

SWEDENBORG
AND
HIS MODERN CRITICS:
WITH
SOME REMARKS UPON
THE LAST TIMES.

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"The present day is the last time of the Christian Church, which the Lord foretold and described in the Gospels, and in the Revelation."—*True Christian Religion*, art. 757.

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TO THE READER.

THE following remarks have been occasioned by an article on *Swedenborgianism*, in the *Englishman's Magazine*; an argument in *The Bible and Its Interpreters* by Dr. Irons; *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement* by Mr. Oxenham; certain letters which have appeared in *The Guardian*; *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, by Dr. Wilberforce; and *Select Treatises of Athanasius with Notes*, by Dr. Newman. An enquiry into Swedenborg's writings, as alluded to in some of these publications, will serve to point out their relation to the present state of Christendom, and bring them face to face with modern Theology; and as there is no thoughtful and religious mind which has not probably felt some anxiety with regard to the movements in Christendom now taking place,

and which seem to portend others, the task is not less interesting than it is important to endeavour to throw some light upon the present state of Christianity; particularly when questions are openly agitated concerning the Reunion of Churches, their Reformation, or their Dissolution. It will be seen, therefore, that the object of the present pamphlet is not only refutation, but instruction; and that instruction is sadly needed upon the various topics here treated of, the following pages will suffice to shew.

January, 1866.

SWEDENBORG

AND HIS MODERN CRITICS.

THE subject of our first remarks is the article entitled *Swedenborgianism*, in the *Englishman's Magazine*.*

“Perhaps,” says the writer, “there are few even among the well-educated in England, who know much more of Emanuel Swedenborg than that he was a Swede, as the name imports, by birth, and the founder of a sect holding some very extraordinary notions.”—This being the case, one would naturally expect to be told what these extraordinary notions are, particularly in an article professing to treat of the subject. Yet what do we find? A number of extraordinary notions, but, with one exception, all of them those of the writer; none of them those of Swedenborg. Now this is not what was wanted. If we are to be provided with an article upon what is miscalled “*Swedenborgianism*,” by all means let us have it with all its “extraordinary notions;” but the writer’s own notions we did not want as a substitute for those of Swedenborg; much less ought he to have given them under the name of “*Swedenborgianism*.”

* For December, 1865; p. 506.

It will naturally be asked, Why then take the trouble to answer them? The reason is obvious. He says there are few among the "well-educated" in England who have any knowledge of the subject. Of course among the "well-educated" he includes not only the laity, but the clergy; and he accordingly proceeds to instruct the clergy as well as the laity upon the nature of "Swedenborgianism;" as, however, he assures us that both of them are not a little ignorant in this respect, it is almost unavoidable for them to mistake the writer's notions for those of Swedenborg, particularly as they are delivered with an authority proportioned only to the writer's unacquaintance with his subject.

The questions at issue are the most important which can engage the attention of Christians at any time, and more particularly in the present day: they relate to nothing less than the decline and fall of the present Churches of Christendom, and the institution of a purer form of Christianity, which Swedenborg calls a New Church. Let us place these questions before us fairly and fully; and to this end let us first hear the objection urged by the writer; and then, in reply, the real statements of Swedenborg. The objection is as follows:*

"There are few more signal instances of a prophet confuted by the stern reality of facts than that of Swedenborg. He claimed to be inspired in the plenary sense of that term. He enounced his doctrines as a direct revelation from heaven. He was, according to himself, clothed with the attributes of a

* p. 505.

Messiah, commissioned to found a New Church, and to inaugurate a new dispensation. More than a century has elapsed since the commencement of this new era, and his predictions are as far as ever from fulfilment. Even in America, the hotbed of all that is eccentric and anomalous in Creed, 'the New Church,' as its adherents call it, numbers only some forty preachers; in England and in other European countries, *fewer* still. The very excuse alleged by Swedenborgians for this want of vitality is curiously inconsistent with the claim of their founder to be the regenerator of the world. When they say that they do not care to make converts, on the ground that theirs is 'an internal not an external Church,' whatever they may mean, they allow, in fact, that their pretensions are a failure."

The first half of Swedenborg's prediction is here ignored; the second half confutes not Swedenborg but the writer. Swedenborg did not speak of the beginning of a New Church without first speaking of the end of the Old; which he refers to under the title of "*consummation of the age*," and "*the last times of the Church*." The "*consummation of the age*" spoken of in Matthew xxiv. signifies, he says,* "the last time or end of the former Church, and the first time or beginning of the New Church." This consummation of the Church, he adds, is represented by our Lord as not taking place all at once, but as effected by degrees, the several stages in the process being thus described; 1. The Church began not to know what was good and true. 2. The Church began to dispute about it; from which arose heresies and enmities. 3. The Church ceased to acknowledge and

* *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 4332, 3353, 3488, 4422.

began to despise it. 4. The Church profaned it. 5. The consequence was the rejection of the Church ; but as mankind would have perished without the existence of some true Church, another was commenced.

The "consummation of the Church" took place, according to Swedenborg, at the time that he was writing, viz., some few years before the French Revolution ; and the state of the Church about that time is thus referred to by the modern author of *Christendom's Divisions* :*—

"Ought we to be astonished, says the great historian of France, if the greater part of thinking men, instead of occupying themselves with what this (the Christian) religion had been, or what it might be, saw in it only what it was then,—a plague from which they would wish to be delivered. It was the Church which had destroyed the religious feeling ; it was the Government which had destroyed patriotism. In the two ages preceding hope had lived on, because the enterprise of reforming both the Church and the State had at least been undertaken. After that time, however, people became cheated of all ; hence they detested all : they laughed at abuses and vices, in order not to weary themselves with a useless indignation. They no longer waited for the Clergy, or for the government, or for a better morality, or for better examples : and the scandal of abuses was often surpassed by the scandal of those even who denounced them to the public.

"How fearful are the calamities which ensue from perverseness or supineness on the part of those with whom, whether in Church or State, the duty rests of *reforming systems*, great or small, ecclesiastical or political ! That puri-

* By Edmund S. Ffoulkes, formerly Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College, Oxford ; p. 180.

fication so tardily commenced,—so superficially carried out,—in the sixteenth century, when it might have been accomplished by fair means, had to be *consummated* by a deluge of blood in the eighteenth century. And still, in spite of that dread judgment, there are those whose very watchword is, ‘No more reform!’ As if the vine did not require to be dressed and pruned extensively, year after year, to bear its full amount of fruit! Were we in the habit of dealing with ourselves, as too many still hold that *systems* are to be dealt with, what sinks of iniquity should we not all of us be long before we had attained to threescore and ten years! The thought that each one of us must one day stand before the judgment-seat of Christ prevents any such delusion on the absolute necessity of reform in our own case. Would that there could be the same salutary apprehension of a *judgment to come for every system likewise!*”

Why is there not the same salutary apprehension of a judgment to come for every *system* likewise? Because it is taken for granted, either that the *system* is infallible and indefectible, or else unerring and unfailing. Any person therefore, we will say any Church, which maintains such a system, is almost indignant at the thought of a last judgment upon itself, at the very time that God is performing it. Is there indeed no more need of reformation? Has the Reformation worked itself out? Have we lived to see the end of all changes? Let us hear the author of *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement* :*—

“What future may be in store for the Church or for the world I know not, nor do I presume to meddle with vexed

* Introduction, p. 48.

interpretations of prophetic lore. There are those who deem the reign of Antichrist is at hand. Be this as it may, in one sense he is always near, and it needs no prophet's eye to discern to-day on the spiritual horizon many of the predicted signs of His coming, written so that he who runs may read. If, indeed, the rival hosts are marshalling now for the last great conflict, it gives to the controversies of the present a deeper and more solemn significance. . . . Our's is an age of uncertain and conflicting tendencies, powerful alike for good or for evil, suggesting the gravest anxieties, yet brightened with the dawning promise of a second spring. One thing, at any rate, is clear enough,—that *we are on the eve of a crisis, such as for the last three centuries the Church has not witnessed*. The Reformation was but the first act of a drama which has *yet to be played out*: and it may be expected that our own age will see questions stirred more searching even than any that were mooted then. *Nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiæ*. But it is of the last importance that, at this supreme crisis of her history, her children should be closely united, and well equipped to meet the coming foe, not with the blunted or misshapen implements of a ruder warfare and a coarser age, but with weapons forged and polished fresh in the armoury of wisdom, of justice, and of truth. . . . Science, philosophy, and criticism, are knocking at our doors to-day. We must accept or reject them, and to reject their aid is to hand them over to the service of error. Now, as ever, the Church must go forth to conquer in the might of that Gospel which she, and she alone, is divinely commissioned to proclaim; but now too, as ever, like a good householder, she must bring forth from her treasures things old *and new*."

We may now see why this particular part of Swedenborg's prediction was ignored!—

It is very true that the Church is divinely com-

missioned to go forth conquering and to conquer; and in this respect to follow the example of our Lord Himself.—But what did He conquer? As Haymo says, “He went forth conquering the Devil in himself, that He might afterwards conquer him in his members.” Well! let the Church do the same, and she will follow her blessed Lord, in the regeneration. But in the time of a universal degeneracy, such as prevailed a century ago, does Swedenborg say that the Reformation of the Church, or the Regeneration, would begin with the *many* or with the *few*? Could anything be more absurd than for him to say, it would begin with the many, and come to maturity all at once? Can anything be plainer than his statements, that it would begin with a *few*, and for a long time go on with a *few*? Our opponent is only signally confirming Swedenborg’s statements, by the very facts which he has brought forward to confute them. To toil up the hill; to swim against the stream; to sail against wind and tide; to think against the current of thought; to set our affections on that which is scorned by the world, and to hope against hope for victory at last, is by no means the popular side of Christianity. Hence Swedenborg interprets the words of our Lord as signifying that the renovation of the Church shall begin with a *few*, and be carried on by a *few*, long before it extends to the *many*.

“The Church at this day,” says he,* “is vastated to such a degree . . . that although men know and un-

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 3898.

derstand, yet they do not acknowledge, and still less believe; except the *few* who are in the life of good, and are called the elect, who now may be instructed, and amongst whom a New Church is about to be established; but where these are the Lord alone knows. There will be *few* within the Church. The New Churches established in former times have been established among the Gentiles.”—In the *Apocalypse Revealed*,* Swedenborg interprets the words—“*and the woman fled into the wilderness*”—as signifying “the New Church at first confined to a *few* ;” and in the *Apocalypse Explained* † he thus remarks upon the same passage. . . . “Whereas, in the end of the Church, there are but *few* who are in truths from good, therefore that it abides with but *few* is also signified. Hence it may appear what these words involve, namely, that the New Church, which is called the Holy Jerusalem, and is signified by the *woman*, cannot as yet be instituted, except with a *few* ; by reason that the former Church is become a wilderness.”—Swedenborg elsewhere observes, that the progress of the New Church in the latter days will be similar to the progress of the New Church in former days, when originally established by our Lord. ‡—“The truths relating to the love of the Lord and of the neighbor, as disclosed by our Lord, were interior truths, and in themselves spiritual; which afterwards served the New Church (of that time) for doctrine and life. But still those truths were *not immediately received*,

* Art. 561.

