He taught about heaven it was always in terms of natural things in the experience of the disciples. The disciples were like children in their knowledge and their ability to understand. Therefore the Lord could not teach them spiritual truth directly, such as we now find given in the teachings for the New Church. He told them about heaven, but he told them in parables. He compared it to natural things: heaven is like a marriage feast; heaven is like a pearl of great price; heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. All these things were purely natural ideas, but from them they gained a sense of something deeper. Their own ideas about heaven were entirely natural. They didn't have a concept of a spiritual kingdom of God as was evident when James and John asked to sit at the right hand and

left hand of the Lord. It was evident they were only thinking of Him as becoming a king over the land of Israel. They had no idea of heaven that was spiritual. So it is with children.

Teaching children using natural imagery

The Lord was always saying things to the disciples that astonished them because they were true but not *literally* true. For example, when the disciples came back from the village where they had been to buy meat, the Lord said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and they wondered. And He said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the field, for they are white already to harvest." But it was four months before the harvest should come and they were astonished at what He said, but evidently knew it had another meaning. They did not know what it was exactly, but they knew that something else was meant, and so their minds were searching for that something else. The Lord indicated a truth that they could realize more fully after His resurrection.

This illustrates the way to teach children. We must imply spiritual truth rather than teach it openly; imply it by arousing the realization there is something deeper in what is said than what appears on the surface. The human mind is created to grow in just that way. All our curiosity, all our desire to probe deeper, arises from a vague perception of something we do not yet clearly see. So we teach religion to children in purely natural imagery, expecting no more than that they will gather a natural idea from it, yet teaching in a way that the mind is led on to seek deeper things, to realize that something deeper is involved.

The natural ideas of children are spiritually understood by angels

The reason we have the dim perception of something deeper that we do not yet understand which urges us on and leads us to seek for something more—the real secret of this is that we have spirits and angels with us who do see something deeper. The natural ideas of children are spiritually understood by the angels who are present with them. Because of the presence of angels, [genuine] truth can flow in from heaven. The intimation of genuine truth will, to some extent at least, depend on how far the teacher sees it. Because the teacher sees it and orders instruction accordingly, the very way in which the thing is presented to the child will be in accord with angelic understanding, in harmony with it, so that the inner meaning can be more powerful to the child.

4.5 THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT USE OF REVELATION

The question of how to make teaching distinctive is one that has engaged the thought of New Church educators since the beginning of the Academy, and it presents many difficulties. There is on the one hand a realization from the teachings for the New Church that the ultimate purpose of all teaching is to reveal what is spiritual. This is the deeper purpose within instruction in all secular subjects as well as in religion. On the other hand, there is a clear perception that the teaching of secular subjects is different from the teaching of religion, and it is a mistake to make the whole of education nothing but religious instruction. The question resolves itself into this: what is the best way in which Divine Revelation may be used to modify our teaching and make it different, to permeate it throughout, and not just be plastered on top? There are two ways in which this can be done. The direct way, which is the most obvious, and the indirect way.

The first things our teachers think when it comes to putting the New Church into their classes is, “What can I find written down in the teachings for the New Church that I can use while I am teaching?” or “How can I speak of these things that are described there together with the secular subjects I am teaching?” That may be called the direct method of using Divine Revelation, which can be done with good results, and should be done under certain conditions and observing a certain precaution. The first and most essential precaution is that we shall not confuse secular teaching in the minds of children with religious instruction. The second is that, every once in a while, children, especially of an older age, will complain that their instruction is all religion. They get too much religion!

In religious instruction, we are focusing the attention and thought upon the Word, upon Divine Revelation, upon the knowledge of spiritual things concerning God and heaven and the life after death and the means of regeneration.

In secular studies, we focus the attention upon worldly things, upon facts, seeking to understand them as to their relation to one another and thus their use, which is the same as saying we are studying how they serve and minister to what is spiritual. So the difference is one of focus, but the final goal in both cases is related. With this in view, it is useful from time to time to use illustrations from Revelation in connection with secular teaching, but this should be done in a natural way.

Children don't distinguish between what is spiritual and what is natural

Again, we have to realize in teaching religion that the statements of doctrine, the facts cited in the language of the Word, of Revelation, are not in themselves spiritual. They are just knowledges about things, knowledges about what is spiritual perhaps, but since the children don't know what is spiritual, don't really distinguish it from what is natural, then although we are telling them about it, they will not have a spiritual idea or understanding of it. Divine

Revelation is the specialized form adapted to contain and transmit what is spiritual to man's mind—words and ideas similar to those used in all thinking and communication of natural things. What is spiritual lies within. It depends not on the words, but on their order and arrangement, the ideas that are suggested, and therefore the spiritual resides in the understanding of these words. We may have a natural understanding of them or we may have a spiritual understanding of them. Our purpose is not to deny this and insist that we are giving them spiritual ideas, nor is it to insist that they must get spiritual ideas before their minds are ready for it.

Don't teach children abstract doctrine

We must be careful to use illustrations that are in accord with the states and capacities of the students. If we try to teach them abstract doctrine (as has been done when they grasp at the idea that spiritual things are good and truth) or if we give any statement of doctrine directly out of the teachings for the New Church in its rational form, if we do this too early before the mind is prepared, we give a grotesque and artificial idea, if any, that will not be adapted to prepare their minds to receive spiritual truth.

Just to illustrate in the extreme, suppose instead of reading the Word and telling the simple stories of the Word in kindergarten and first grade, we read them *True Christian Religion*. It would not have any basis of inspiring the foundations of religion or spiritual thought at all. That is an extreme, but we can easily do that to a lesser degree without realizing it, and call it New Church education.

