

We know that Emanuel Swedenborg, spent a large portion of his time traveling through countries outside Sweden and that he passed the last part of his life in England. However, it is quite clear that the place where he worked the most and where he returned again and again was Stockholm, the place of his birth. Of course this city has changed dramatically since the time when he lived there, but the whole structure of the central areas, where he was reportedly seen by many, is still largely the same as it was in his lifetime.

According to the “old calendar”² Emanuel Swedenborg was born on January 29, 1688 in Stockholm in the parish of Jacobs Kyrka, on Regeringsgatan 18, in the center of the present city, and the distance from there to the old royal palace was quite short. The entries of the baptism of the child Emanuel Swedenborg are still preserved in the parish church.³ His father served as a royal court and army chaplain. In the park that is there is the Kungsträdgården (Royal Garden), and we also have reports about it of how later the adult Emanuel had met with people in this central Stockholm park. Opposite the park today is Jernkontoret, the “Iron Office,” which today holds certain functions of the Bergs Collegium of the eighteenth-century. The Bergs Collegium was dissolved in the mid-nineteenth-century, but its activity is carried on by the Kommers Kollegium (Chamber of Commerce) and Jern Kontoret, both of which existed previously.

On the outer side of the corner of the Jern Kontoret building can be seen a large portrait medallion of Emanuel Swedenborg, and various other eminent scientists. Around 1950, when I was a young man and new in the

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¹ *Offene Tore* (Swedenborg Center, Zürich) (3:2011): 158–170; translator, Kurt P. Nemitz.

² In 1753, Sweden introduced the “new” Gregorian calendar. It differed by eleven days from the “old” Julian calendar. According to our “new” calendar Swedenborg was born on the 9th of February.

³ Frans G. Lindh, “Swedenborg’s Födelseort och Dop” (Swedenborg’s Birthplace and Baptism), *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* (1914): 138.

New Church, we used to explore the building on Regeringsgatan to find out how much of the house is left from the time when Swedenborg was born. A significant part of the house was still standing, but some years later, all the buildings around the St. Jacobs Kyrka were torn down, and now there are only recently erected buildings.

It seems about the same was the case with the house in the vicinity of the nearly vanished Brunkebergstorg, where Swedenborg's first permanent residence in Stockholm was as an adult. It was only when he had reached the mature age of thirty-six years and held a secure position as a full assessor of the Bergs Collegium (July 15, 1724) that he rented his own premises in the house of Count Gyllenborg in the parish of Sancta Clara, not far from today's central station. It is said that during his stay in this mansion he had a servant, named Olof. At that time he also had a close if not always cordial relationship with Lars Benzelstierna, who was married to his sister Hedvig and lived in the same house.⁴

The island of Gamla Stan (Old Town) is the very center of Stockholm, and Emanuel worked and lived there for a long time. The Bergs Collegium in Swedenborg's time had its seat at the Mynttorget in Gamla Stan in a building that was used until recently by the Swedish central government. When the Bergs Collegium moved away from the Mynttorget, parts of Swedenborg's furniture were moved into the building in Riddarholmen which is occupied at the present day by the Kommers Kollegium.

The Kommers Kollegium is located near the Riddarholms Church, the royal burial church, where all the royal friends of Swedenborg were buried. Quite near it is the Riddarhuset (Knights House or House of Nobles), where he represented his family from 1719 until his last years as a very active member of the Parliament. In Emanuel's childhood the old royal palace, which was also in this region, was destroyed by a fire, and as he was growing up the new palace, which can be seen today, was built by the great Swedish architect Nicodemus Tessin and was completed by his son Carl Gustaf Tessin, a close friend of Swedenborg.

Swedenborg's sister Hedvig died in 1728 and shortly thereafter he withdrew from the northern part of the city center to Gamla Stan. He

⁴F. G. Lindh, "Swedenborg som äktenskapskandidat" (Swedenborg as marriage prospect), *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* (1917): 41–43.

moved his quarters to Stora Nygatan, today No. 7, at the corner of Stora Nygatan and Göran Helsing Gränd. His residence there was very close to the Bergs Collegium, which is now located at the Mynttorget, and during the five years he spent there, he completed his three-volume work *Philosophica Opera et Mineralia*. He recorded an impressive vision of the Stora Nygatan in his *Spiritual Diary*:

My inward sight was opened and I looked into Stockholm's Stora Nygatan⁵ and then saw many walking there. Next I was led onto the street. And there were angels with me. They said that in the houses roundabout no one was alive but all were dead, that is to say, spiritually, so that they were horrified and did not want to go further. When they are dead in the houses there, then no windows appear in the houses, but holes, inside which all is dark; but when they are alive, windows appear and in them people. I then was led to Lilla Nygatan.⁶ There, it was said, a few were alive. Then I was lead back toward Slussen. At the market place there scarcely anyone was alive. Where the food shops were it was said there were few. Likewise on the other side of the bridge, where food shops around the marketplace were, there were not any who were alive, except in one house, on the corner. There was no one in the great houses there besides this. Then, on the long street from the marketplace, where the pharmacy was, there was also no one alive, but I did not look far. And not a living spirit was seen from the marketplace toward the sea, and then farther. (*Spiritual Experiences* 5711)

Swedenborg's experience in assessing the people in the spiritual world in this part of Stockholm is an accurate physical picture of this district today. The same streets—Stora Gatan, Lilla Nygatan and Långgatan—are still here, as well as the marketplace near the water, the Kornhamnstorget.