† Art. 730.

‡ Art. 670. See also *True Christian Religion*, art. 784.

nor till *after a certain period of time*, as is well known from ecclesiastical history. The reason was, because *they could not be received* before all things in the Spiritual world were reduced to order; for the Spiritual world is with men conjoined to the Natural world; wherefore, unless that world had been first reduced to order, the goods of love and truths of doctrine could not be understood or perceived by men in the Natural world. This was the reason why *so long a time* intervened before the Christian Church was universally established in Europe; for all effects which exist in the Natural world derive their origins from causes in the Spiritual world, especially those which concern the things of the Church.”

This interpretation concerning the true Christian Church existing only among a *few*, is not peculiar to Swedenborg. The prophecy has often been applied to describe the early state of Christianity: still more often, to describe its latter state in the times of Antichrist. Thus it is regarded as describing a state of the Church pertaining to both periods. As referring to the *early* Christian Church, it has been paraphrased in these words: *—

“But though the Christian Church was thus to be delivered, . . . and the true religion gain a settlement in the (Roman) Empire; yet, methought, it was but a little while before I saw it reduced to a very low and mean condition in the world; and its professors, the true and sincere ones I mean, living in a Christian world that might be compared to a wilderness, a wild desert; wherein the far greater part of

* By T. Pyle, M.A., Prebendary of Sarum. 1735. Chap. xii. 6.

pretended Christians were overrun with false doctrines and superstitious practices. However, Divine Providence still preserved the truth from being quite extinguished; though these corruptions were to be permitted to prevail, after they were come to their full height, in the Church, for the term of twelve hundred and sixty years, even as Daniel had long ago foretold."

The same author, referring in the same *Paraphrase* to the *latter* days of the present dispensation, or times of Antichrist, observes :*—

"But notwithstanding this general depravity of the Christian Church, God will always have some faithful servants to bear witness to the Truth, and stand up against these corruptions; though indeed, during this period of degeneracy, *they will be but few*, and those *few* have but a miserable time of it; and will be treated by the majority with great contempt and oppression."

A similar interpretation is given by Sir Isaac Newton,† when referring to the Scripture of truth, which, according to the prophet Daniel, was to be shut up to the time of the end; and to the two Witnesses prophesying in sackcloth :—

"All which is as much as to say, that these prophecies of Daniel and John should not be understood till the time of the end: but then some should prophesy out of them in an afflicted and mournful state *for a long time*, and that but darkly, so as to *convert but few*. But in the very end, the prophecy should be so far interpreted as to convince *many*."

We may fairly ask then, whether our opponent, in insisting upon the paucity of numbers in the New

* Chap. xi. 3, 4; p. 97.

† On *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, p. 249.

Church, does not stand “signally confuted” by his own facts? Setting aside the question whether the New Church spoken of by Swedenborg be a true or a false Church, has not our opponent shewn that the present circumstances of the New Church are precisely those which have ever been predicted concerning *some* true Church in the latter days? And indeed after all, as Dr. Newman has justly observed, the numbers and extent of the Church have nothing to do with the essence of the Church, but are only an accident of its being. Our object, however, is not merely refutation of error, but illustration of prophecy; and accordingly we proceed, in the words of Swedenborg, to the illustration of the prophecy concerning the *woman in the wilderness* whither she fled: *—

“‘*That they might nourish her a thousand and two hundred and threescore days.*’

“The reason why these words signify *whilst the Church groweth to the full*, is, because this signification follows as a consequence from that of the words preceding, which are, that *the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God*; by which is signified, that the New Church which is understood by the *woman* is first amongst a *few*; and in the meantime is provided amongst *greater numbers*; whence it now follows—until it grows to the full: moreover by *nourishing* is signified to sustain life and grow. The causes why the New Church, which is called the Holy Jerusalem, is first to

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 732.

commence with a *few*, afterwards with greater numbers, and so at last to arrive at its full state, are several.

“The first is, that its doctrine, which is the doctrine of love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, cannot be acknowledged and thence received, except by those who are interiorly affected with truths; and no others are interiorly affected with truths but they who see them; and they only see them who have cultivated their intellectual faculty, and have not destroyed it in themselves by the loves of self and of the world.

“The second cause is, that the doctrine of that Church cannot be acknowledged, nor consequently received, except by those who have not confirmed themselves in doctrine and at the same time in life, in faith alone. Confirmation in doctrine only does not hinder reception; but if it be at the same time in life, it does hinder reception; for such persons do not know what love to the Lord is, nor what neighborly love or charity is; neither are they willing to know.

“The third cause is, that the New Church on earth increases according to its increase in the World of Spirits; for spirits from thence are with men, and are from those who were in the faith of their Church whilst they lived on earth, and no others of them receive the doctrine but those who were in the spiritual affection of truth. Such only are conjoined to heaven wheresoever that doctrine is, and conjoin heaven to man. The number of such in the Spi-

ritual world is now increasing daily; wherefore according to their increase, the Church, which is called the New Jerusalem, increases on earth also.

“These likewise were the causes why the Christian Church, after the Lord left the world, increased so *slowly* in Europe, and did not arrive at its full until after an *Age* had elapsed.”

Here then are three causes assigned by Swedenborg for there having been so *few* genuine converts to Christianity for so long a time in the early Christian Church; and similar causes are said to operate in producing but *few* converts to the early New Church, for in like manner a long interval. That interval Swedenborg calls an AGE (*saeculum*), a period of at least a century, and how much longer he does not state; but it is represented in prophecy, he says, by 1260 days; or three years and a half; or a time, times, and half a time.* This period or *Age* is an interval in the duration of the Church which is clearly defined and marked out, after it has elapsed, not by a literal succession of days and years, but by a succession of events defining a distinct period, not so much in the external history of the Church as in the internal; that is to say, a succession of events which are the signs of the times of the Church, or of its *moral* and *spiritual* states. When therefore our opponent says that more than a century has elapsed since the commencement of this new era, and Swe-

* *Three* signifying a full or completed state: thus the *end*. A *half* the *beginning* of another and new state. Thus *three and a half* signify the *end* and the *beginning*.

denborg's predictions are as far as ever from being fulfilled, he is quite mistaken in his literal application of days and years to the explanation of "the time, times, and half a time." We measure this period not by *years*, but by *states*; not by revolutions of the *earth*, but by revolutions of *thought*,* such as are produced, in the new era, by Biblical criticism, rejections or modifications of doctrine, increased liberty of conscience, education, civilization, advancement of the natural sciences, the general progress not only of the intellect, but of life and morals, of real spiritual religion, thus also the progress of all benevolent institutions, and everything which has for its object the good of mankind, or the welfare of society. All these are the quiet, gradual, and orderly preparations going on in the world; the beneficent provisions that are being made for the future development and increase of the Church. *These*, and such as these, are the changes which Swedenborg predicted as destined to take place gradually and slowly: is he signally confuted by the stern reality of facts? More than a century has elapsed since the commencement of this new era, and are his predictions as far as ever from being accomplished?

Surely the Christian Church did not come into the world full grown, or full blown; or already a perfect man in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; or with kings as her nursing

* Exemplified in *Gains of the Church of England*, in 1865. See *Frazer's Magazine* for December, 1865.

fathers, and queens as her nursing mothers; or already endowed with treasures of Catholic and Apostolic traditions: or with a throne already prepared upon many waters, herself arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, and in her hand holding a golden cup. These were the developments of after ages: instead of traditions, she had only prophecies fulfilled and being fulfilled, of which the world knew nothing, but with which she *fled into the wilderness*, where she was taunted with the fewness of her followers, the narrowness of her sect, the meanness of her condition, the novelty of her doctrines, the failure of her pretensions, the hopelessness of her cause. It was not till generations after the voice had cried in the wilderness, that, all things being prepared, "*the Lord gave the word, and great was the company of the preachers.*"

We now come to the specific charges against Swedenborg in regard to Theology; for it is as a theologian only that we here propose to consider him; since it is on that ground that his theological writings appeal to the Church; and as it is maintained that his science influences his theology, and that the "theoretical" and mistaken principles of the one are transferred into the other, we are bound to answer this charge of "theoretical" teaching even in matters of science, in so far as it is here brought forward as affecting Swedenborg's theology. One great charge then against Swedenborg in this respect is the following: *—

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 508.

“While teaching, for instance, wisely and well, that the mind forms the body, he lost sight of the converse truth, that our lower nature acts and reacts largely on the mind.”

The *reaction* of the lower nature against the higher, involves an important theological question. What has Swedenborg said upon this subject? It is to the reaction of the lower against the higher,—of the natural against the spiritual, that Swedenborg ascribes the origin of evil, the fall of man, the loss of the spiritual sense of Scripture, the love of self and of the world, the denial of a life after death, and the decline and fall of the Church. He is probably more precise than any other author in pointing out the nature and cause of this reaction, as will be further explained in our answer to the next objection.

“He seems to have had only the dreamiest perception of the relation which subsists between matter and spirit; and to have been ignorant of the great truth, which the advance of physical science tends more and more to establish, and which is in perfect harmony with the dictates of morality and religion, that in the exquisite mechanism of our being the will alone is purely immaterial.”

The relation between matter and spirit is here determined by the relation between the will and the intellect; the writer's notion being, that the will *alone* is purely immaterial, but the intellect not so!—Swedenborg's doctrine is this: that there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. The natural body pertains to man in the Natural world, the spiritual body pertains to man in the Spiritual

world. When the spirit is separated from the material body, it is separated from the material world,—consequently from matter; but in this state is still endowed with a will, an intellect or understanding, senses, and active powers. If then we lay down the rule, as is here done, without the least qualification, that the will *alone* is purely immaterial, it is obvious that the intellect is *not* purely immaterial; and thus in a Spiritual world we have an intellect more or less material. In this case, to be divested of materiality is to be divested of intellect, hence to be divested of *thought*; so that in a purely immaterial world the spirit of man must *cease to think*. Is not this the doctrine of the soul-sleepers? They maintain, that if the will of man be purely immaterial, the intellect at least, without some material conditions, is unable to think. Under these circumstances, of course they regard, like our opponent, Swedenborg's intercourse with the Spiritual world as mere phantasy,—“his apparitions* as the honest production of his own reflex and introverted imagination.” They deny, therefore, the possibility of intercourse with the World of spirits, and in this denial are more consistent than our opponent; for says he, “those† who deny the possibility of any communication between ourselves in our present state of existence and the World of spirits, are asserting a negative which, to say the least, they cannot prove.” Can they not? They at least conceive that nothing is more easy; for if the intellect be more or less mate-

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 509.† *Ibid.*, p. 509.

rial, so also is *thought* as proper to the intellect; and therefore when deprived of materiality it is not possible for man to think, or feel, or act; for what becomes of material intellect when deprived of materiality? In the case of Swedenborg they would say in the words of our critic, 'The most cursory glance detects the significant circumstance that his apparitions were of persons with whom he had been acquainted personally;'—'and what then can be clearer than that this very fact proves them all to be delusion?—they stand self-convicted.'