4.6 DEVELOPING NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

The indirect use of Revelation is the real means by which education becomes distinctive, rather than by the direct use of Revelation. This latter has its place, its important use, but by itself it will not make New Church education. The indirect use of Revelation is the real basis of distinctive teaching. By the indirect use of it we mean, not teaching the doctrines for the New Church, but teaching *from* the doctrines for the New Church. We mean teaching from the philosophy of life and the philosophy of education which has been built up by study of the teachings for the New Church. We mean that the teacher, having come to see and be inspired by the vision given of the relation between the external things being taught and the internal things of spiritual life, will teach in such a way that gradually that vision may open up to students as their own discovery.

A spiritual point of view

In this kind of teaching there is a limitless field of development. It involves the teacher's mastery of a given subject in its true relation to a genuinely religious life. It involves a spiritual point of view regarding life in general and regarding subjects in particular where the material may be so ordered as to illustrate and confirm spiritual truth.

It is the right application of the same law of ordering and presentation that is wrongly used in what we call propaganda. Propaganda implies that facts are distorted in order to give a pre-determined point of view. Facts are distorted, selected and left out, in such a way that the whole picture will not be seen, but a certain mental idea will be built up by careful presentation. We see how tremendously effective propaganda is in what has been accomplished in a single generation in Germany, in Italy, in Russia, and Japan (lecture given May 12, 1942), where the point of view of a whole generation of young people has been molded according to the image dictated from the government. Propaganda is a terrible travesty on education, but its power comes from the fact that it is utilizing a true law—the only law by which teaching can be given.

All our teaching must be a selection of material and an ordering of it with some idea in view. We can't teach otherwise, but the great difference lies in our philosophy. What is it that we want to impart? What is it that we want our selection and ordering to imply to our children? In New Church education we seek to order material so that our children's minds shall be disposed toward the whole picture. We are not to distort the facts, not to remove some facts and hide them from our children so that their minds won't be distracted from what we want them to see. But we seek to prepare them to see the whole picture from the center of God and religion, not from the center of self. That is the difference.

All the facts of nature point back to the Creator

And no distortion of fact is needed because all the facts of nature, all the facts of every subject that we can put into the curriculum, point back to the Creator. And the real interpretation of

them, the real understanding of them, is possible only when we approach them from the standpoint of acknowledging the Creator as their Divine origin. So far as we can order our teaching from this standpoint, there will be insight on the part of the teacher into the deeper implications of the subject matter. From this standpoint the whole conception of the subject will derive its form and color, becoming distinctly different. It will produce a different effect on the minds of children.

This is exactly what is being done in an opposite direction by modern education everywhere. The philosophy of life which is directly contrary to the idea that we must trace everything back to its source from the Divine, is what molds and directs the selection and ordering of the material in all the text books and educational media that we find in the modern world. The whole idea of modern education is built up on the denial of that truth. Adopting a philosophy of life that is based on acknowledgment of the truth will produce a distinctive New Church education.

Ideals of the early Academy

All that is involved in the indirect use of Revelation is not yet fully realized. It is intangible to many, and only gradually will a full realization of it arise. The central idea had its origin in the early Academy as an ideal. It was involved in the choice of the name "Academy" in all the classical connotation of that word, and it was involved also in what was called the "University" idea. That a group of people, very few in number, should establish a theological school and a kindergarten with a few pupils, and have the temerity to talk about it as a "University," was a most astonishing thing. What they referred to was not simply the idea that in the distant future a large institution might develop and provide courses in every branch of human knowledge to thousands of students. That was not the main reason for speaking of it as a University. It was because the faculty believed the essential idea was a search for truth, a search for truth universally in every field of knowledge, and by truth they meant the truth of the New Church—not merely scientific accuracy, but truth. My criticism of the scientific attitude is not the utter devotion to accuracy, but its insistence upon confining thought to the sensory plane, an unwillingness to recognize and acknowledge spiritual things.

The spirit that animated the Academy was that the faculty should be made up of men and women of learning, men and women in search of truth. They saw such a vision of the new possibilities open to them through the Revelation given in the teachings for the New Church, and this vision was not merely a distant ideal. It was something immediately within their grasp. They saw it with an enthusiasm and spirit altogether out of proportion to the actual accomplishments that were possible within that day. However, their spirit and enthusiasm have produced the results that we now enjoy. The early Academicians were not satisfied merely to state an ideal and await an indefinite future for the ideal to be realized. They set out to realize it in as large a measure as was humanly possible in their day, and they did that with courage and with persistence that got results.

Some of the first attempts had to do, nonetheless, to a large extent, with the direct use of Revelation. Aside from a very few, the idea of the indirect use was not clearly seen, although it was involved in the whole spirit of the movement. But the direct use of Revelation, insofar as it outstripped the indirect use, had disappointing results. And as a result there followed a reaction. Questions and doubts arose as to whether the hopes of the early Academy could be realized; doubts as to whether we were not making too much of distinctive teaching; whether we weren't trying to enforce unnaturally the teaching of religion. Should we not after all put our main effort into improving the external efficiency of our teaching along lines such as we found in the world around us?

That was a natural reaction, almost inevitable under those circumstances, but it arose, not from anything wrong with the early Academy ideal, but from a too rapid and, in certain instances, injudicious application of that ideal. The truth is that unless we are constantly developing the indirect use of Revelation, our hopes to establish a truly distinctive system will fail. In this indirect application there is a limitless field of development in every subject that comes before the educators. There is a limitless field in our understanding of the human mind, our understanding of educational psychology, in the development of appropriate methods and modes, of presentation, and of pedagogy. And there is a limitless field in the interpretation of every science that we can present. There is a limitless field in the development of philosophy, especially Swedenborg's philosophy, in its relation to all human thinking. And finally, there is a limitless field in the development of the doctrine given in the teachings for the New Church.