When Swedenborg returned from his fourth trip abroad in 1740, he fell in love with this street and rented an apartment left vacant by one of his relatives, the great scientist Carl von Linné. It was located in the so-called Röntmästarehuset at the corner of Slussplan Skeppsbron and in the

⁵ A street of this name.

⁶ A street of this name.

southern part of Gamla Stan, near the water, which separates this part of the south-central part of Stockholm, Södermalm. The old buildings there are maintained more or less as at Swedenborg's time.⁷

In November 1740 Linnaeus invited Swedenborg, to join the recently created Academy of Sciences, and they must have known each other pretty well. Swedenborg's older cousin Johan Moraeus served in Emanuel's home as his private teacher when he was still a student of medicine.⁸ He and his wife took over the family estate Sveden near Falun in Dalarna, and that is the reason why Linnaeus and Moraeus' daughter, Sara Elizabeth Moraea, was married there. During the years 1738 to 1740 Linnaeus was active as a physician in Gamla Stan, and he held very popular lectures there.⁹ Swedenborg and Linnaeus could not at all avoid meeting. It is quite likely that they saw each other every day.

A volume of the original edition of the work *Heaven and Hell*, Swedenborg gave to Linnaeus has been preserved by the Library of the Swedish Academy of Sciences and is now in the University Library of Stockholm.

Swedenborg was quite often abroad, including 1743–1745, but during that time he had apartments that were prepared for him in Stockholm. In 1745 he was again in the Röntmästarehuset residence. Frans G. Lindh, the principal researcher on Swedenborg Swedenborg's locations in Stockholm describes the residence as follows:

According to the tax list the first-floor apartment was down to the south, because, as is well known, Swedenborg preferred to have his home in rooms that receive sun from the south. Downstairs was a café that was certainly visited by the coffee-lover Swedenborg and that was in possession of the shop-keeper with the Danish-sounding name Finn Holsten Hobel.¹⁰

⁷F. G. Lindh, "Swedenborg som Söderbo" (Swedenborg as living on Söder), *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* (1921): 137.

⁸Cyriel Sigstedt, *The Swedenborg Epic* (London: Swedenborg Society, 1981), 97, 162.

⁹Carl Forsstrand, *Linnés Stockholm* (Linnaeus' Stockholm) (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers, 1915), 58–151.

¹⁰Lindh, "Swedenborg som Söderbo," *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* (1921): 138.

From the report of a Swedish clergyman, we also know that Emanuel Swedenborg could be found now and then in the Taverne Gyldene Freden, the “The Golden Peace,” a restaurant of that time which still exists today in Gamla Stan. In the eighteenth century this place especially connected with the local appearance of the National Swedish poet Carl Michael Bellman, who was famous as a singer and musician. Bellman was younger than Swedenborg, but somewhat his contemporary. Obviously both of them had good contacts with the family of the Dutch Ambassador de Marteville, and both had problems in connection with the same Archbishop Peter Filenius.¹¹ They had their residence close together in the south of Stockholm,¹² and it is likely that Bellman and Swedenborg, two well-known personalities and Stockholm compatriots, saw each other now and then.

The name of the clergyman, to whom we owe this information, was Carl Nyrén, who wrote:

To celebrate his appointment, a week after the event Bishop Filenius asked me to serve as master of ceremonies on that occasion and to drive around in a rented wagon and invite guests to the Gyldene Freden inn, where they were treated courteously. Among other acquaintances I had those of Assessor Swedenborg, deeply revered by some people, while others made fun of him. He was not very talkative, and went away after the first toasts were brought out.¹³

Not too far from the center of Stockholm lies the property Svindersvik and the Drottningholm Palace, which are both very clean and well maintained and regularly shown to the public. In Svindersvik Swedenborg took part in the social evenings, which were arranged by his friend Carl Gustaf Tessin. And on one occasion it is reported that instead of the usual

¹¹ P. D. A. Atterbom, *Svenska siare och skaldar* (Swedish Prophets and Poets) (Örebro, Sweden: N. M. Lindh, 1863, Band 1), 13, 48.