Now, in order to shew that man lives after death, Swedenborg says it was granted him to see and converse with not merely spirits in general,—of whom he could not personally testify that they had ever been in this world,—but spirits whom he had previously known to have existed in this world, and with whom in this world he had been personally acquainted: so that from his own experience he could testify that man lives after death. 'Impossible!' says the soul-sleeper; 'man has then no material organs with which to think.' Nay, but, says an opponent, this is not necessary; the intellect itself is more or less material. 'Be it so,' says the soul-sleeper; 'I only said that man could not think without material organs of thought: you go farther; for you say that the will *alone* is immaterial. If so, the intellect is *not* immaterial, and to deprive it of materiality is therefore the destruction of its being. Under these circumstances, intercourse with spirits in the Spiritual world is an impossibility; for the

spirits have no conscious existence. If Swedenborg had said that he conversed with spirits of whom he had previously never heard or read, and of whom, as far as we could say, nobody had ever known anything, all would be well: I should then be in possession of no testimony that they had ever lived in this planet or any other, and my doctrine of the sleep of the soul would remain undisturbed. But for Swedenborg to say that he had seen and conversed with persons in the Spiritual world with whom he had been personally and familiarly acquainted in this material world, or of whom history testifies that they had actually lived in this world, is a direct contradiction of my doctrine; and if men believed him, they would not believe me: for they would believe in the possibility of a conscious life immediately after death, which is the very thing I deny! I am, however, rejoiced to find that after all we both agree; for as you say that the will *alone* is immaterial, we both agree, for the reasons mentioned, that Swedenborg's apparitions were the honest production of his own reflex and introverted imagination; and now I can go on thinking as I have always thought—*that a living dog is better than a dead lion.*'

We have here one of Swedenborg's illustrations of the reaction of the lower nature against the higher,—of the natural against the spiritual, of matter against spirit. If the will *alone* be immaterial, and the intellect be material, of course the intellect cannot, even in this world, think any otherwise than

materially, *i. e.* its ideas or thoughts must be derived from the things of time and space. Bring the intellect thus conditioned to think of spiritual things, and all theology becomes a system of what have been called *material thoughts*, in other words, a system of *fallacies*. Thus Swedenborg observes :*—

“There are various things which are called *fallacies*, which man reasons and concludes from the natural man without spiritual light, that is, without the light of understanding illustrated by the Lord. For the natural man takes the ideas of his thought from earthly, corporeal, and worldly objects, which in themselves are material; and when the thought of man is not elevated above them, he thinks *materially* concerning things *spiritual*, and *material* thought without *spiritual* light derives all its quality from the loves of the natural man, and from their delights, which are *contrary* to celestial loves and to their delights. Hence it is that conclusions and reasonings from the natural man alone, and his infatuated lumen, are *fallacies*.”

Here is a further illustration of the *reaction* of the lower nature against the higher. Does then Swedenborg say that in this world we can think without ideas derived from time and space? No; but that we can think *within* them; for as the spiritual is within the natural, so is spiritual thought within the natural thought, just as the soul is within the body. It is the thought of the natural mind that is called material, and thus also the understand-

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 781.

ing of the natural mind ; although in itself it is *not* material, but only *apparently* assumes the *conditions* of materiality. In relation to the spiritual mind these appearances are merely external ; but after death the spirit puts them off ; and the inner thought, and thus the inner intellect, is brought into conscious existence, and is as purely immaterial as the will. In no genuine sense, then, would Swedenborg say that *the will alone is purely immaterial* : the alleged discovery arising from the advance of science being itself a fallacy. Let us attend to the following remark of Swedenborg :*—

“The truths and falses of the natural man are called knowledges and scientifics ; but the truths themselves when they have obtained life, which is effected by the life of faith, viz., charity, appertain to the spiritual man, or to the spiritual mind of man ; and these with their affections and pleasantnesses do not appear to the manifest sense and sight of the man, as is the case with the knowledges and scientifics of the natural man. The reason of this is, that man, so long as he lives in the world, thinks naturally and speaks naturally ; and what is thought and spoken naturally is sensibly felt, and perceived by him by a certain sight which appertains to his understanding ; whereas his spiritual thought, which is conjoined with the affection of truth or of the false, does *not* appear before man has put off the natural body, and put on the spiritual body, which takes place after his decease or departure from this world,

* *Ibid.*, art. 654.

and his entrance into the Spiritual world, where he thinks spiritually and speaks spiritually, and no longer naturally as before. This comes to pass with every man, whether he be merely natural, or whether he be at the same time spiritual. Indeed *thought*, with the merely natural man after death, is still spiritual, but gross, without intelligence of truth, or affection of good; for it consists of correspondent ideas which indeed *appear* as *material*, but still are not so."

What then in this case is the relation of *spirit* to *matter*, or of the *spiritual* to the *material*? for this will determine the relation of the Spiritual world to the Natural world or world of visible Nature.

The term *spiritual* is taken in two senses, the one having relation to *substance*, the other having relation to *quality*. A spiritual body is an immaterial body. In this sense both the good and the evil after death are immaterial or spiritual substances,—or spirits: and, as such, the thoughts of both are spiritual, in the sense of their being the thoughts of spiritual beings or spirits, and obeying the laws of thought in the World of spirits. But the term *spiritual* has come to signify also certain *qualities* of the substance, and in this case is contrasted with *natural*. In the Spiritual world the natural man and the spiritual man are both spirits, and in this sense both spiritual; but, as applied to quality, the *spiritual* signifies what is within or above the *natural*, and as such is distinct from it. When the spiritual overrules the natural, the mind is called spiritual, whether in a material

body or not; when the natural overrules the spiritual the mind is called natural, whether in a spiritual body or not, in which sense the *spiritual* is not only distinct from the *natural*, but opposed to it. In both cases the spirit of man, with the faculties of will and intellect, is distinct from matter; and we must therefore regard the theory that "the will *alone* is immaterial," as involving the theory that the intellect is material, and consequently that the mind of man is a heterogeneous compound of spirit and matter. Well may we ask, in such a case, who it is that has the dreamiest perception of the difference between spirit and matter!

But we proceed.*

"When a man like Swedenborg comes to apply a method like this to theology, the consequences are obvious. Even in physics he was an audacious theorist, laying down the law, for example, on the manner and process of the Creation, as if he had been an eyewitness of it."

We presume that the writer is here alluding to the *Principia*, in which are described the constitution of the Sun, and the manner in which the planets issued from it, and continued their revolutions till they reached their present orbits. Does the writer remember that, since this treatise was written, Science has become still more daring? With a certain class of scientific men, the chemical constitution of the Sun has become a familiar topic—one which nevertheless involves the laws of the inmost and most subtle forces of nature, and as such the organization

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 508.

of crystals, plants, animals, and man; in fine, Science is approaching those very confines of the Natural world which border upon the Spiritual. This is a startling fact; accordingly what is the language of modern science on this subject?*

“We find in solar light and heat the very mainspring of vegetable life. . . . Molecular forces determine the *form* which the solar energy will assume. In the one case this energy is so conditioned by its atomic machinery as to result in the formation of a *cabbage*; in another case it is so conditioned as to result in the formation of an *oak*. So also as regards the reunion of the carbon and the oxygen,—the *form* of their reunion is determined by the molecular machinery, through which the combining force acts. In one case the action may result in the formation of a *man*, while in another it may result in the formation of a *grasshopper*.”

What is the consequence?—That many conclude that the real Creator of the cabbage, the oak, the grasshopper, and the man,—is after all the Sun; and unless Theology goes before Science, and leads it in the right direction, a subtle system of materialism, and hence of Pantheism, threatens to be the result; nay, has in part already resulted; and what has the old Theology to urge upon the subject but the old interpretations that the Sun was created on the fourth day? What Science has in store for the theological world, may further be seen from the following remarks:†—

“In discussing the material combinations which result in

* *Heat considered as a Mode of Motion* (Second Edition). By Professor Tyndall, F.R.S., etc., pp. 492, 497. † *Ibid.*, p. 498.

the formation of the body and the brain of man, it is impossible to avoid taking side-glances at the phenomena of consciousness and thought. Science has asked *daring* questions, and will, no doubt, continue to ask such. Problems will assuredly present themselves to men of a future age, which, if enunciated now, would appear to most people as the *direct offspring of insanity.*"

Is modern Theology prepared to meet this state of things? Does not Science boast that she has left Theology far away in the rear? Has not Science already her own ways of producing a Sun,—quite apart from modern Theology?

"Still, though the progress and development of science may seem to be unlimited, there is a region apparently beyond her reach—a line, with which she does not even tend to osculate. . . . When we endeavor to pass, *by a similar process* (viz., that of physical laws), from the region of physics to that of thought, we meet a problem to seize on which transcends any conceivable expansion of the powers we now possess. We may think over the subject again and again, but it eludes all intellectual presentation."—*Ibid.*

Undoubtedly—if we proceed upon the principle here laid down, namely, that of exploring the region of thought *by a process similar to that* by which we explore the region of physics.

"Thus, though the territory of science is wide, it has its limits, from which we look with vacant gaze into the region beyond."—*Ibid.*

The region beyond is the region of thought or the Spiritual world; and if we attempt to look into these *by a similar process* to that by which we explore

the region of physics, we shall undoubtedly be rewarded by “—a vacant gaze.”