The ongoing work of developing New Church education

Nothing has been given to us but the vision of truth in the teachings for the New Church. It has not been worked out for us. All the answers haven't been given. They are left for men to discover by the same means that they discover anything: to a considerable extent by trial and error, by patient experiment, over and over again. And so there must be the ideal of individual study and individual experiment as part of the teaching function in the New Church. There must be the realization that it is not enough to take care of the children that are given to us, although that is our most immediate duty. It is not enough to teach from day to day and feel that we have accomplished our function. We must be looking ahead. We must be building. We must be preparing so that our generation shall have made some contribution, taken some steps on which the next generation can go further in the matter of developing distinctive New Church teaching. All our teachers should have the attitude of continually learning what the world has to give. This was true of the founders of the Academy. They were men of education, of university training, men who had a great regard for knowledge in every field, and their standard should not be lowered.

We need to make certain experiments in the field of education, that nobody else is making today, to find out how certain things in the teachings for the New Church can be applied. It has to be done by establishing certain general New Church principles, and then inquiring what the relation of these principles is to the actual facts of our subject matter. How can we so present

the facts in that field to help children so that when they become adult, they will be able to think from a spiritual perspective?

PART FIVE: TEACHING ABOUT AND FROM DIVINE REVELATION

5.1. and 5.2 CORRESPONDENCES

I want to speak about using correspondences to lead our teaching to spiritual ideas when speaking of natural things. Not only are correspondences something we can use, they are something we cannot avoid using. We use them all the time in our teaching, consciously and unconsciously, for correspondence is the relation between the spiritual world as a world of causes and a natural world as a world of effects.

The human mind lives in both worlds. We have no sensation that does not include an impulse from without or from the natural world and an impulse from within or from the spiritual world. We try to explain and describe the things we feel by means of what we see. So, correspondence appears in all human language.

The study of language offers a very rich field for illustrating what correspondences are. The root meanings of words go back to more and more primitive language, where they had their origin in objects seen and in physical actions—concrete things. There are innumerable examples of how abstract ideas have been derived from concrete root meanings of words. For instance, the word “haughty” is derived from a root meaning “to be seen above.” The word “forgive” comes from a root meaning to cover, hide, pass over, make light of. Speech is an effort to explain the things we feel within that come from the other world by using the things we see in the material world.

Poetry and metaphor

Poetry is based on correspondence. Poetic expressions, similies, comparisons, and metaphors all make up poetic speech. When we speak about a ship that plows the sea we are comparing the similarity of physical appearances. But the real appeal of poetry happens in its human associations when a natural thing is compared to something we feel within.

The real essence of poetic expression is correspondence—the relation between the things in this world and the things of the other world. In ancient times this was the universal mode of speech. They spoke in correspondences and that form of speech has been preserved in the Sacred Scriptures. We find it in all the poetry of the Old Testament and in all the parables of the New Testament—comparison of natural and spiritual things, as when we say that God is a rock, a fortress, a high tower, meaning something immovable, strong, protective. Many, many

illustrations might be given. When the Lord said, “I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor,” He wasn’t speaking of reaping with a scythe. He was speaking of gathering the results of their efforts and labors, whatever they might be. And when He said, “I am the door of the sheep,” comparing a natural thing like a door to a spiritual way of entrance.

In ancient times people had not learned to speak scientifically. They hadn’t even conceived of such a thing. When I say “speak scientifically,” I mean speak with a definite attempt to rule out all our feelings and limit the thought to what comes from without. Scientific expression, in an effort for accuracy, yields a definition of factual content, and any feeling we might have must be eliminated. There was no such thing in ancient times. They didn’t care about facts. Facts had nothing to do with human life; they were merely dead things in the world around them which had no interest for them. So, throughout the Sacred Scripture external things are used very carelessly from the standpoint of science. They are not at all accurate in a scientific sense. We find unrealistically large numbers used in connection with armies because they did not care whether they counted them right or not. The numbers expressed how they felt about their tremendous armies.

Some say, “Are the Scriptures true?” Of course, they are true—true to the way they were written. They would not be true if we try to transpose them to our world and impress the limitations of scientific fact upon them.

Civil and moral customs

Our civil and moral customs also have their roots in ancient times. People expressed their feelings through acts as well as through words. Simple actions had profound significance for them and their meaning has come down to us in one way or another. Ancient people laid tremendous importance on eating together because it represented a bond of friendship. Holding up a hand as testifying to an oath has ancient origins in correspondences—the hand representing all the power of the will. Another ancient custom full of meaning was bringing a gift as a sign of allegiance.

Organic forms in nature

We also find correspondences throughout nature in organic forms. We are apt to think of correspondence as having to do with form, but primarily correspondence has to do with function. A function, or use, is always spiritual. A use exists first, and it produces the organic form. The use of the eye is to see. It appears as if we must have an eye first and then we see. But the use was there first and the organ was created to fill that use.

That is universally true—everything has its origin in the Divine Providence, Divine Love, the Divine foresight of what will serve the purpose of creation. So much is said in the teachings for the New Church about the human body because it is the most perfect illustration we can have of correspondences. Yet we should be careful about referring to some organ and saying it corresponds to so and so.

Don't teach correspondences as absolute facts

There is a danger in teaching correspondences categorically to children. We need to be careful that we do not just fill the minds of our children with categorical statements of correspondences and think that we have taught them what correspondences are. We haven't!

We have to remember that correspondences are very living things. They are highly complex. They are based, not on fixed forms, but on qualities. They are only partial and may appear more fully at one time than another, and therefore correspondences depend upon the occasion—the source or the context in which a thing is used. The teachings for the New Church, in explaining the correspondences of the Word, speak of a thing as having one correspondence in one passage and quite a different correspondence in another passage. If a lion is referred to as a destructive and ravenous beast that slays ruthlessly, it has an evil correspondence. But the same lion spoken of as the most powerful of all animals may have a good correspondence, may even represent the infinite power of the Lord Himself.