¹² Arne Munthe, *Västra Södermalm intill mitten av 1800 talet* [Western Södermalm to mid-19th Century] (Stockholm: Sancta Maria Magdalena Församlingshistoriekommité och Högalids församlingar [municipal Historical Commission for the communities of Sancta Maria Magdalena and Högalids], 1959), 313.

¹³ Quoted from manuscript in Fredrik Book, *Svensk Vardag* [Swedish daily] (Stockholm: PA Norstedt & Söner, 1922), 85.

billiard game the guests remained seated a long time to listen to Swedenborg, who gave an overview of the best part of his ideas.¹⁴ This was quite obviously in the year that Swedenborg's role as a seer and prophet and as the author of the anonymously published religious works became generally known.

The name Drottningholm derives from Drottning, "the Queen"—and in Sweden we associate this palace especially with Queen Lovisa Ulrika, a strong, intelligent but contradictory woman. She received the palace as a personal gift, although it was named after a former queen. She sent after Swedenborg to inquire after her deceased brother, who was in another world. She must have made a strong impression on Swedenborg, and he had probably visited Drottningholm several times.¹⁵ He told C. C. Gjörwell in August 1764, that he had just handed recently printed books in England to the king and queen at Drottningholm and was received favorably.¹⁶ I have seen one of these volumes with a beautiful mark of the queen in the collection of the present day royal library in Stockholm. Several more volumes of this type were once quite obviously this library, but since the library had duplicates, in the nineteenth century some there were sold at auctions, likely to libraries and individuals in England and America.

Currently, the Drottningholm Palace with its beautiful park is the permanent residence of the royal family, and it is also well known for its interesting Royal Theatre, where in the summer, operas and ballets of the eighteenth-century are listed. The theater dates from Swedenborg's time, and then it was only for royal guests. One can speculate if Swedenborg had ever been there.

In 1743 Swedenborg bought a part of the block Mullvaden Första in Södermalm, and later he took up the Hornsgatan residence (today no. 41–43).

Södermalm, the southern part of today's city center, has changed quite a bit, and in the biographies of Swedenborg we are reminded of large and destructive fires in this district, especially the one that he saw in a vision in

¹⁴ Sigstedt, chap. 31, 276.

¹⁵ Rudolph Leonhard Tafel, *Documents concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg*, Vol. 1, 1875; Vol. 2, pp. 647–666; 1890; Vol. 3, 1890.

¹⁶ C. C. Gjörwell, *Anmärkningur i Svenska historien* (Comments on Swedish History), (Stockholm: NJ Nordström, 1786), chap. 26, 220–224.

1759 in Gothenburg.¹⁷ Nonetheless the streets and many buildings from Swedenborg's time remain. On Hornsgatan is the Mary Magdalene Church, which Swedenborg occasionally visited. It was severely damaged by fire, but restored again. There Swedenborg led a famous 1751 interview with Christopher Polhem on the occasion of Polhem's funeral, in which Polhem expressed his astonishment at the pastor's address regarding Polhem's future resurrection, since he had already risen and was fully alive (*Spiritual Experiences* 4752). Near this church you can still find an old place now called Mariatorget, the former Adolf Fredrik's Torg. In his later years Swedenborg lived near this place, and it is not so long ago that the Stockholm city authorities honored Swedenborg by establishing a Swedenborg Park and set up a bust of Swedenborg created by one of Stockholm's sculptors, Gustav Nordahl. At its base there is a scene in relief in, which Swedenborg's in his nearby garden introduces a little girl to an angel by letting her look in a mirror.¹⁸

The Mariatorget is located in the vicinity of today's Swedenborgsgatan (Swedenborg Street), and consequently the place of his former property. In that part of the block at the Mullvaden on Krukmakargatan in which Swedenborg lived, is a recently built house where the architect Nils Orento has tried to restore parts of Swedenborg's garden. The gate to his garden is wrought-iron, the creation of the young Stockholm wrought-iron craftswoman Annika Söderström, and it contains figures of plants from Swedenborg's garden. Below that grows the pea, which was apparently imported together with other seeds from America, where the family Svedberg-Swedenborg maintained so many contacts.¹⁹

We do not know exactly when he moved into his own house, but we know that he lived there in 1747, when he at his own request, he received permission from the king to withdraw from his office in the Bergs Col-

¹⁷ The earliest report on the fire from Gothenburg is found in a letter of Immanuel Kant, which was published as an appendix to the Sewall-Görwitz translation of *Träume eines Geistersehers* in English (London: New Church Press, 1899, 1915).

¹⁸ The story was originally related in a letter from her grandson, Anders Fryxell, printed in Bernard von Beskow's, *Minne öfver assesoren i Bergs-kollegium Emanuel Swedenborg* (Memories of the Assessor of the Bergs Collegium Emanuel Swedenborg) (Stockholm: PA Norstedt & Söners, 1860), 108.