“ We may fairly claim matter in all its forms, not only as it appears in external nature ; but even as it exists in the muscles, blood, and brain of man himself, it is ours to experiment and speculate upon. Rejecting the idea of a vital force, let us reduce, if we can, the physical phenomena of life to attractions and repulsions. But having thus exhausted physics, and reached its very rim, the real mystery yet looms beyond us. And thus it will ever loom—ever beyond the bourne of man’s intellect—giving the poets of successive ages just occasion to declare that, ‘ we are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded by a sleep.’ ”—*Ibid.*

All perfectly true—if we keep in mind the premises from which this conclusion is deduced, namely, the exploration of the region of thought *by a process similar* to the one adopted in the region of physics. A wrong method of investigation may render the discovery of truth as impossible as if we had no faculties to discover it ; and if we are ignorant of any other method of investigation, and refuse to learn, we must be content with our ignorance ; our faculties are, in this case, of no more use to us than if they did not exist. But when Science has arrived at the “ rim ” of the Natural world, what if it be found at the “ rim ” of the Spiritual world ; and if the confines of the two worlds should touch each other ! Undoubtedly Physical Science cannot look beyond her own confines. She knows only of what the eye hath seen, and the ear hath heard, and the imagination hath conceived, and the natural intellect deduced ; but when all these have reached their limits,

and Science has exhausted all her efforts, has Theology nothing to say? Must she be dumb upon the subject? May she not say to Physical Science, ‘*Daring* as you may be in your physical flights, I can ascend far higher still; I can see a Sun far above yours: a Moon far above yours: Stars which defy all your telescopes to reach, aye, and all *your* processes of thought to comprehend, or even believe. I behold a Sun, but which in these days is darkened; a Moon, which in these days is turned into blood; Stars which to *you* do not give their light; and that is the reason why you look into the region beyond nature with a vacant gaze. I could throw light even upon your world, if you would allow my light to enter into your light, instead of expecting that your light is to enter into mine. If you cannot enter into my world I can enter into yours. You may attempt, but in vain, to pass into my world by *continuity*: I enter into yours by *correspondence*. The Sun of your world is dead; the Sun of my world is Life itself. The Sun of your world is but a symbol of love and wisdom; the Sun of my world is essential love and wisdom itself. Where is wisdom to be found:—Have I not told you where?’

If this be true theology, it is also certainly that of Swedenborg. Our opponent says, however, it is not that of Swedenborg; for that*—

“He *began* by arguing that the invisible world may be deciphered from the analogy of things visible. He *ended* by saying, so far as a precise meaning can be attached to such

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 511.

vagueness of thought alike and expression, that *the sun which we see in the sky* is not merely a symbol of love and wisdom, but *essential love and wisdom itself*. Coleridge has said that nature, meaning material nature, is the antitheton of God. Swedenborg's teaching, if carried out consistently, ends in Pantheism."

Now as nothing can be clearer and more consistent than Swedenborg's teaching upon this subject, our opponent will not be allowed to escape under the plea of Swedenborg's "vagueness of thought alike and of expression." Swedenborg said that Nature is the antitheton or opposite of God; so did Coleridge: but Swedenborg said so long before Coleridge, who was himself a reader of these writings. The real fact is, that our critic has attributed to Swedenborg the very *antitheton* of what he taught. Light and darkness, heat and cold, life and death, are not more opposite to each other than Pantheism or Naturalism to the doctrines of Swedenborg.

Swedenborg *began* by saying, that* the Divine Love and Divine Wisdom proceed from the Lord as a Sun, and that they are essential *life*; that on the contrary, the Sun of the Natural world is pure fire, and therefore *dead*; that since Nature derives its origin from that Sun, Nature also is *dead*; that the heat proceeding from that Sun is *dead* heat, and the light proceeding from that Sun is *dead* light; and the forces resulting from that heat and light are *dead* forces; and that Naturalists who believe other-

* *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love*, art. 146, 151, et seq.

wise are *dead* men. Swedenborg began by teaching this doctrine, and he *ended* by saying the same thing; as may be seen in his last work—the *True Christian Religion*, as follows:*

... “We will clearly prove that what they call God, the Creator of all things, is nothing but Nature: consequently, that God is a word without meaning, unless Nature be meant.”

Who are they that utter these words? Not Swedenborg, but naturalists and pantheists from the regions of darkness, who are thus remonstrated with by an Angel, the scene being in the Spiritual world:

“You, in consequence of believing Nature to be God, or to be a Goddess, believe also that the light and heat of this world are the same with the light and heat of the Natural world; whereas they are totally different; natural light being darkness here, and natural heat cold. Moreover, have you hitherto had any knowledge of the Sun of this (the Spiritual) world, from which our light and heat proceed? Have you understood that this Sun is pure Love, and the Sun of the Natural world pure fire? That from the Sun of the Natural world, which is pure fire, Nature derives its existence and subsistence; but that from the Sun of heaven, which is pure Love—that which is life itself, namely, love united with wisdom, exists and subsists; consequently, that Nature, which you make to be God or to be a Goddess, is absolutely *dead*? . . . All in heaven worship God, and all in hell worship Nature.”—And what

* Art. 77.

do these spirits conclude?—"In our present state we can conclude, from what you have told us, that there is a God; but when the delights of evil take possession of our minds, we then see nothing but Nature."—What is the consequence? In mere intellectual light, apart from the will, they were led "to acknowledge the being of a God, and that Nature was created to be subservient to the life which is from God, and therefore that in itself Nature is *dead*, and has no power of acting, but is acted upon by the life which is from God."—But these spirits were convinced against their will; and their will predominating over their intellect, inasmuch as they loved darkness rather than light, they relapsed into their former naturalism and pantheism, and so "the ground clave asunder underneath their feet, and they sank down into hell."

Now these spirits, while in this world, had thought that, as the activities of Nature proceeded from the Sun of Nature, so also it was the activities of this Sun which produced a cabbage, an oak, a grasshopper, or a man! But if the forces of Nature are owing to the activities in the Sun, whence does the Sun itself derive these activities? Swedenborg says, from the Sun of heaven, from which the natural Sun exists and subsists. Each sun has its own proper *expanse*. The expanse proper to the Spiritual Sun is heaven;* the expanse proper to the Natural Sun is the Natural world. But the Spiritual Sun is no more identified with the Natural Sun, than

* *True Christian Religion*, art. 35.

the Spiritual world is with the Natural world; or the spirit of man with his material body. Still the spirit of man is within the material body, and when the material body dies, the Spirit survives. As, then, all the activities of Nature by which organization is effected, whether in crystals, plants, animals, or man, arise from the activities of the Natural Sun; so these activities themselves arise from the activities of the Spiritual Sun, which is "the brightness of the everlasting light, a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty." And this is to teach what, if carried out consistently, ends in Pantheism!—It is true that this kind of theology has hitherto been regarded as speculative; but whatever it be, it is a theology which is not only adequate to the discoveries of modern science, but has gone before them, in order to lead Science upwards *out of* the pantheism into which it would otherwise fall; and however we may attempt to evade the subject, it is literally forced upon the Church by the modern researches in Solar physics; the alternative of the Church in future being either to receive this theology, or to surrender to Science as a system of naturalism.

We have here one example of what is meant by provision being made for a Church which has fled into the wilderness; thus of the kind of preparation now being silently made by Divine Providence for its being supplied with greater numbers.

If, however, we have seen the relation of this Spiritual Sun to Solar physics, let us proceed to

point out its relation to the Sun or Solar system of *prophecy*; for *prophecy* is ever referring to the Sun, Moon, Stars, Heavens, and Earth. This we do the more especially, as the subject is forced upon us by the following charge: speaking of Swedenborg, it is said: *—

“He fixes a year for the end of the world, with all the audacity of Dr. Cumming, and with equal success. Those who oppose his notions are persecuting the truth.”

This statement, like its representative of which we read elsewhere, “*hath but a short time.*” Differing as we do *toto cælo* from the interpretations of Dr. Cumming, it is nevertheless due to him to let him speak for himself: †—

“The remarkable fact,” says he, “that I have brought out is not that the world is to end in 1867, which I never prophesied anywhere; nor that the world is to close its present state at that year; but that great chronological periods of prophecy bisect that year, and intersect each other at that year;” etc.

Dr. Cumming, nevertheless, predicts the end of the world, though he does not allow that he predicts the time: Swedenborg predicts neither the time nor the end of the world. Even, however, had Dr. Cumming ventured to do so, why throw the onus of absurd prophetic interpretation upon him? He does not profess to be the original author of these prophecies about “the end of the world;” rather he

* *Englishman's Magazine*, page 512.

† *Millennial Rest*, page 33. See also *The Bridegroom Cometh*, pages 52, 67.

candidly tells us how much he is indebted on this subject to the Clergy :

“The Church of England,” says he,* “presents at this day the greatest number of the most brilliant investigators of prophecy of any Church in Christendom. In that Church there is Elliott, the author of the *Horæ Apocalypticæ* ; Dr. Mc Neile, who has written most eloquently upon the Second Advent ; there is the present bishop of Ripon, a devoted student of prophecy. There are Dallas, Ryle, and Birks, and many others.”

Among “the many others,” he elsewhere includes Faber and Bishop Newton ; and he quotes Lord Macaulay as saying :†—

“Many Christians believe that the Messiah will shortly establish a kingdom on the earth, and reign visibly over its inhabitants. Whether this doctrine be orthodox or not, we shall not inquire ; the number of people who hold it is very much greater than the number of Jews residing in England. Many of those who hold this doctrine are distinguished by rank, by wealth, by ability. It is preached from the pulpits both of the Scottish and of the English Church ; noblemen and members of Parliament have written in defence of it ; who expect that before this generation shall pass away, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be swallowed up in one divine empire. Such is the opinion of Macaulay.”

Is this a delusion ? The more prudential divines in the Church of England say that it is ; so does Swedenborg. Who, then, is answerable for the delusion ? If it be true that the most brilliant

* *The Bridegroom Cometh*, page 193.

† *Ibid.*, page 13.

interpreters belonging to this school are to be found in the greatest number in the Church of England; is the Church of England, or is it not, the most responsible party?

It may be said that in this case the Church of England is not responsible, but only individuals; for it leaves the interpretation of prophecy an open question. Why is it left open? Because it has no fixed principles of interpretation, and consequently cannot decide between the literal and spiritual interpretations. In what position, then, is the Catholic Church with regard to the Second Advent? It tells people that the Second Coming is a coming to Judgment; that God shall judge the world according to *the Truth*; that this Judgment is a ground of man's moral responsibility, and reminds them that when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Well then, if there be any occasion on which *the Truth* requires to be told, it is the occasion of the Second Advent. Yet what do we find? The one grand truth of a coming to Judgment melted away into one grand delusion!* We have battles of Armageddon presenting a scene of universal slaughter; a white horse bearing a divine Hero clothed in garments literally dipped in gore; saints engaged in a universal massacre, plunged up to their horses' bridles in blood, with "the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand

* See *Apocryphical Interpretation*, Vol. II., chap. 7, 8. By the Rev. A. Clissold.

to execute judgment, as it is written, such honor have all his saints." Then at the Judgment day we have the *end of the World*—the *Sun* literally darkened, the *Moon* literally turned into blood; the *Stars* falling from heaven; the conflagration of the Earth, including the burning of the Royal Exchange, Bank, Mansion House, and so forth. The Trumpet is to sound*—"Then the dead shall instantly rise; and, visiting Kensal Green, or Norwood, or the village churchyard where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep, you will find some graves empty and some not empty"—and so forth. What is the consequence? The one grand Truth of a Judgment being inextricably bound up with events of this description, becomes lost in a cloud of fable: the very Judgment itself is regarded as fabulous; and so it comes to pass, that the Second Advent is celebrated as a festival of the Church, a story belonging to the Ecclesiastical Calendar—a matter of annual custom. And then follows, what?—a warning against the sin of infidelity!—"Lord, how long!"