Correspondence is the greatest of all the sciences. Ancient people considered it to be the science of sciences. It will again be so considered when humanity has gotten past the present stage of supposing that the only thing worthwhile is what we get after we have squeezed all the correspondence out. If we get past that adolescent stage of human development, the interest in and importance of correspondences will be restored. And because it is such a great science, it is a mistake to over-simplify it, merely making a dictionary of correspondences, and then from that dictionary have our children memorize the meaning of certain things, so that they think they have mastered the science of correspondences. It simply doesn't work that way.

Stories provide the perfect medium for correspondences

Often our mistake is that we have come to see something of a spiritual nature from our study of the teachings for the New Church. We want to impart that to children without realizing that we have gone through a series of steps to reach it. Children haven't, and to pour knowledge into their minds doesn't give it to them at all. It can't. They have to go through those steps too.

Now there is where the great use of poetry, fable, and folklore comes in. They provide the intermediate steps of coming to know and understand and appreciate what is meant by correspondences.

Summary

The use of natural comparisons and metaphors prepares the mind to see spiritual things in adult age. They are steps leading to the perceptions of correspondences, and it is just for the establishment of these steps that man is born into infancy, and grows through infancy and childhood into adult age. Without receiving in their minds those intermediate steps, there could be no understanding and perception of spiritual things.

Imaginative pictures prepare the mind to clothe spiritual truth. The purely scientific attitude would lead to a disparagement of these imaginative things on the grounds that the only things of real value are those things that are factually true, and that when we tell children stories and fables, we are telling them something that isn't true, something that we will need to modify later in life. This is a great mistake. If we understand what the purpose of these things is, we can see that we are not telling the children things that are not true. We are telling them the only truth they are capable of understanding. If we try to tell them scientific facts that are beyond their age, we won't be telling them the truth either; we will just be giving them an incomprehensible idea.

If we have in mind preparing children to see spiritual truth in adult age, then we can use imaginative things far more effectively and intelligently than we can otherwise.

Quotes from Arcana Caelestia on Correspondences

AC 2333^{3,4} So that the nature of correspondence may be known, or what amounts to the same, how worldly and bodily ideas pass over into corresponding spiritual and celestial ideas when they are raised toward heaven, let 'the morning' ...be taken as an example: when a person reads of 'the morning', as in the phrase 'rising up in the morning', angels do not conceive the idea of the start to a new day but the idea which 'morning' has in the spiritual sense. The idea they conceive is similar to the statement in Samuel,

The Rock of Israel,...He is like the *morning* light, when the sun rises on a cloudless *morning*. 2 Sam. 23: 3,4

Thus, instead of 'the morning' angels perceive the Lord, or His kingdom, or celestial things of love and charity. This they do varyingly according to the train of thought in the Word which a person is reading.

Similarly, where a person reads of 'a way' as in 'going on your way' they cannot have any idea of a way, but a spiritual or a celestial idea, that is to say, like that in John, when the Lord said, I am *the way* and the truth. John 14: 6

Thus, instead of 'a way' angels perceive truth. They do so in the historical as well as the prophetic sections of the Word; in fact, angels no longer have any interest in matters of history as these are not at all in keeping with the ideas they have. Consequently, in place of historical details, they perceive such things as belong to the Lord and His kingdom, which also follow on one after another in marvelous array and perfect sequence in the internal sense. For this reason, so that the Word may serve angels as well, all historical details there are representative, and each expression serves to mean such things. This special feature is what makes the Word different from all other literature.

AC 4653 The deeper meanings which human utterances possess have their origin in for the most part in correspondence, the reason being that a person's spirit exists among spirits in the next life, and exercises its power of thought there, though the person has no knowledge at all of this and one interested solely in the body has no wish to know it.

AC 4526 The reason why people are able to acquire intelligence by means of the things which are seen in the light of the world is that a higher light, or the light of heaven, flows into the objects made visible by the light of the world and causes them to be seen in a representative and correspondential fashion. For the light that is above the light of the world is that which proceeds from the Lord who enlightens the whole of heaven. Intelligence and wisdom themselves which come from the Lord are seen there as light, and it is this light which constitutes a person's understanding or internal sight. When that light is flowing in through the understanding into the objects made visible by the light of the world it causes them to be seen in a representative and correspondential fashion, and so to be seen with understanding.

AC 5131 There is a correspondence of sensory impressions with natural ideas, a correspondence of natural ideas with spiritual realities, a correspondence of spiritual realities of celestial entities, and a correspondence of celestial entities with the Lord's Divine. This a sequence of correspondences exists extending from the Divine down to the last and lowest degree of the natural,

AC 5131³ From this it is evident that both the interior and the exterior aspects of human beings, that is their rational concepts, natural ideas, and sensory impressions, must be brought into a state of correspondence so that the Divine can flow in and be received by a person, consequently so that they may be born again, prior to which all is not well with them.

AC 4044 Representations are nothing else than images of spiritual things manifested in natural ones, and when the former are accurately represented in the latter they correspond. But anyone who does not know what the spiritual dimension is but only what the natural is may imagine that such representations and consequent correspondences are not possible. For people might say to themselves, how can that which is spiritual act on that which is material? But if they will reflect on the things taking place every moment within themselves, they will be able to gain some concept of them—that is to say, if they will reflect on how the will can act on the muscles of the body and produce actual movements; or on how thoughts can act on the organs of speech, by moving the lungs, windpipe, throat, tongue, and lips, and so produce speech; also on how affections can act on the face and there produce images of themselves, so much so that from these one person often knows what another thinks and wills. These actions are able to provide some idea of representations and correspondences.

AC 4223 Once the forms have been produced or the organs adapted, the uses they serve then flow from them, in which event it seems as though the forms or organs were prior to the uses, when that is not in fact the case. For the use flows in from the Lord, by way of heaven in

keeping with correspondences. This is the manner in which people are brought into existence and in which they are kept in existence.

AC 6232³ One thing in the natural world corresponds to millions in the spiritual world.

AC 8812^e Natural things arise from spiritual ones as effects from their causes. Consequently, there is a correspondence of all things in the world with those in heaven, and therefore the whole natural order is nothing other than a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom.