¹⁹ Kerstin Wickman, "Jobb för kroppsbyggare" (Work for a Bodybuilder), *Stockholm Tidningen* (February 24, 1982).

legium.²⁰ At least he now had his own house, surrounded by a large and beautiful garden with “summer houses,” where he could open his spirit in quiet harmony to the divine revelations granted to him, and which he felt himself obliged to share with the world. Rev. C. J. N. Manby, pastor of the New Church in Stockholm until his death in 1920, wrote in a publication:

We’ll never forget to our deep spiritual reverence, when in 1865 for the first time we entered the place at Hornsgatan in Stockholm where Swedenborg had his home during the last decades of his life. The house was still in good condition. The garden was quite large, leaving a free space around the house. A gate or a trellis door formed the entrance to a long path; at its end was the well-known summerhouse. We entered his house and learned how a gentleman in the Eighteenth Century lived. We climbed the stairs to the upper floor. His summer home was kept in pretty good condition. We put our names in a register that was put out there for this purpose. We also climbed into the attic of the summer house. Everything was so new to us. It was a lovely summer day. No wonder our feelings were full of sacred awe.²¹

Cyriel Sigstedt quoted a description of Swedenborg’s summer home in her biography, from an article from 1867 in the English between *Intellectual Repository*:

At the end of the walk are two poplars; behind them is the summer-house, which looks down the garden walk between the trees. It occupies the middle of the end of the garden and is about fourteen feet square. There are three stone steps up to the doorsill, a double door, on each side a window; a vine gathers over them and the top of the door, and clammers partly over the roof. On the two sides are external traces, and the shutters, of windows which are now obliterated inside. In the room is another door opposite the entrance; it opens into a lobby, a pace wide, on the right of which is a cupboard, on the left the bricked-up doorway, which formerly led to the covered way; a part of it remains between the summer-house

²⁰ Lindh, “Swedenborg som Söderbo,” (1921): 138–140.

²¹ C. J. N. Manby, *Swedenborg och Nya Kyrkan* (Swedenborg and the New Church), (Stockholm: Nykyrkliga Bokförlaget, 1906), 38.

and the long side of the garden, away from the street. From that angle to within a few yards of the house the covered way has been removed. It appears as if it originally ran down the length of the garden, and served as a protected path to the summerhouse-pleasant in bad weather or at night. Like the house, the summerhouse or study is built of logs, raised on a granite foundation about a couple of feet from the ground. It is as gay in color as the house—dark red lines on yellow ground, with white window frames and a black roof, all well contrasted with the bright green of the vine. The roof does not go up to a ridge or gable, but is broken through by a short vertical portion, in which are long narrow windows, serving to light the loft over the room. This, in turn, is roofed with hip rafters. On the two points of the ridge is a ball ornament, on which is perched a little golden star. A chair which belonged to Swedenborg remains in the summer-house. His organ lately stood there, but has passed into the possession of Mr. Hammer, in whose museum, in Byström's Villa, it may be seen.²²

Christian Hammer, the former owner of the organ, was a well-known jeweler and collector in Stockholm, and very interested Swedenborg. In particular, he served as a model for "the wealthy blind man" in August Strindberg's *Dream Play*. The Nordiska Museet and Skansen bought the organ from his estate.²³

F. G. Lindh wrote about Swedenborg's home in his article "Swedenborg som Söderbo":

Alongside Hornsgatan were only farmhouses, on the western corner of the property was a carriage house with the associated storage space for garden equipment, and on the eastern corner there was a barn and cattle shed, which on the side facing the court was connected with a log house. On its ground floor were three large rooms, one of the two was undoubtedly a spacious kitchen, and there was a room upstairs. Most likely his gardener and his family lived there. They also looked after his horses and cows. It can be assumed with certainty that he did not let the buildings

²² Sigstedt, chap. 39, 492.

²³ Carl-Göran Ekerwald, "Lusthus för andeskådare" (Summer home of a Spirit-seer), *Vi* 43 (October 23, 1986): 13.