What is to put an end to this system? Will copes and chasubles, candles and candlesticks suffice? Will primitive creeds, traditions, and catechisms? Have not all these fabulous interpretations grown up under the very shadow of Church authority? To eradicate the whole system, there must be a radically *new system* of interpretation. I do not say *new principles*, for the Church is already in possession of those principles, but has been afraid

* *The Bridegroom Cometh*; p. 154.

to use them. Why it has been afraid to use them, we shall see in the following remarks.

We are not to interpret prophecy, we are told, in such a manner as shall contravene the doctrine of the Church. Now one leading doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church is, that it is *indefectible*; while the Church of England, as a branch of the Catholic Church, regards itself as permanent. In either case, to speak of the decline and fall of the Catholic Church would be regarded as controverting the words of our Lord, that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Hence the doctrine of Churches in general is, that they will last to the *end of the world*, or the general conflagration. This was also the belief of the Jews with regard to the Jewish Church. But history has taught us that the Jewish Church came to an end, but the world did not.

When the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world," every one might know that the expression is not "end of the world," but consummation or "end of the *age*." The *age* is that of the dispensation or Church; but to interpret the expression as signifying the end of the *Church* would be to contravene the doctrine of the Church; particularly as, in this case, sermons preached on Advent Sundays would then be sermons not upon the *end of the World*, but upon the *end of the Church*; and the Church upon Advent Sundays would be celebrating, or at least foretelling, the transition of the Catholic Church as it now exists, and the advent of another; for no one questions

that there will be a True Christian Church as long as the world lasts, and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Accordingly, Swedenborg interprets the expression which in our translation is rendered *the end of the world*, to signify the *end of the Church*, or *consummation of the Age*.

His words are as follow :*—

“The coming of the Lord is *not* a coming to destroy the visible heaven and the habitable earth; and to create a new heaven and a new earth, according to the opinions which many, from not understanding the spiritual sense of the Word, have hitherto entertained. It is the prevailing opinion at this day in every Church, that the Lord, when He comes to the Last Judgment, will appear in the clouds of heaven with angels and the sound of trumpets; that He will gather together all who are then dwelling on the earth, as well as all who are deceased; and will separate the evil from the good, as a shepherd separates the goats from the sheep; that He will then cast the evil or the goats into Hell, and raise up the good or the sheep into Heaven; and further, that He will, at the same time, create a new visible Heaven and a new habitable earth.” . . .

In opposition to this teaching he adds,† that he has been enjoined by the Lord to give the spiritual sense of the Word upon this subject, in order—“to prevent man from plunging deeper into this false opinion of the destruction of the visible heaven and the habitable earth.”—Hence on the words, “What

* *True Christian Religion*, art. 768.

† *Ibid.*, 771, 757.

shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the consummation of the age," he observes,* "By the coming of the Lord and consummation of the Age is signified the beginning of a New Church, and the End of a former Church. By the coming of the Lord, the beginning of a New Church; and by the consummation of the age, the end of an old Church. Wherefore the Lord in this chapter instructs the disciples concerning the successive vastation of the former Church, and concerning the establishment of a New Church at the end of a former. But He instructs them by mere correspondences, which cannot be unfolded and known, except by the spiritual sense." Accordingly, by the *Sun* being *darkened* is signified, he says, the obscuration of charity; by the *moon* turned into *blood*, corruptions of the faith; by the *stars* falling from heaven to earth, the spiritual knowledges of the Word of God brought down and changed into mere earthly and sensuous fallacies; by *clouds*, the letter of Scripture; by *glory*, the spiritual sense; by the *trumpet*, the voice of Divine Truth speaking to the Church.—"Unless,"† says he, "this sense be understood, it cannot in anywise be known what the words involve; as that *the sun shall be darkened*, and also the *moon*, that the *stars shall fall from heaven*, and the *powers of heaven be shaken*; that the Lord shall appear in the *clouds* of heaven; that the angels shall make a sound with the *trumpet*, and shall thus gather together the elect. He who does not know the internal sense of these words will

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 706. † *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 4059.

believe that such things are about literally to happen ; yea, that *the world is to perish*, with everything that appears in the Universe ; but that *no destruction of the world* is meant, but the consummation or vastation of the Church," Swedenborg says is demonstrated in his interpretation of the words of our Lord upon that subject.

Our opponent, then, could have given but little credit to the "well-educated" for much knowledge upon this subject, when he gravely assures them, *upon his own authority*, that "Swedenborg fixes a year for the end of the world with all the audacity of Dr. Cumming, and with equal success." Surely it might be worth while even for the "well-educated" to become a little better acquainted with the subject, were it only to enable them to see on which side the temerity lies.

It is true that Swedenborg says, that from the year 1757 there commenced a New Era, and preparations for the establishment of a New Christian Church ; just as we say that a New Era commenced in the year 4001, and from that time preparations were made for the establishment of a New Church. But the world did not come to an end in one case any more than in the other ; although in both cases the heavens and the earth passed away. We fear, however, that the real temerity of Swedenborg consists in denying the end of the World, and affirming the end of the Church, and that it is for this reason that he is a daring theorist, and a false prophet.*—

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 512.

“Certainly the career of Swedenborg is a warning to those, who, with intentions as good as his, set themselves to erect a *Church of the future*, as if the hoary edifice which Christ built on the Rock were *tottering to its fall!*!”

Well, then, let us at least for awhile listen to the kindly warning; bid adieu to Swedenborg and his interpretations; be as little concerned with prophecy as possible; and maintain, with the Church in general, that prophecy is not to be explained by individual *interpreters*, but only by *events*; thus that when prophecy is really fulfilled, it will explain itself. What then are the *events* for which the Catholic Church professes to be waiting? One of them is the fulfilment of one of its own traditions,—the coming of some forerunner of the Second Advent, and that forerunner the prophet Elijah. Why need the Church then look out for any other prophet, or for one extraneous to herself, when she is waiting for her own Elijah?

But in what character is this Elijah to come? Origen says, that “Elijah is a type of prophecy which bears testimony to Jesus.” Elijah, then, is to interpret prophecy as bearing testimony to Jesus. This is his office, and this is the Catholic interpretation; for as the testimony of Jesus is the breath of prophecy, so the breath of prophecy bears testimony to Jesus. But as Elijah is to be interpreter, nothing is gained by transferring the interpretation from the interpreter to the event, for the event transfers it back again to some interpreter. *The very event itself is the coming of an interpreter.* But the Church itself is also

interpreter; and Elijah, before he begins his "Bible Christianity," is warned in these words—"It will be* a fatal day for education in England, if ever the chaotic vagueness of what is called Bible Christianity, be substituted for Creed and Catechism." Elijah, then, must keep in view both Creed and Catechism; and as such be tolerably well versed in the writings of Petavius on the Incarnation, Pearson on the Creed, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and that of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, and so forth. To explain the Scriptures apart from these Creeds and Catechisms, or in any respect contrary to them, would be to convict himself of being a false prophet, and to be guilty of "the chaotic vagueness of what is called Bible Christianity." As to Swedenborg,†—"he discarded even the help of Commentaries;" let Elijah beware of the same fatal mistake; let him remember that, as to the Church of Rome, the Vicar of Christ may grant him his commission; but that as the decrees of the Vicar of Christ are equally divine with those of the Word of God, it is understood, as a matter of course, that the Papal system cannot be the subject of the prophet's denunciations, particularly as this might invalidate his commission, and he might be silenced in these words:—"Are we not warned against false Christs and false prophets? You are of yesterday, we, from the beginning: you are an individual, we the Church: we are authority itself, apart from us you have no authority: if you are a prophet, shew

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 512.

† *Ibid.*, p. 508.

yourself to be a prophet; go forth and preach *in our name*: if not, Paul we know and Silas we know, but who are you?—A question which, in the present case, is answered in the following manner: *—

... “Unless we may impute the extravagancies of his old age to an intellect disordered by overwork, he cannot be acquitted of a spiritual pride and of a blasphemous presumption. Happily it is the most reasonable, as well as the most charitable supposition, that he was beginning to dote when he began to fancy himself a prophet.”

An increpation which, while it would effectually extinguish the interpreter, illustrates his interpretation. Gregory the Great had said that an *axe*, in the internal sense, sometimes signifies *increpation*; and increpation includes all manner of reproach. Hence, to be *smitten with an axe*, signifies to be smitten with reproaches. In our English version the word in the *Apocalypse*, chap. xx. 4, is translated as signifying *beheading*; in the Vulgate, *decolation*. It is no unusual thing to say of a *dotard* that he has lost his head, † meaning his rational faculties. In whichever sense we take the expression, it implies that “the powers that be” had said and done upon the occasion “whatsoever they listed.”

But let this pass. Swedenborg is a *prophet* only in the sense of being a *Teacher*. It is said of the *Two Witnesses*, ‡ “they shall prophecy—i.e. teach

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 507.

† Or, as in the French idiom, “*Il a perdu la tête.*” *l.*

‡ Pyle's *Paraphrase*, Rev. xi. 4.

true doctrine, and, like the ancient prophets, reprove and confute all erroneous doctrine and corrupt practices." So Grotius * observes respecting Moses and Elias, whose coming, according to tradition, was to precede the end of the world, that the tradition is to be interpreted of those *Teachers of the truth* who were to come in the spirit of Moses and the spirit of Elias; and a similar interpretation of the word is given by him in the 11th chapter of the *Apocalypse*. It is over the teaching of these Witnesses that their enemies make themselves merry, congratulating themselves upon having finally extinguished it; and when the extinction has all the appearance of having been perfected, the spirit of life re-enters the dead bodies, and the opponents seem to be silenced instead of the Witnesses. That such a state of things is to happen at the close of the present Dispensation is, to say the least, a common interpretation. As Mr. Oxenham appropriately observes: †—"The same spirit who once spoke by the Prophets abides for ever in the mystical body of Christ. Now, indeed, as then, whenever some special crisis ‡ occurs, we need not doubt that a

* Matth. xvii. 11. See also Schleusner's *Lexicon of the New Testament*.