5.3 THE DOCTRINE OF GENUINE TRUTH

The doctrine of genuine truth keeps us straight in our use of correspondences, so that we don't go off at a tangent and build up imaginary conclusions that are contrary to truth. Doctrine in its origin is the light of heaven, spiritual light revealing spiritual objects or truths to the mind. That light is invisible to children until the internal degrees of the mind are open, until the spiritual mind that is the eye which sees that light has been formed and opened. Since that doesn't happen until after the period of growth, doctrine cannot be taught to children. But there are intermediate steps appropriate to every age of a growing child which are the means of forming or building the mind that will see doctrine, will see in spiritual light.

Spiritual light falls also upon natural objects, and when the mind of man has been opened to see it, spiritual light shines through natural objects. This is especially the case in the Word where word pictures are so put together that spiritual light may shine through. We have throughout the Sacred Scripture places where the internal meaning or spiritual meaning is obvious, open, clear, right in the literal meaning. These passages in the Word where spiritual truth shines through comprise the doctrine of genuine truth. We have to build up the doctrine of genuine truth in our minds by gathering together these passages from the Word where truth shines through and ordering them in such relation that they build up a system of truth. These passages in the Word where the spiritual sense shines through can be learned by children and understood naturally, and from their natural understanding their minds are prepared to see the spiritual meaning and significance later.

We teach everything through story

What we may understand spiritually, we give children in natural illustrations so that they may understand it naturally. That is the way the mind is built. Let me illustrate. We teach little children everything by means of a story. What is a story? Nothing but a putting together of imaginary things in a certain order that to us means something. This is the thing that builds the minds of the children in such a way that they can see that thing as they grow older. Although

the child, when we are telling the story, may not consciously realize what we see in it and are trying to pass on to him, yet he sees the story and is interested in the pictures and back of that he sees something more. He may not understand what it is, but he perceives something else. So, the mind is led on and on to higher understanding and perception.

Whenever we tell a story with the idea of teaching something that is spiritually true or even naturally true, we are imparting doctrine to children that is appropriate to their age. We might try to teach them doctrine directly. As an obvious illustration, we might teach them doctrine by quoting the teachings for the New Church, the rational language, words and terms of which they do not understand, and the meanings of which are entirely beyond them. We might think we are teaching them doctrine, but we wouldn't be. However, if from our knowledge of the teachings for the New Church, we select stories that illustrate to us spiritual truths, and we tell those stories to the children so that they perceive something more deeply, which leads their minds on, then we are really teaching doctrine to the children—their kind of doctrine, the kind that belongs to their age.

The whole of the Word in its literal sense is doctrine. The stories of the Word are nothing but doctrine for children. The internal sense of the Word is doctrine for adults, but stories of the Word are doctrine for children. The parables of the Word are doctrine for older children, and the scientific explanation of those parables—that is the laws of nature that illustrate spiritual truth – are doctrine for youth. These three kinds of doctrine: just word pictures for very little children, stories with a meaning obvious to the child for older children, and scientific explanations ordered to illustrate spiritual truth appropriate to youth, are found in every part of the Word, and the Word can be taught in such a way as to bring out any one or another. There are certain parts of the Word that are more obviously adapted to teaching little children. There are other parts that are more obviously adapted to teaching older children, and there are still others that arouse the interest of youth. But the Word can be taught, drawing out that which is appropriate to each of these ages, from any part.

The Word is the essential origin and source of all doctrine. If we understand the doctrine of genuine truth from the Word, then we can utilize all truth – natural truth, scientific truth, or truth of nature to teach doctrine appropriate to children. And we can use it either in story form for little children, or in imaginative dramatic stories bringing out virtues and natural emotions for older children, or in ways which appeal to the interest in scientific truth with youth. We first have, therefore, doctrine made of sense images and word pictures, but word pictures designed to lead the mind on to see something deeper. Then we have imaginative and moral stories that lead the mind to perceive what is meant by virtues and vices: hero tales, folk-lore illustrating the victory of good over evil, stories arousing natural sympathies, mercy and compassion and charity, comprising dramatic representations of all kinds. These also are the means of imparting doctrine. But note that these may be true or false. It is of utmost importance that we surround our children with true teachings, and those who understand the doctrine of genuine truth from the Word can select accordingly. Such teachers can utilize stories in a way that others cannot,

and there is the whole difference with New Church teaching. That is what the New Church brings to us—an ordering of all these things; not a direct teaching of doctrine to children that is beyond them, but an ordering of all their teaching in all their subjects in such a way that the impression made on their minds will prepare them to see spiritual truth later.

Now this is where the difficulty comes with other educational systems. If we have an educational system that is opposed to the acknowledgment of God, of the Word, of life after death, then quite unconsciously all the things that are taught are put together in such a way as to convey an impression to the mind, making it easy to see *that* philosophy, and hard to see the *truth* later in life. In the New Church, we must become more and more skillful in preparing children in the proper way to see spiritual truth when they become adult.

5.4 DIVINE REVELATION AND ABSOLUTE TRUTH

We shouldn't have too narrow an idea of what doctrine is. Many people think that doctrine is something put forth by the church, some conclusion formulated from scripture. But any teaching is doctrine. And teaching is based on some idea of authority.

There is doctrine for every plane of the mind, and as the mind grows it passes from one plane to the other. Doctrine on the sensory plane applies to little children when they first begin to learn.

Teach sensory appearances first

Doctrine for children is in the form of sensory appearances, such as that the sun rises and sets; the earth is flat; the sky is blue. Everything as it appears to the senses is truth on that plane. And children must learn to distinguish between these appearances before they can learn that they are appearances and what the truth behind them really is. Teaching at first is a teaching of the appearances themselves, how to distinguish between them and how they are related to one another, and these appearances are true. The sun does rise. We see it every morning and it sets every night. That is perfectly true. The question of why it does so, or what makes it so appear, is something else. But appearance is a truth and a very important truth. So, children must first learn sensory appearances.

