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Re: Energy from the Sun by David Lomax

I was intrigued to read Alan Misson's recent piece in E-Read entitled Energy from the Sun. I have been interested for a number of years in what used to be known as alternative energy. I can remember attending a conference in the mid-1990s where one of the speakers, Hermann Scheer, said something that I have never forgotten.

When talking about how we humans generate energy, he made the suggestion that where we obtain energy from says something about our collective state. If we are using fossil fuels for this purpose, we are extracting something from underneath the ground. As regards alternatives to this, at least solar and wind power can involve us looking upwards.

As far as I am aware, Dr. Scheer knew nothing of what Swedenborg outlines about correspondences and which Alan used in what he wrote about solar

energy. He did, however, make a link between what is in the earth potentially linking with our more “earthbound” side and what is above with a higher part of us, or, to put it another way, the part which can connect us with the Lord.

The view Dr. Scheer expressed, as I remember it, was that we were unlikely as a species to make major steps towards finding alternatives to fossil fuels unless we were also able to work on resisting the effects of the part of us which has the potential to drag us down. What I saw as significant in this idea is that it therefore makes many of the issues around climate change into a spiritual challenge.

Twenty-five years later I am still personally of the view that discussions on the environment can demonstrate the extent to which we as a whole race are motivated primarily by our own concerns or whether we are able to look beyond them. I don't believe the latter is possible unless we resist our tendencies to, as Alan puts it, block our reception of the Lord's spiritual energy.

Perhaps, in a strange way, the crisis we now face ecologically adds extra weight and urgency to the need for all of us as human beings to work on ourselves spiritually. It may be that we can only overcome this crisis by finding that which breaks through these spiritual blocks in ourselves.

Alan has set out how the correspondence of the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom with the sun can remind us of our need to connect with the Lord. I find it comforting, if also challenging, that wind power may also remind us of our relationship with the Lord. That is in the sense of one element of the Trinity, as images of wind or breath are often used in the Bible for representations of Spirit/the Holy Spirit. The inherent unpredictability of wind power, which may not always seem to be an advantage, can also point to this link with the potential in Spirit for something new and unexpected to be created.

I want to return to the idea of what is lower and what is higher and how we might be able to use this constructively. If I focus on the idea of the connection between that lower part of ourselves and the image of extracting fuel from underneath the ground, I am reminded of Swedenborg's spiritual world visions in which some individuals seem more comfortable in a sort of subterranean existence, avoiding heavenly light as much as possible. This contrasts with those who are able to see the Lord as the source of light and warmth in the spiritual world.

In reflecting on these images, I have tried to think of an example where the contrast between that which is lower and higher in us can be clearly seen. If we think about what “fuels” or “drives” us, I can reflect on times when I feel that I may want to find fault with or criticise others. Although this may give me a personal sense of feeling better, say about a difficult situation, it can actually stem from very negative feelings,

both towards myself and towards others. If, instead, I can think about how I might be able to do something to help improve a situation and take some positive action towards this, even if or especially if this costs me something, I would suggest that this is a way that I can connect with something higher.

What comes to mind in this context are passages where Swedenborg stresses angels' ability to look through what drags us down and see instead the potential for good in us. He points out that they have this ability from the Lord "who bends everything evil into good" and also that positive feelings towards others are "the Lord at work within charity".

Although there are huge challenges which we face in relation to climate change and other ecological issues, I can't help feeling that we need to remember and foster a sense of care or even love for the planet and all its inhabitants, humans included. Perhaps only then will we be able to adapt how we live in order better to nurture creation as a whole.