that were equipped for the livestock stand empty, especially since it was known that Swedenborg loved to mingle with the society, both in town and in the country, and therefore needed ways to get around comfortably. He probably had a horse carriage. It is also known with certainty, that Stockholmers of that time generally kept cows that grazed during the day on the commons outside the city and in the evening were driven home to their stables by special, so-called cowherds. Milk was also an important, if not the most important nutritional element in Swedenborg's diet. The fact that he lived so far outside in Södermalm was certainly an advantage for him, as his cows were not so long a way to and from the pastures outside the city. On the back of the gardener's cottage on the property out there was a small garden with flower beds and shrubs in boxes, which were trimmed in the Dutch way in the forms of birds, pots and all sorts of other shapes. On the other side of this small landscaped courtyard across from the gardener's house, was Swedenborg's own abode, a house half of logs and [half] of brick, paneled on the inside and outside. Swedenborg's house was painted yellow, and the gardener's house red; and both were on solid stone foundations. On the ground floor Swedenborg had two wide rooms and one small room. One of the large rooms was probably used as a reception room or parlor, the other as a writing room, and the little one was probably used as a bedroom. The upper floor of the living quarters had been prepared as a sort of greenhouse, probably having a glass wall to the south and with a brick floor. The greenhouse and the living quarters below were well-equipped with stoves. Clearly the house was warm and comfortable in the severe cold of winter; Swedenborg constantly used to burn a wood fire in the writing room. It could be cold sitting and writing all day; and the fact that Swedenborg suffered from a digestive disorder, and had to live almost exclusively on a milk diet was probably due to his sedentary lifestyle. On the other hand it is known that he allowed no wood fire in his bedroom, but instead used all the more linen and quilts at night. This was a habit he had adopted on his trips abroad, notably England and France, where, as you know, there is no fire in the bedrooms.²⁴

²⁴ Lindh, "Swedenborg som Söderbo," (1921): 145, 146.

Swedenborg was always very much interested in trees, shrubs and flowers and no doubt, like the people of the Ancient Church elders he described, perceived these growing things as representing and symbolizing spiritual realities. In this home for several years and with tremendous diligence he now wrote the volumes that contain what he saw as the revelation of the Lord for the New Church. To the world outside he seemed to have led a quiet and secluded life, although he was always ready to welcome those who would like to visit him. Around 1760 he had three female servants and a few years later, we hear for the first time that a family took care of his garden and he came to enjoy its produce. Anecdotes fairly accurately testify to all of the great affection which the servants felt for their master.²⁵

Swedenborg's close friend Carl Robsahm, who lived in another property in Stockholm near Swedenborg, in his memoirs about Swedenborg tells us of how worried the gardener and his wife were when Swedenborg seemed to be in a state of great bewilderment and despair during certain nights.²⁶ From his room they could hear words like, "Lord, help me! Oh Lord, my God, forsake me not! "But when they approached him, he calmly assured them, that everything was alright with him and that whatever would happen to him, would happen with the Lord's permission. The gardener's wife also told Robsahm how frightened she had been, when she once opened the door of Swedenborg's room and then seen his "burning eyes" But Swedenborg said to her." Fear not, the Lord has opened my bodily eyes and I saw in the spirit [in *spiritu*], but in a moment I will have recovered and I am not injured."²⁷ After half an hour, she told Robsahm, this appearance, which was like fire, had disappeared.

The garden is mentioned particularly in connection with another event of the year 1769, when a process was initiated by the estate of the clergy of the Parliament to admit Emanuel Swedenborg to a mental hospital—a very common method of the time to deal with religious dissidents.

²⁵ Henrik Alm, Emanuel Swedenborgs hus och trädgård (Emanuel Swedenborg's house and garden), *Samfundet St. Erik's Årsbok 1938* (Yearbook of the Society of St. Erik 1938), (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1938): 162.

²⁶ Carl Robsahm, "Robsahms memoirer öfver Swedenborg" (Robsahms memoirs of Swedenborg), *Skandinavisk Nykyrktidning* (1876), 60, 74, 91, 105, 122, 137, 153, 170. Also published in Tafel's *Documents*, Vol. I, 30–51.

²⁷ *Documents*, Vol. I, 40.

One of his friends in the parliament had heard of the plan and sent him a message that he should leave the country immediately. But Swedenborg remained. Robsahm tells us: “Swedenborg was very sad, and then he soon came out into his garden, where he knelt and prayed to the Lord in tears, asking what he should do now? And he received the comforting conviction that no harm would befall him.”²⁸ The plans were not implemented, at that time Swedenborg had highly placed advocates in the country.²⁹

The orthodox clergy were harsh and judgmental, but due to the influence of the writings of the philosopher Christian Wolff, whose philosophy of interest to Swedenborg too, some important ministers were more moderate.

One of these men who could have helped Swedenborg in this difficult situation was Andrew Knös. In this regard I would like to quote from a well-informed book of the Swedish scholar, Dr. H. I. Carlson:

When there was a discussion of Swedenborg’s writings within the clerical estate at the parliament in 1769 with the purpose of declaring that their author is sick and if possible would be brought to an institution, one of the most learned and orthodox members of the class of, Dean Andreas Knös was tasked to deliver a verdict in the matter, and this man, who was conscientious, not to judge what he did not know thoroughly, began a serious and impartial study of all these extensive works, the consequence of which was that he finally was convinced of their truth. The state then decided to discontinue the proceedings and the matter was allowed to rest.³⁰

Andreas Knös died in 1799 as a fully committed believer of the New Church.³¹

²⁸ *Documents*, Vol. I, 47.