Imaginative truth belongs to childhood

Then there are appearances on the imaginative plane which must be taught next to children. These are also true, although they are not factual. For instance, good is always victorious over evil. The idea that the maiden who is rescued by the brave knight is always beautiful, is true but not always factual. The idea that the unknown hero turns out to be a prince with a kingdom to offer his beloved is not always factual either. Finally, the idea that they live happily ever after—this is truth as imagination would picture it. We like to see it as we think it ought to be, as we feel it ought to be. If you stop to consider, there is a reason we feel that way. We would not feel

that way if there were not a truth behind that picture in the imagination. Why should we feel that good ought always to be victorious over evil? Because there is something in us that tells us it is true. It is satisfying to our inner feeling of what is right and appropriate. Indeed, we are created to perceive what is true.

Now that is the part that is not recognized by many who become enamored of scientific teaching. They lose sight of the fact that imaginative things are expressing truth, a deeper truth, a truth that is of utmost importance for children to learn before they can really understand or interpret scientific truth. And while they will need to revise their understanding of this truth, and come to acknowledge that it is not always factual, nevertheless, because they have learned this truth, they will be able to interpret rightly, in accord with the truth, the appearances and the factual actualities of life which they find later. Imaginative truth belongs to childhood.

The realism of youth

When we pass out of childhood into youth, we can correct our impressions of imaginative truth. What belongs to us then are rational appearances of truth, and these are always realistic. We are not satisfied to simply believe the hero is always a prince when we see from our own experience that he isn't. We want to understand truth in relation to life as we find it. To do this, we have to begin to understand why things must take place, what is the cause, and this leads us to the idea of principles, the abstract idea of law, of invisible forces that operate according to laws. When we get to the point where we are not satisfied to assume that things are as we feel they ought to be, and are compelled to face them as they are, we long to reconcile actuality with those feelings that are so satisfied with our imaginative interpretation of life, those feelings about what is right and just and fair. This raises many problems, but rational interpretations give rise to a practical philosophy which is a reconciliation between what we feel things ought to be and how we actually find them.

Absolute truth

Unless this philosophy is led by some inner perception of truth, it becomes purely opportunist. It has nothing to anchor it. It drifts with the current of the times. It sways with every wind of public opinion. It merely seeks to satisfy the requirements of the moment, but it has nothing permanent, nothing deep and immovable to direct it or hold it steady. If it is to have an anchor, there must be some internal perception of truth above our own interpretation of how we think things ought to be. There must be some perception of truth, of an absolute truth, some standards above our own opinion or anybody else's opinion, by which we can measure and judge how far our philosophical conclusions will stand the test. Of course, we at once face the problem of authority.

If we merely accept some established authority blindly, because we have been taught that it is so, or because it has stood the test of time, because many generations have held to it, because it is one of the oldest concepts in the history of mankind, or some other such reason, then we do become guilty of authoritarianism. And that kind of blind authority closes the mind and

blocks intellectual progress. This is perfectly true. On the other hand, to refuse to acknowledge that there is such a thing as an absolute truth, that there is a standard by which to measure, blocks our progress just as much. Without such a standard, we would never know where we are going and may retract tomorrow what we are sure of today.

The modern tendency is to recognize one absolute truth, one basis and foundation of absolute truth, and that is nature itself. The careful examination of nature, checked and rechecked, is the ground and basis of all modern scientific development. With the acceptance of that authority, and the overthrow of a blind following of ecclesiastical dogma, the way was opened to tremendous development of knowledge and practical use of the researches of nature. But if we acknowledge only this one foundation or basis, we are tied to what we can prove by sensory demonstration. We still have no guide whatever regarding those inner feelings of what is right and wrong; no guide whatever to a philosophical interpretation of life, as to why it is there, what it is all for, where it is all going. The fact that we must acknowledge nature as an authority by no means blocks other intellectual progress, but opens it.

It is just as valid for men to acknowledge Divine Revelation as authority. In the same way and for the same reason, it will not block their intellectual progress, but will open unending avenues of intellectual development. This does not mean accepting some interpretation of Divine Revelation that has been established by the Church or accepting the authority of tradition. Regarding Divine Revelation as something that has been given by the Lord, reveals answers that cannot be proved by sensory demonstration. In seeking these answers, people must acknowledge that there is an absolute truth regarding those things that they feel internally but cannot prove by sensory demonstrations. They must acknowledge there is an absolute truth about what is right in itself, whether people think so or not; that this right has been revealed in the Word; and that a person can approach an understanding of it ever more nearly, although never attain the absolute truth.

What is true for investigating nature is just as true for Divine Revelation. People go on investigating nature, and while they prove this, that, and the other thing, they always find more discoveries that modify their proofs. So it is with spiritual things. To recognize that the Word is absolute truth, but that human beings merely approach the understanding of that truth, and try to have as the ideal an ever closer approach to it, cultivating an internal humility—recognizing that we know very little and must continually be in need of learning—this is what opens the way to intelligence and wisdom, to all intellectual development.

Thus, there are two foundations of truth; both of them true in themselves; both of them above any human opinion; both of them capable of being misunderstood, but both of them also capable of being more and more truly understood if we approach them rightly. That is the ideal of authority that leads to wisdom.

The difference between genuine authority and authoritarianism

Blindly accepted authority, is as we have said, authoritarianism, and at the present day there is a great tendency to confuse this with any belief in Divine Revelation. Only nature must be so approached as an authority—that is the modern attitude. But what happens when we adopt that idea? The result is that we merely exchange some authority of religion or the church for human authorities.