† *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*: Introduction, p. 41.

‡ Of this crisis the following remark is one illustration: "I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the next ten years will bring forth and sift to the very bottom all the great doctrines on which the Church of Christ is built. There is nothing which will not be the subject of discussion, and we shall enter upon a great conflict, to which all the conflicts which have taken place

special prophet or preacher of righteousness will be raised up to meet it, from whose lips a fresh energy may be caught for the enlightenment or regeneration of them that come after." What treatment that prophet is to receive in case he should not re-echo the voice of the Church, Mr. Oxenham does not venture to intimate. The subject is of importance, however, as raising the question, how far Elijah may differ from Creeds and Catechisms without losing his character as a prophet. To proceed.

Swedenborg has laid down definite principles of interpretation, and consequently given definite interpretations,* "forgetting that the *internal senses* of Scripture are manifold as the diverse aspects of truth"—Pray what are the "internal senses" which relate to *the consummation of the Age*? If they are so very manifold, how is it that no one hears anything about them in sermons on the Second Advent? How is it that they are cautiously avoided in Commentaries? How strangely would have sounded in any pulpit, at any one period within the last century, the following "*internal sense*" given

during the last twenty-five years will be mere child's play. I cannot doubt, looking to the legal decision recently made, the publications issued, and the tone of public preaching, that everything now reverently received and held will be questioned—the authority and inspiration of God's Word, the miraculous character of the Old Testament, and by consequence that of the New; even the nature of the doctrine of the great Atonement."—*Guardian Supplement*, Aug. 9, 1865. *Speech of the Rev. C. C. Bartholomew, Exeter, on the occasion of Elections to Convocation.*

* *Englishman's Magazine*, page 512.

by Cardinal Hugo :—“ *There shall not be one stone left upon another which shall not be thrown down—* Morally : it is a destruction of the Temple, a desolation of religion and of the Church, and its downfall ; which for a great part are already destroyed ; not in respect of the multiplicity of its stones and revenues, but in respect of sanctity of morals and devotedness of faith.”

If, then, the passage has “any internal sense,” would it not be safer to say nothing about it? or else to say, that although the “internal senses are as manifold as the aspects of Divine truth,” yet we know little or nothing about them, and must not pry into things which God has not revealed?

This brings us to the office of the Clergy as foreshadowing and foreshadowed by that of Elias.

As interpreters of the prophetic Word, the Clergy are thus referred to in the Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent :—“O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee ; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy Second Coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight.”—The language of this Collect is taken from that of the angel when speaking of John : “*Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him, in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobe-*

dient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." There is nothing clearer than that the Clergy, as ministers and stewards of the Word,* are here set forth in their office as interpreters of the prophetic Word; and as in the spirit and power of Elias, bearing testimony to Jesus, and thus preparing the way for the Second Coming. In what manner, during the Sundays in Advent, do they go forth in the spirit and power of Elias? In answer to this question, it is admitted that many among them would disclaim altogether most of the literal interpretations we have already given; and even be disposed to say as little about the *end of the world* as possible; their alternative in this case being that of a late Hulsean lecturer: *—

"Darkness is upon the face of the prophetic creation, and the Spirit of God must move ere it can be broken and dispersed; and we must either wait for some *inspired interpreter* to unravel its intricacy, or sit down in contented expectation for that period in which the difficulties of Christianity shall be swallowed up in the glories of the Second Coming of our Lord, as the seeming inconsistencies of the Jewish scheme were illuminated by the brightness of his First."

Here, the alternative is either that of waiting for some interpreter, or of giving up the subject altogether—which a great many of the clergy do: they will have nothing to do with prophecy or its interpretation; and it is obvious that, in this respect,

* *Evidences of Christianity*, by the Rev. C. A. Benson, Prebendary of Worcester, page 138.

they have nothing to do with the prophetic office of preparing the way for the Second Coming.

But is this to go forth in the spirit and power of Elias? The peculiar office of Elias is to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, and this especially by the interpretation of prophecy. It is in relation to this especially that the term *disobedient* is used; namely, to signify those who are disobedient to the prophetic warnings uttered by the ministers and stewards of God's Holy Word in relation to the Second Coming. But suppose the ministers and stewards should themselves be waiting for an *interpreter*! Well; they are in this respect waiting for further instruction concerning the coming of the Lord. But suppose they should *not* be waiting for an interpreter, and that the very notion of the coming of an interpreter should be the signal for scorn and derision. What then! Why then they must sit down in darkness, and *wait* for that coming, which, notwithstanding their waiting, is to find them unprepared. "Darkness is upon the face of the prophetic Creation;" behold, the lamps of the prophets are gone out! The Church waits for events: the clergy wait for the Church: the laity wait for the clergy: but time and tide wait for no man,—no, not even for the Church. So events have marched onwards before the Church: the Age is in advance, and looks back and sees Theology *waiting*! Waiting for what? Is the Church to go on everlastingly waiting? Is the Lord never to give any interpretation of his Word until she shall have called

together her Councils, disputed over "the manifold senses" of prophecy, and made the whole course of Divine Providence dependent upon another Council of Nice? "Thy word is a *lamp* unto my feet and a light to my paths." What the lamp is to its light, the letter is to its spirit. If, therefore, the spiritual sense is gone out, the lamp is gone out. John, in preparing the way of the Lord, was a burning and shining light; but in preparing the way of the Lord, how can they be said to give light, who confess that they have no light to give? And if they have none, what is the consequence? The Church is waiting for the interpretation of prophecy, even as the children of Abraham are waiting for its fulfilment at this very moment.

But will the Church have to reform any of her Creeds, or abandon any of her traditions? We answer; The interpretation of prophecy is an open question; that being the case, when we come to the expressions, "*I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away,*" it is quite competent to any member of the English Church to give the same interpretation to these words which was given to them when applied to the Jewish Church; that is, to interpret them as signifying the passing away of one Dispensation and the coming in of another. Now the Dispensation is of the Church; if the Dispensation passes away, the Church passes away, and thus both pass away when the heavens and earth pass away. If, then, the heavens and earth pass away, what becomes of the

Church? If the Church passes away, what becomes of her Creeds and Traditions? We say, then, it is competent to any member of the Church to affirm, that the present Churches of Christendom may pass away, and together with them all their Creeds and Traditions, in so far as they are not found perfect before God. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*"—"Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven: and this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

This brings us to the subject of Catholic Creeds and Doctrine, or Dogmatic Theology, more especially in relation to prophecy.

*"Swedenborg's repugnance to dogmatic theology, and his disregard of tradition issue naturally, if not in an explicit denial of the great truths of Christianity, at least in the evasion or suppression of them. In his periphrastic language they are disguised and diluted till they disappear altogether. It is easy to quote passages in which Swedenborg professes his faith in the Saviour, but in denying his eternal Sonship he practically denies that He was God."

Is then *the miraculous conception* no proof of the Saviour's Divinity? Or was there no Divine generation of the humanity in the womb of the Virgin Mary? Or if there was, is it denied that the humanity was Son of God in virtue of that Divine generation, and in a plenary sense Son of God in virtue of his glorification? According to the inter-

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 511.

pretation of Swedenborg, *Christ* is the name of the humanity anointed with the Divinity, which was effected both by divine generation in the womb of the Virgin, and by Divine glorification at the Resurrection; so that the humanity itself is Deified or made Divine. Accordingly, the very rock on which the Church is built is the confession of Peter—*“Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.”*

But we are told that it is not the confession that is the Rock, but Peter; for what is a confession without a confessor? And we ask in reply, what is Peter without his confession? . . . **“Thirty-six Fathers and Doctors of the Church of all ages and nations in the East and West, including ten Popes, interpret the Rock to be the true Faith.”* Suppose, then, we grant for awhile that it is Peter, as making the confession, that is the rock upon which the Church is built; or again that the Church, nay even the Pope, is the representative and successor of Peter: and suppose further, that Peter is asked in the present day, *“Whom say ye that I am?”* What is the answer given by Peter? We must seek for it in the writings of Athanasius; and Athanasian writers furnish us with the following interpretations: †—

Dr. Waterland:—In respect of the miraculous conception *“Christ was not Son of God in a higher or more peculiar manner than angels or Adam.”* Wheatley:—with respect to the humanity, notwith-

* *The Unity of the Church.* By Dr. Manning, page 153.

† See *Spiritual Interpretation of the Apocalypse.* By the Rev. A. Clissold. Vol. I., *Incarnation*, page 115, *et seq.*

standing the miraculous conception, "Adam was more immediately the Son of God than Christ." Archbishop Usher:—"Christ Jesus is the natural Son of God only in regard of the eternal generation, otherwise there should be two sons,—one of the Father and another of the Holy Ghost." Dean Sherlock:—"Christ is never in Scripture called the Son of God but with respect to his eternal generation." . . . "It is downright heresy to assert that Christ is called the Son of God on account of his miraculous conception." Bishop Bull:—"As to being formed by the Divine power and virtue without a father in the womb of the Virgin, the first Adam is in some measure *superior* to the second, since the former was made by God without father and without mother, the latter without father only." Macknight:—"Instead of proving Jesus to be superior to angels, his miraculous conception does not make him superior to Adam."—All these and other similar interpretations are professedly drawn from the writings of Athanasius, and founded upon the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

It cannot be denied that here is a fundamental difference upon the doctrine of the Incarnation; and that if the theology of Swedenborg be founded upon the first interpretation, and that of Athanasius upon the second, we must come to the conclusion that one or the other is false. If the misinterpretation be regarded as on the side of Swedenborg, then the Church has come to regard the doctrine that Christ is the Son of God by Divine generation in the

womb of the Virgin, not only as no proof of His Divinity or that He is God, but as "downright heresy!" Let this be thoroughly understood as the real ground of difference between the two systems of theology, and we shall find that the debates in the council of Nice concerning the theology of Arius are not yet over; that, to use the words of Mr. Oxenham—"We are on the eve of a crisis, such as for the last three centuries the Church has not witnessed. The Reformation was but the first act of a drama that has yet to be played out; and it may be expected that our own age will see questions stirred more searching than any that were mooted then."