²⁹ Tore Frängsmyr, “Wolffianismens genombrott i Uppsala” (The breakthrough of Wolffianism in Uppsala), *Skrifter rörande Uppsala universitet. C. Organization och historia* (Reflections on the University of Uppsala: Organization and History) (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1972, Vol. 26), 136.

³⁰ H. I. Carlson, *Anmärkingar vid Herr Professor And. Fryxells skildring af Emanuel Swedenborg* (Notes on Professor And. Fryxell’s description of Emanuel Swedenborg.) (Stockholm: Nya Kyrkans Bekännares Förlag, 1876), 2.

³¹ Harry Lenhammar, *Tolerans och bekännelse tvång* (Tolerance and forced confession), PhD Thesis (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1966), 315.

We have a description of a visit to Swedenborg's garden in the book *Notes in Swedish History* printed by Carl Christopher Gjørwell in 1786 in Stockholm. As librarian of the Royal Library in Stockholm Gjørwell visited Swedenborg on 28 August 1764 to obtain his recently published books for the library and also to investigate his ideas about religion. After his visit there Gjørwell wrote:

I recently came back from Assessor Emanuel Swedenborg, whom on behalf of the Royal Library I asked about his works last published in Holland. I met him dressed in plain clothes as he cared for his plants in the garden which he has next to his house in Södermalm on Hornsgatan. His residence was a wooden house, low, and it looked like a garden pavilion, and the windows looked out onto the garden. Without his knowing me and without knowing of my request, he said with a smile on my face. "You are taking a walk here in the garden." I told him then that I wanted to have the honor to visit him on behalf of the Royal Library, to ask him about some of his latest works, so that we could have a complete collection of his works, because we already own the earlier volumes that he had handed over to the Royal secretary, Mr. Wile. "Yes, with the greatest pleasure," was his answer. "I've already intended to send them there," he added, "since the reason for me publishing them was that they might become generally known and come into possession of intelligent people." I thanked him for his courtesy, and he showed me the books. And then we walked around the garden. Despite the fact that he is an old man and the gray hairs stuck out everywhere from under his wig, he walked briskly, spoke with joy and with particular glee. His face was thin and quite skinny but cheerful and smiling. On his own initiative he soon started to talk about his ideas, and since hearing this with my own ears was, in fact, the second purpose of my visit, I listened very eagerly to what he said and did not contradict his teachings, but did no more than readily put forth questions, as if it would serve my own enlightenment.³²

The report on another remarkable visit to Swedenborg's garden can be found in the book *Tessin und Tessiniana* (Tessin and Memorabilia), pub-

³²Gjørwell, chap. 47, 220–224.

lished in Stockholm in 1819, with excerpts from Carl Gustaf Tessin's diaries and manuscripts. Like Gjørwell Tessin also went there to learn more about Swedenborg's visions and his teachings. He was well received, and Tessin mentions his happy, cheerful and friendly, jovial and open attitude. He generously gave Tessin information and promised to send him a copy of *Heaven and Hell*. This visit took place in March 1760.³³

Robsahm mentioned three summer houses in Swedenborg's garden, one with rather strange doors, a maze ("just to amuse respectable people ... and their children"), and a blind door that opened and by a mirror on the other side gave the illusion of a much larger garden. Of course that was the door that he opened in the probably true anecdote when he wanted to show the young girl Greta Askbom an angel. All the stories about the man give evidence of a happy nature, playfulness and a great love for children.

It was also claimed that shortly after Swedenborg's death his actual house had been destroyed for fear of local spirits.³⁴ But there is little doubt that Rev. C. J. N. Manby had visited the right house, the house where Emanuel lived and worked regularly. This house had a connecting passage, a corridor, to the still preserved summer house. It was said that in his work he was surrounded mainly by biblical texts in Latin and the original languages, dictionaries, and his own manuscripts and excerpts from the Bible, and probably also by his record of his own spiritual experience. Consequently when it was not too cold, he must have worked quite often in the summer house.

As a staff Swedenborg often had married couples. Then the husband obviously cared for the horses, cows and the garden, from which he could generally use some of the produce, while the wife took the necessary care of Swedenborg's household. F. G. Lindh has observed—and his sources were the census records of the City of Stockholm—that these servants did remarkably well in their retirement. When Swedenborg eventually moved into his house on the Hornsgatan, the couple had their three girls between ten and fifteen years living with them.³⁵

³³ *Tessin och Tessiniana: Biographie med anecdoter och reflexioner, samlade utur framledne Riksrådet m. m. Grefve C.G. Tessins egenhändigiga manuskripter* (Tessin und Memorabilia: biography, anecdotes and reflections, compiled from the leading State Council, etc. Count C. G. Tessin's own manuscripts) (Stockholm: Johan Imnelius, 1819), 555, 556.