So, we need to see the difference between true genuine authority and what is called authoritarianism. And there is good reason why we need to free our minds from being bound to the authoritarianism that arises when we do not acknowledge the Divine authority of the Word. Whence comes the Divine authority of the Word in a practical sense for us? It is not merely acknowledging that here is something that has been spoken by God and therefore it is true. If that were all, and we were incapable of understanding it, that would certainly be a blind authority. To simply acknowledge, for instance, the Hebrew scriptures as true without knowing Hebrew, without ever being able to read them, but looking at them and saying, “That is the Word of God, therefore it is true” would certainly be blind authoritarianism even in acknowledging the Divinity of the Word. Its truth must be based in the last analysis on the living perception of what must be true, what we sense and perceive within ourselves.

Truths that are common sense

In the Word there are many things we do not understand, but there are also truths plainly stated which at once appeal to the mind, to which the mind gives immediate assent from common perception. In this assent, all people agree; if they don't, it is because they have destroyed that common perception in themselves. The truth is that there is a God, and if there is a God, He must be good. He must represent the highest good possible, and what He says must be true, must be the highest possible truth. What He does must be just; whatever He does must be merciful. Everything that God does must be in order. These are things to which the human mind gives immediate assent from what we call common perception, and they give a basis for an acknowledgment that the Word is from the Divine.

If, then, in our efforts to interpret life as we find it, we begin our thinking with universal principles such as these drawn from the Word, and confirmed by the doctrine of genuine truth and refuse to be turned from by external appearances to the contrary, while still always questioning and seeking to improve our personal understanding of those principles and how they are to be applied; then we are submitting to authority that will by no means close the mind, but will open the way to unlimited progress in development in a definite direction. It will give the opportunity, the possibility of developing an understanding ever more nearly in accord with the truth of nature, on the one hand, and the truth of the Word on the other.

That is the ideal authority, very simply put, which the teachings for the New Church give us. And it is the concept of teaching that should guide us in imparting doctrine to our children in

school. This is the ideal to which they ought to be led, and if we reflect upon it we find that it will greatly modify our mode of teaching.

Should we use the inquiry approach or authoritative approach in education?

There is tremendous confusion in educational thought in the present day because of this matter of authority. On the one hand, it is recognized that whatever you teach is going to come before the children with some authority. On the other hand, it is recognized that ideas and opinions are changing very rapidly. Times change, and how do we know that the things we teach today will not be denied tomorrow? Therefore, there is a tremendous uncertainty and hesitation as to what we ought to teach.

Many say: "Let's not teach them anything. At least, let's not give the impression that we are sure of anything. Let's teach children that they have to learn for themselves; have to develop their own ideas out of their own experiences, and not rely on anybody else. Let's just leave them without any authoritative teaching whatever." The result is that the poor children are lacking the kind of guidance and direction which is necessary to build up any idea in their own minds as to how they are to find the truth when they grow older. They are left drifting on an open sea without any compass or any rudder. The natural idea they get is, "Whatever I think is true, must be right. Whatever I think is so must have authority in itself." It leads right back to self-intelligence without any recognition of Divine Revelation. These children are supposed to come to the truth by their own discovery, by testing it out and finding whether it is true or not. Only what they so test and find out for themselves should they be expected to believe. Therefore, it is a mistake to teach anything positive, but always teach it with a question, and let the children find out for themselves.

Now there is some value in this, and if that attitude were combined with a recognition of Divine Revelation as absolute truth, to which people may approach more nearly, as well as the recognition of nature as a basis of truth to which people can approach much more nearly, then it would lead in the right direction. But if it doesn't involve that, then it leaves the mind adrift. To lead properly we must teach positively, definitely, that what the Lord says in the Word is true.

5.5 USING THE IMAGINATION IN EDUCATION

Teaching in the other world is done largely by living representations or experiences. And when these experiences are described in writing, they are made available to others and pass before the imagination as they are read. This is very real to children who, in the imagination, live these things themselves, and thus they have a similar experience, only less powerful.

Swedenborg's descriptions of his "Memorable Occurrences" in the teachings for the New Church help to make doctrine living for children. We might teach a doctrine to children as an abstract thing and it would have very little meaning. But if doctrine can be illustrated by actual experiences, then what is abstract comes down into the concrete. The value of all our teaching, whether we draw from history, from fable, folklore, or literature is to illustrate and make concrete laws that otherwise would be abstract.

Folklore, fable, fairy tales—all these have the same value as the Memorable Occurrences for little children. They are based on the idea of the spiritual world, of the human mind and the way it operates. They illustrate spiritual laws, and the more ancient the stories are, the more illustrative they are because they were written, or came into being, at a time when people had a perception of the spiritual world. Modern fairy tales that are purely imaginary, written by people who have no idea whatever of the spiritual world, are often purely fantastic and have no internal truth. They may even contain a very false idea of life, and therefore we need to select with care from modern fairy tales. They might be very interesting as stories, but that would not be the only criterion to consider. Do they give a true picture of life or not? Will they lead the mind to see what is true later or do they tend to implant some false idea?

Should we tell children fairy tales are real?

When a small child asks how much is real in fairy tale, what should we tell them? Of course, it depends on the circumstances, but as a rule we can tell them that it is real. It is *real*, only it is not *factual*. It is easy for them to realize later that the reality lies in the other world, not in this one.

Children readily respond to teaching about the other world. They have no difficulty at all. Therefore, it is altogether right and useful that teachers in New Church schools use Swedenborg's descriptions of his visits with angels and people in the spiritual world naturally, as a matter of course, so that the other world and its reality is taken for granted, not to be questioned or proved. You don't have to prove the reality of the other world to children. They believe it spontaneously. They are created to see and understand it. There is no hesitation or doubt about it. Simple people everywhere who have not been indoctrinated against it, spontaneously believe in the other world.

This matter of using the imagination in education is an art whether we are doing it by telling a story, by dramatization, or by other means. That art will grow and increase with us, become

more powerful, as we become more skillful. The importance of it is that it will make the spiritual world more real. It will increase the sense of the reality of that world with our children, and enable them to maintain it after the state of childhood passes. The greatest value of those early stories can be maintained and interpreted in rational terms when the time comes.