If the Divinity of Christ cannot be proved by the *miraculous conception*, the only other alternative afforded by the Church is to prove it by the Eternal Sonship. Accordingly, Swedenborg observes* that it was foreseen by the Lord that the Divine generation of the humanity would be denied; that consequently if the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship were not permitted, the Divinity of our Lord would be denied altogether, and there could be no Church. Nay, further, that it was foreseen not only that the Divinity of the Humanity would be denied, but that whatever attributes the Humanity possessed would be transferred to his reputed Vicar, or to the Church; so that in fact the Humanity of our Lord would become a cypher, and all power in heaven and in earth would be usurped by the Church. Accordingly,

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 1110.

it is the Church which has "clothed itself with the attributes of the Messiah;" it is the Church which assumes to be "the representative of the Saviour." Hear the language of Moehler :*—

"The *visible Church* is the *Son of God Himself* everlastingly manifesting himself among men in a human form, perpetually renovated, and eternally young—the permanent incarnation of the same, as in holy Writ, even the faithful are called the body of Christ. Hence it is evident that the Church, though composed of men, is yet not purely human." . . . "Christ himself is only so far an authority as the Church is an authority." . . . "If the Church be not *the authority representing Christ*, then all again relapses into darkness, uncertainty, doubt, distraction, unbelief and superstition: revelation becomes null and void, fails of its real purpose, and must henceforth be even called in question, and finally denied."

† Can Church authority be more highly exalted? Can it be placed in a position of more absolute sovereignty? If then doctrine can be taught only by authority, it is evident that authority is before doctrine; for it is authority that propounds doctrine. Hence the clergy, as teaching by the authority of the Church, precede in this respect the doctrine which they teach. Accordingly, observes a modern writer, in *Christendom's Divisions*, p. 200 :—

"Were it permitted to establish degrees of importance

* Moehler's *Symbolism*. Translated by Robertson. Vol. II., pages 6, 7, 18.

† "Surely the Holy Ghost speaks by the Church, no less than by the Bible, and any neglect to hear his voice in one case is as deadly as in the other. In fact it may be a question whether, *e. g.* even the Ten Commandments are binding on Christians otherwise than through the Church." *Union Review* for November, 1865; p. 710.

amongst things of Divine institution, I should place the hierarchy before dogma—to so great a degree is the former indispensable to the maintenance of the faith. One may cite in favor of this theory a splendid experience which for three centuries has been conspicuous in the eyes of all Europe: I mean the Anglican Church, which has preserved a dignity and weight absolutely foreign to all the other Reformed Churches, entirely because the English good sense has preserved the Hierarchy.”

With all these advantages, how has the *authorized* interpreter succeeded in interpreting prophecy? Is it not still to him a sealed Book? Would a single one of the seals be opened by a reunion of all the Churches of Christendom? Would prophetic interpretation be in the least advanced? Would not the Churches united have still to wait for an interpreter, or give up the interpretation of prophecy as hopeless? We are told that without the Church as a supreme authority, “all relapses into darkness, uncertainty, doubt, distraction, unbelief, and superstition;” and what else is prophecy now with all the advantage of supreme authority as interpreter? Of what avail have been the most absolute authority, the profoundest learning, the most venerable tradition; is not Prophecy as dark as ever? Has it not become null and void, and failed of its real purpose, till it is called in question and finally denied?

But if there be this inevitable uncertainty with regard to *prophecy*, is not the case different with regard to *doctrine*? Assuredly here at least there is no darkness, no uncertainty.

*“The clear and definite teaching transmitted in the Church from Christ and his Twelve Apostles, affords a more than sufficient guidance in the midst of this inevitable uncertainty.”—Here then do we not come to something clear and definite; something that the Church herself, as Teacher, understands, and teaches so as to be understood by those who are taught? What is the answer to this question as given in the same *Magazine*, and apparently by the same writer?

†“Why has not the Church defined Inspiration, and given us a solution of the difficulty? We answer, Because it is neither her duty to do so, nor is it possible to be defined and limited by human language, or conceived by human thought. The Church lays down doctrines to be believed, but does not explain them. She lays down, for instance, the doctrine of the HOLY TRINITY in the Creed of St. Athanasius, but she neither explains this mystery, *nor calls upon any one to understand it.* ‘The Catholic Faith is this, that we worship ONE GOD in TRINITY, and TRINITY in UNITY.’ She asks for worship and obedience as the expression of Faith;—*not for a comprehension of her doctrines.*”

Here, then, it is affirmed, that the doctrines taught by the Church, the Church as Teacher does not profess to explain, obviously because she does not profess to understand them; and as neither does the Church profess to understand prophecy, it is evident that doctrine and prophecy are alike not understood. What then can be the meaning of these words—“The clear and definite teaching trans-

* *Englishman's Magazine*, p. 512.

† *Ibid.*, p. 343.

mitted in the Church from Christ and his Twelve Apostles, affords a more than sufficient guidance in the midst of this inevitable uncertainty?"

What, according to this writer, is "the clear and definite teaching" of the Church but this? that the Church has authority to teach, but does not understand what she teaches, or expect those she teaches to understand; and that this teaching, not understood on either side, is to be regarded as clear and definite, and to be a sufficient guide in the midst of inevitable uncertainties; as if what is not understood gives understanding. Nay, but in this case it is replied, there is the more need of authority: we say, there is the more need of instruction: it is replied, there is the more need of the Church: we say, there is the more need of an interpreter: it is replied, there is the more need of obedience; we say that it is the office of *the interpreter* to prepare the way of the Lord, and to turn the hearts of the *disobedient* to the *wisdom* of the just; and who in this case are the disobedient, but they who are disobedient not to *authority* merely but to *wisdom*? The fact that the doctrine of the Church is not understood, and the reason why it is not understood, will more fully appear in the sequel. In the meantime we observe, that if the object of the writer had been to shew the necessity for the coming of an interpreter, he could scarcely have written more appropriately.

We now pass on to the remarks of Mr. Oxenham in his work on *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*; and in so doing we need not interrupt the

continuity of our argument; for the subject is still that of Doctrine, and first of all the primary doctrine of *The Trinity in Unity*. Swedenborg asserts that God is one in Substance and in Person; that this God is the Lord God Almighty—the Saviour Jesus Christ; that in Him there is a Trinity of Essentials,—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that every Church is judged according to its idea of God, and the life arising from it; that judgment has begun at the house of God; and that as these are the last times of the Church, so are they the last times of the theology founded on the Tripersonality.

We have seen that by “the consummation of the age” is meant not the end of the world but the end of the Church, called in the Epistles “the last times” or “the last days;” these last times or days being, in the age of the Apostles, those of the Jewish Church. Hence, in the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 2, it is said, “God hath spoken by his Son, in these last days:” in the first Epistle of St. Peter i. 20, “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and was manifest in these last times for you:” and in first Epistle of St. John ii. 18, “Little children, it is the last time;” and in other passages; *the last time* is that of the Jewish Dispensation or Church. In like manner when it is said, 2 Tim. iii. 1, “In the last days perilous times shall come.”—2 Pet. ii. 3, “There shall come in the last days scoffers”—by “*the last days*” are meant those of the Christian Church or Dispensation; or “the last days” when the Son of Man cometh; and

then shall He find faith upon the earth? If faith is at that time to be found at all upon the earth, we naturally look for it in the Church; but at that time we look for it in vain: the Church will have no faith that it is the last time; no faith that it has arrived at its end; no faith that it is the time of the Coming of the Lord; no faith in the veritable Coming itself; for it will not know in what the Coming consists, but suppose that it means something which it does not mean; as was the case with the Jewish Church. Hence the Advent overtakes the Church unawares. The ministers and stewards of God's Holy Word had been professedly preparing the way of the Lord, down to the very moment of the Advent; and yet when the Lord comes, he finds them all unprepared. That the Church should profess to be diligent in preparing the way of the Lord, and yet when the Lord comes, should be unprepared for the Coming, shews that the same thing will have then taken place in the Christian Church which had previously taken place in the Jewish. The Jews had not understood the true nature of the Coming, and therefore had not understood how to make preparation. But why did they not understand the true nature of the Coming?—Simply, because "*they would not.*" John preached repentance not to individuals only but to the Church, and to the Church as consisting of individuals: he made no difference in this respect between the Church and individuals: to both he proclaimed, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The repentance of all the indivi-

duals would have been the repentance of the Church, and the Church could not have repented and disbelieved at the same time. What then should we say of the Jews, if in answer to John they should have replied in the words of Moehler*—"We all have erred—it is the Church only which cannot err: we all have sinned—the Church only is spotless on earth?"—Here we have repentant individuals, and an unrepentant Church; the repentant individual receiving Christ, and as a member of an unrepentant Church rejecting him. Why is the Church unrepentant? Because it has nothing of which to repent—"the Church alone is spotless upon earth"—the Church alone is "inerrable;" and as to the individual—"When his feelings, thoughts, and will are conformable to her spirit, then only can the individual attain to inerrability."—"Hence it is with the profoundest love, reverence, and devotion that the Jew embraces his Church. The very thought of resisting her, of setting himself up in opposition to her will, is one against which his inmost feelings revolt, to which his whole nature is abhorrent: and to bring about a schism—to destroy unity—is a crime before whose heinousness his bosom trembles, and from which his soul recoils."—"Could Satan succeed in annihilating the Jewish Church, then the Jewish religion would be at the same time annihilated, and Jehovah Himself would be vanquished by him."

What is the consequence? Repentance and faith are the acts only of the individual, and as such, acts

* *Symbolism*, vol. ii., pages 32, 10, 21.

of schism in regard to the Church—the Church only is spotless upon earth—the individual is inerrable only as a member of the Church—and thus is the Church justified in “killing the prophets, and stoning them that are sent unto her.”

Moehler, then, has put into the mouth of the Catholic the argument of the Jew. The Catholic Church is made to speak the language of the Jewish; and thus, while professedly awaiting the Advent, the Catholic Church may, like the Jewish, be desperately opposed to it, and be even Antichristian without being aware of it; for “as a snare is that day to come upon the whole earth.” Accordingly, Antichrist may himself be looking out for the coming of Christ, and the coming of Antichrist; looking out, however, in the wrong direction, and for a wrong description of event. If there be one thing clear in our Lord’s prophecies concerning his Second Coming, it is that He will find the Church profoundly ignorant of the *times* and *seasons* in which He comes. For this reason it is that the Church is and must be taken by surprise. It cannot be otherwise: *Acts* i. 7, “*It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.*” The *times* and *seasons* of the Church are, as we have seen, the *spiritual states* of the Church, and these spiritual states will be deeply hidden from its knowledge. The Church is not aware that it is that which it is, and therefore not aware of that which is to be. *Matt.* xxiv. 36, “*Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the*

angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” As no man can judge of the spiritual state of another, so is he forbidden to judge, that he may not himself be judged; and the case is the same with regard to the angels, whom God hath himself charged with folly. It is the Father who is the *Supreme Good*; and therefore it is the Father alone to whom are known all the states of the Church as to *good* or *evil*; and the Son knoweth these states only as *The Supreme Good*, or the *Father*, reveals them within him.