³⁴ Alm, 165.

³⁵ Lindh, "Swedenborg som Söderbo", 1921: 171, 172.

There were different stories told about Swedenborg's life during his later years in the south of Stockholm. From these years, we have to accept a report of his hesitation to partake of the Lord's Supper in the parish of his domicile, the municipality of Maria Magdalena. It is needs to be mentioned that for a long time it had been a matter of national duty in the state church of Sweden to take this sacrament. It is said that he had spoken to two bishops on the matter. Swedenborg claimed that he lived in conjunction with the Lord and the spiritual world and that that was enough for him and he could not stand the preaching of the pastor. But he agreed to accept the sacrament from his curate, for whom he felt a greater spiritual friendship.³⁶

From Swedenborg's last years of life we have reports of visits of rather young men, all of whom were seriously interested in spiritual things. One of them was obviously the visionary "Skara boy," whom Swedenborg's friend Gabriel Beyer in Gothenburg thought that would be able to reveal healing treatments from the spiritual world. Swedenborg confirmed that the experiences of the boy testified to contacts with the spiritual world, but at the same time he stressed his immaturity both in terms of age and with respect to spirituality. Yet he was very interested in the boy. He asked that he be sent to him in Stockholm and promised to arrange that he would be cared for properly.³⁷

An oral but quite probable tradition is that Swedenborg was visited by the young Jonas Pehrson Odhner, who was a private teacher in one of the first families of the New Church in Sweden, the family of Lars Lindström, who were personally well-acquainted with Swedenborg. In 1795 in Copenhagen Odhner published the first Swedish translation of *The True Christian Religion*. He was one of the clergymen of the Swedenborgian Church of Sweden.³⁸

³⁶ Alfred Stroh, *Den Nya Kyrkan i Norden* (The New Church in the North) (Kopenhagen: Alfred Stroh, 1913), 9. See also Robsahm, 91. *Documents*, Vol. I, 36, 37.

³⁷ *Samlingar för Philantroper. I. Utdrag af några bref från Emanuel Swedenborg til åtskillige des vänner* (Collections of Philanthropists. Volume I. Extracts from some letters from Emanuel Swedenborg to Several of his Friends), Brief 10 (Stockholm: Exegetiska och philanthropiska sällskapet, und A. J. Nordström, 1787).

³⁸ Hjalmar Kylén, *En Swedenborg Reformation i Sverige under första 1800-talsdecennierna* (A Swedenborgian Reformation in Sweden during the First Decade of the 19th century) (Stockholm: F. C. Askebergs, 1910).

Two fairly well-known Swedish clergymen were also among Swedenborg's visitors at Hornsgatan. Both were probably not very fond of the Lutheran orthodoxy. Both two at the time of their visit appear to have been in very good agreement with Swedenborg in spiritual matters. One of the two was Nicolas Collin, who had been active during the long period in which Jesper Svedberg and his many "heresies" dominated the Swedish Church in America. On his visit Collin first interest was understandably information about his recently deceased brother. Swedenborg gave him no such information, but he invited him into the house for coffee, and the two gentlemen discussed the problem of the human soul and the concept of the spiritual world. Among other things, they considered the ideas in Wallerius *Psychologia Empirica*, published in 1755 in Stockholm.³⁹ The other notable cleric was Andreas Rutström, author of hymns, principals and at that time a central figure among the Moravians in Sweden. This man remained in exile for several years on account of heresy and in 1772 was in jail in Sweden. Swedenborg said to Carl Robsahm that "this Rutström saw everything, but his life and his deeds showed that his Moravian sect, in which he had long ago been confirmed, even to persuasion, was dearest to him."⁴⁰

In Swedenborg's biographies oral traditions are recorded about personal contacts between Swedenborg and the most noteworthy central figure in the early New Church movement in Sweden, Christian Johansén, a pious and devoted husband, a true spiritual leader. His correspondence in spiritual matters left its mark on a large part of the New Church movement in Sweden. Copies of his letters were widely dispersed, and in some Swedish archives, there are large collections of copied letters from him. He began his studies of Swedenborg in 1767 at the young age of twenty-one. He was also a pioneer of the Swedish iron industry and technology. The biggest day of his life, mentioned almost everywhere in his numerous letters but recently found documented in a note in a preserved personal diary, was a beautiful winter day in Stockholm, where the

³⁹ Sigstedt, 346–348. Jesper Swedberg, *America illuminata* (Enlightened America), translated and with an introduction by Robert Murray (Stockholm, 1985), in different places. An edition of Wallerius' *Psychologia Empirica* can be found in the library of the New Church, 4 Banérgatan, Stockholm. *Documents*, Vol. II, 417–424, 1158.