5.6 REVERENCE FOR THE WORD

Finally, I'd like to make a few remarks on the subject of using the Bible. The tradition of the Academy has been opposed to the using the Bible in secular subjects, and the reason was to increase the sense of reverence for the Word in the minds of children. This was a reaction against the frequent custom in other schools of using the Bible in the same way that we would use any other book. It was used just as if it were an ancient document without any special sanctity. Various types of literature and poetry and prose were illustrated using parts of the Bible, and it was used as a text to study grammar and literary structure of language.

Possibly the Academy went too far to the other extreme, and there grew up a sort of hesitation and fear of using the Word. Certainly, there was a period when it was rather noticeable that children taught in our schools had less knowledge of the Bible than many children brought up in Christian churches with Christian church education. Our great stress was on the teaching of doctrine, and for a time at least, the Bible was somewhat neglected. I believe that has been corrected.

We have to try to define the proper use of the Bible in connection with secular studies. It can and should be used. In later periods of education, using it for the study of literature, poetry, etc. is valuable and necessary. The Bible can and should be used with little children in various studies, such as geography, and history. The challenge is to do this in such a way as not to detract from a sense of its holiness, preserving with the child a realization that the Word is not like other books, and that what is written there is to be differently regarded from all other human writing.

There is a strong tendency in circles where the Word is not held in sanctity to ridicule, and this is something into which children can naturally fall because the expressions of the Word are strange and unusual to them. The only way to avoid this natural tendency is to teach them to regard the Word as holy. This tendency is not by any means confined to children. They come in contact with it continually in public print and in the common usage of grown people. My own experience in college illustrates it. One of our professors was noted for his scriptural jokes. He was always using the Word as the basis of jokes, with flippant allusions, and they had a big effect on the class. It was an effect which destroyed any sense of holiness about the Word and filled the mind with mental pictures that were extremely disturbing. It is such a common thing that we sometimes fall into it ourselves without realizing it. We find it commonly done in the world around us and certainly it affects children.

It was, as I say, in reaction against these various things that the early Academy strictly avoided using the Bible except in religious classes and in the sphere of worship. Symbolic of the Academy's whole attitude toward the Bible was the kindergarten beginning the day with the morning worship circle, reading the stories of the Word. We need not avoid using the Bible where we have built up a common sense of reverence for the Word on the part of all our older people with whom our children come in contact. We can be freer. The essential thing is not a form. The essential thing is an attitude of reverence in the mind. If that is there, we can use the Word quite naturally.

Reverence for the Word in the mind of the teacher

Where there is reverence for the Word in the mind of the teacher, so that this has become a natural attitude—nothing assumed but completely natural—and where that attitude of reverence is felt by the children, and has been established in the school as what is right, then the Word can be used quite freely, whether in religious classes or in secular classes.

Apart from its spiritual significance, the Bible is a source of literary power and beauty that we can learn to appreciate. If we realize that this power had its origin in Divine inspiration, it will increase our reverence for the Word.

APPENDIX A
KEY TO THE RETITLING OF CHAPTERS

Appendix A: Key to the Retitling of Chapters of The Philosophy of New Church Education

	Chapter Titles in the 1979 Transcription of the 1942 Lectures	Titles in This Edition
Part One	The Conscious Mind	Swedenborg's Theory about the Mind
1.1	Consciousness Results from the Meeting of Two Worlds	Consciousness Results from the Meeting of Two Worlds
1.2	The Internal and External Sensories	The Natural and Spiritual Minds
Part Two	The Philosophy of Education	A New Philosophy of Education
2.1	The Relation of Secular and Religious Education	Religion and Education
2.2	A Definition of Education	Defining Education
2.3	Formal Education	Instruction and Spiritual Purpose
2.4	Religious Education	Religious Education for Children
2.5	Remains	Remnants: Essential Influences in Childhood
2.6	Secular Education	Knowledge as Foundation for Spiritual Truth
2.7	New Church Education	A Task for New Church Educators
2.8	Vocational Training	Vocational Training
2.9	Learning and the Affections	Learning and The Affections
2.10	The Divine End or Purpose in Education	The Work of a Teacher
Part Three	The Ultimate Aims of Education	The Ultimate Goals of Education
3.1	Free Choice	Free Choice
3.2	True Rationality as a Goal of Education	True Rationality
3.3	Conscience	Conscience
3.4	Character	Character
3.5	The New Church Concept of Use	The New Church Concept of Use
3.6	Every Occupation Has a Spiritual Value	Every Occupation Has a Spiritual Value
Part Four	The Philosophy of Natural Learning	Organizing Natural Knowledges to Prepare the Mind for Spiritual Truth
4.1	The Natural and the Spiritual	The Relationship Between What is Spiritual and What is Natural
4.2	The Ordering of Knowledges	The Difference Between Natural and Spiritual Thinking
4.3	The Opening of the Three Degrees of the Natural Mind	Seeing Higher Truth
4.4	The Purpose of All Teaching is Spiritual	Developmentally Appropriate Religious Instruction
4.5	The Direct and Indirect Use of Revelation in New Church Education	The Direct and Indirect Use of Revelation
4.6	New Church Philosophy of Subject Matter	Developing New Church Education
Part Five	The Direct Use of Revelation	Teaching About and From Revelation
5.1	Correspondences	Correspondences
5.2	Correspondence, Representation, Signification	

5.3	The Doctrine of Genuine Truth	The Doctrine of Genuine Truth
5.4	Authority and Doctrine	Divine Revelation and Absolute Truth
5.5	The Use of the Memorable Relations	Using the Imagination in Education
5.6	The Use of the Letter of the Word in Teaching	Reverence for the Word

Editor's note: All subheadings in bold within the chapters are new additions and do not appear in the 1979 transcription.