⁴⁰ *Documents*, Vol. 1, 37, 627.

snow fell all day. On January 3rd, 1770 he welcomed Swedenborg into his home. The meeting appears to have given Johansen significantly renewed encouragement as a believer in the New Church. It is possible that on this day they had spoken about the work *De Cultu et Amore Dei*. It was often said in the tradition of the New Church that Swedenborg told Johansen that this work is of lesser importance than the later works. But Johansen felt that it was nevertheless of great value and soon after he began the translating it into Swedish. His translation of the manuscript is preserved in the Royal Library in Stockholm (Doc. II, 709, 710).⁴¹

The Swedish author Carl-Göran Ekerwald writes in a new article on Swedenborg:

One of the younger friends of Swedenborg was the chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele, the discoverer of oxygen. As Swedenborg planned his last trip—I think it was 1770 to Holland and England—he decided that the remaining goods and chattel of Hornsgatan should go to Scheele, who at the time worked in the pharmacy with the name of Korpen [The Raven].⁴²

However, at the same time Swedenborg had ordered that a marble table with inlaid cards, along with five small pictures inlaid with bird motifs, be handed over to his earlier workplace in Mynttorget in Stockholm. They can still be seen in the premises of the Swedish Kommers Kollegium (Commerce). In 1763 Swedenborg wrote, a treatise “Huru inläggningar ske uti marble skifvor til bord cast eller annan hus-zirat” (How to make inlays in marble slabs or other household decorations), which was published in the annual yearbook of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Of course, the marble table and other objects were not made by Swedenborg himself, but ordered by him and then manufactured under his supervision in Holland.⁴³

⁴¹Inge Jonsson, *Swedenborgs skapelsedrama “De Cultu et Amore Dei”* (Swedenborg’s Drama of Creation, The Worship and Love of God) (Stockholm: Nature och Kultur, 1961), 23, 24. Lenhammar, 256, 380. Bror-Erik Ohlsson, *Eskilstuna fristad* (Freetown Eskilstuna) (Eskilstuna kommun III, 1971), 104. Olle Hjern, “Christian Johansen,” *Gnosis* 1–2 (1986), 55.

⁴²Ekerwald, 13.

⁴³Alm, 167, 168.

After his death Swedenborg's residence in the south of Stockholm underwent many changes. Some parts were torn down or cut back, other parts soon gutted. In the 1880s it was somewhat uncertain what was authentically "Swedenborgian."⁴⁴ The part that was undeniably authentic was the small *Lusthus* (the summer house). At the time of the 1888 bicentennial celebration of Swedenborg's birth a new house had already been built on the Hornsgatan property, and on the ground between the buildings where Swedenborg's house and garden once stood, members of the New Church in Sweden and other countries have mounted a cast-iron plaque with Swedenborg's portrait in a bordered medallion. On this panel, the following words are engraved: "Venturus est tempus quando illustratio" (The time will come, when there will be enlightenment), taken from *Arcana Coelestia* 4402.⁴⁵ Starting in October 1986 extensive plans were made to reconstruct the entire garden together with the summer house.

The island of Djurgården east of today's central Stockholm was in Swedenborg's time a popular place for excursions, picnics and entertainment and remains so to this day. There is no doubt that Swedenborg visited this place often. Around 1890 great efforts were undertaken to make the island of Djurgården a center for the Swedish folk-culture, and to this end the open-air museum Skansen was founded. Its founder Arthur Hazelius, the son of a follower of the New Church, in collaboration with the New Church community decided to transport the old summer house—at the time the last remaining part of Swedenborg's estate—to the new open-air museum. This was in 1896.⁴⁶

In 1960 the administrators of Skansen restored the summer house anew and in the process created a rose garden which was to have the greatest possible resemblance to the garden on Swedenborg's original property. But the house needed more and more repairs, and the financial support for this was then provided by the Swedish Swedenborg Society, founded in 1978, in collaboration with New Church Swedenborgian organizations in America and England. In September 1985, Swedenborg's house organ, which he used for private, meditative enjoyment, was also

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁵ "29 January 1888" *Skandinavisk Nykyrkotidning* (1888), 29.

⁴⁶ The move is described by Alm, 171.

repaired. Now we can hear a concert of Swedenborg's time for ourselves, played by Mads Kjersgaard, organ restorer. Kjersgaard believes that this organ was made by young travelling journeyman in one of the organ shops in the vicinity of Swedenborg's residence on Hornsgatan.

At the end of July 1770, "after he had generously supplied his two servants," as F. G. Lindh put it, Swedenborg left Stockholm headed for Holland and England, especially for the purpose of publishing his work *The True Christian Religion*. He did not depart this world in the city of his birth, but in London, on the 29th of March, 1772.⁴⁷

However, from this quiet corner in the Swedish capital the most important spiritual stimulus had already gone out into the whole world, and this process is certainly still going on. □

⁴⁷Lindh, "Swedenborg som Söderbo," (1921), 171.