Accordingly, it is this Revelation with which the Apocalypse opens. But is the Church represented there as her own judge of herself? When the strong angel proclaimed, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof,” where was the spotless Church, infallible, inerrable, having all power in heaven and in earth? Why was she silent? Why did she not dry up the tears of the Apostle, and answer like the stars, and say—“Here we are”—the Church that has not erred!—the Church that was spotless upon earth!—the Church that never needed repentance!—the Church that hath all power in heaven and in earth. How came the Apostle to be ignorant of such a Church, and all the Angels, and the Lamb himself; and the Church herself to be mute?—Was it not because no Church could then be found able to open the Book, and understand her own spiritual condition?

Had the Jewish Church believed in the fact of its own unbelief, or had faith in the fact of its own

want of faith, it would not have given itself credit for believing in Moses and the Prophets when all belief had departed. When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find a profession of faith upon the earth? Yes!—but when He cometh shall he find faith notwithstanding? No!—Some will profess faith, and have none. Some will profess no faith, and have none. Some will profess strong faith, but a wrong faith; and so, in regard to a right faith, will have none. Scoffers will be found among all, and among none more plentifully than among the professed believers—the Sanhedrim and synagogue of the day. It was the Jewish Church which presented the highest form of infidelity: the faith of the day which was the quintessence of unbelief. Nevertheless, even in those times, *Polytheism* was not one of the sins of the Jewish Church. Whether it be not the crying sin of the Christian Church we proceed to enquire; and as Swedenborg professed to treat of Theology in the last times of the Church, we proceed to the last phase of the controversy on the subject of *The Trinity in Unity*.

In the year 1832 Dr. Burton, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, published a volume of sermons, in which is contained a “Defence of the Athanasian Creed,” which was preached before the year 1831, and had reference to certain discussions then arising. In this sermon he states the Sabellian hypothesis to be one* “which supposes the Son of God not to have a real personal existence like that of a son who is a

* Page 264.

distinct being from his father;" and his object is to shew that in the doctrine of the Trinity, *Father* and *Son* are terms to be understood in their common literal sense,* just as when they imply two distinct Beings. In his *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Doctrine of the Trinity; Introduction*, he observes :†—

“The Sabellian hypothesis . . . assigns no reason why God should be called the Son, when viewed as the Redeemer of mankind; and the notion of the Son interceding with the Father, of his having made satisfaction to his Father, and of his being a Mediator between God and man, must lead us to the notion of *two Beings*, who in some way or other have distinct individuality. That Sabellianism, when it appeared in the third century, was looked upon as a heresy, is not a matter of speculation, but of history.”

Here it is distinctly stated that Sabellianism was considered to be a heresy on the ground that it did not regard the Father and Son as *two distinct Beings*. Bingham takes the same view of the subject; and hence in opposition to Sabellianism he observes;‡ —“It is very inconceivable how one office should intercede or mediate to another. Intercession is an act of a rational or intelligent being; and intercession of one to another supposes *distinct intelligent beings*,—one interceding, another to whom intercession is made.” For preaching doctrine of this kind in the University pulpit at Oxford, Bingham was censured by the hebdomadal board as preaching

* Page 274.

† Page 11.

‡ See his works, vol. ix., page 345.

Arianism and Tritheism, in consequence of which he was obliged to leave the University; but in his *Ecclesiastical Biography*, under the article *Bingham*, Dr. Hook maintains that Bingham was right, and the hebdomadal board was wrong.

It is well known that Archbishop Whately constantly protested against this doctrine of Two or Three Divine Beings.

We now come to one of the leading intellects of the day, viz. Dr. Newman. In Volume VI. of his *Parochial Sermons*, second edition, 1842, there is a sermon on the *Mystery of the Holy Trinity*, directed, among other errors, against that of Sabellianism, and the author observes :*—

“Thus we must ever commence in all our teaching concerning the Holy Trinity; we must not begin by saying that there are Three, and then afterwards go on to say that there is One, lest we give false notions of the nature of that One; but we must begin by laying down the great Truth that there is One God in a simple and strict sense, and then go on to speak of *Three*, which is the way in which the mystery was progressively revealed in Scripture. In the Old Testament we read of the Unity; in the New we are enlightened in the knowledge of the Trinity.”

If the question be asked, *Three what?* the meaning is grammatically *Three Gods*: thus, that in the Old Testament we read of One God, in the New Testament of *Three*:—in what sense *Three*, is thus explained :†—

* Page 379.

† *Atlantis*, July 1858; p. 338. Also *Select Treatises of Athanasius*, p. 407, and other places.

“Non tres æterni sed unus æternus. I suppose this means that each Divine Person is to be received as the one God as entirely and absolutely as he would be held to be, if we had never heard of the other Two, and that he is not in any respect less than the one and only God, because they are each that same God also; or, in other words, that as each human individual being has one personality, the Divine Being has Three.”

But does not this make our ideas of the Trinity and Unity necessarily incongruous, incompatible, contradictory, and inconsistent with each other? Let us hear the answer. In the *Notes** to the *Select Treatises of Athanasius*, it is said:†—

“The peculiarity of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, as contrasted with the heresies on the subject of the Trinity, is that it professes a *mystery*. It involves, not merely a *contradiction* in the terms used, which would be little, for we might solve it by assigning different senses to the same word, or by adding some limitation (*e.g.* if it were said that Satan was an Angel and not an Angel, or man was mortal and immortal); but an *incongruity* in the *ideas* which it introduces. Not indeed ideas directly and wholly contradictory of each other, as “*circulus quadratus*,” but such as are partially or indirectly antagonist, as perhaps “*montes sine valle*.” To say that the Father is wholly and absolutely the One only simple God, and then that the Son is also, and yet that the Father is eternally distinct from the Son, is to propose ideas

* Mr. Ward, in his *Ideal of a Church*, p. 405, observes in reference to this work of Dr. Newman,—“that work (to say nothing more) is certainly the most remarkable accession to dogmatic theology that has been made within our memory, and is perhaps the greatest of all his works.”

† Pages 439, 515, 327.

which we cannot harmonize together; and our reason is reconciled to the state of the case only by the consideration (though fully by means of it) that no idea of ours can embrace the simple truth which* we are obliged to separate into portions, and view in aspects, and adumbrate under many ideas, if we are to make any approximation toward it at all; as in mathematics we approximate to a circle by means of a polygon,—great as is the dissimilarity between the two figures.”

Upon this principle the humanity of our Lord is inadequate to set forth the Divinity: the Incarnation is a contradiction revealed, as far as regards human ideas. For instance:—

“It has been observed that the mystery of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not merely a *verbal contradiction*, but an *incompatibility* in the human *ideas* conveyed by them. We can scarcely make a nearer approach to an exact enunciation of it, than by saying that one thing is two things.”

Again:—

“Thus there are two Persons in each other ineffably, each being wholly one and the same Divine substance, yet not being merely separate aspects of the same. Each being God as absolutely as if there were no other Divine Person but Himself. Such a statement indeed is not only a *contradiction* in the terms used, but in our *ideas*, yet not therefore a contradiction in fact; unless indeed any one will say that human words can express in one formula, or human thought embrace in one idea, the unknown and the Infinite God.”

If a glorified or Divine Humanity be not in our ideas adequate to a revelation of the Divinity, God is unknown to us not only by reason of the incom-

* There is a slight typographical error here which I have corrected.

patibility, incongruity, and contradiction of our ideas, but because of the consequent impossibility of any adequate revelation of the Deity by Incarnation. No wonder that we read in *The History of the Arians of the Fourth Century*,*—

“If Scripture bids us adore God, and adore His Son, our reason at once asks, whether it does not follow that there are *two Gods*; and a system of doctrine becomes unavoidable, being framed, let it be observed, not with a view of explaining, but of arranging the inspired notices concerning the Supreme Being, of providing *not a consistent*, but a connected statement.”

Such is the last phase of the controversy between Sabellius and Athanasius, ending in an open and formal surrender, as far as human ideas are concerned, of the Catholic doctrine of the Tripersonality to confessed Tritheism; and such is the direct confirmation of what Swedenborg has stated in these words: “That a Trinity of Persons existing from Eternity, or before the Creation of the World, when conceived in idea, is a Trinity of Gods, which cannot be expelled by the oral confession of one God.” We see further laid open to view the real origin of *mystery, perplexity, and incoherency* in the prevailing systems of doctrine; it lies in the very fundamental ideas concerning God himself, the irreconcilable opposition between the Unity and the Tripersonality. Hence in *The True Christian Religion*, Swedenborg observes: †—

* Page 161.

† Art. 15.

“That no Doctrine or Worship of the Church can be *consistent* or *coherent* where more Gods than One are acknowledged. Whosoever acknowledges one God in faith, and worships him in his heart, is in the communion of saints on earth, and of angels in heaven. . . . But the case is altered, if, instead of one God, men address and worship more than One; or if they acknowledge but One God with their lips, whilst they have the idea of Three in their thoughts; as is done by those in the Church of the present day, who divide God into Three Persons, and declare each Person by himself to be God, and attribute to each distinct qualities and properties which they do not allow to the other. Hence, not only the Unity of God is actually divided, but the whole theological system, and also *the human mind*, in which it should reside, are divided with it; and what can thence result but *perplexity* and *incoherency* in all things appertaining to the Church?”

Had Dr. Newman's object, in his foregoing remarks, been to afford an apt illustration of the “*wall*” mentioned in Ezekiel* as being built with untempered mortar, and thus of stones without any *coherence*, he could scarcely have written more to the purpose. Infallible authority may command the wall not to tumble down, but is a very poor remedy for the want of coherence in the materials; and so, notwithstanding the assurance of security from infallible prophets—as Menochius says, “*corruiit murus cum adificantibus et linientibus.*” According

* Ezekiel xiii. 15.

to Swedenborg, there is a Divine influx into all minds, which teaches them, when it is not resisted, that there is a God and that this God is one. According to expositors of Catholic Doctrine, there is a Divine influx through the medium of the Church, teaching that God is Three. These two influxes, which cannot be both from God, meet together in mutual conflict; the result of which is, that like two currents meeting in opposite directions, they contradict and neutralize each other, leaving the mind in a state of indifference, perplexity, or denial, with respect to the existence of any God whatever.

It is in vain to say that all that is meant is, that God is Three in one sense, and One in another; for Swedenborg acknowledges this fully: what the alleged Catholic doctrine means, is something more; namely this, that God is Three in such a sense, that in our ideas He cannot be One Being in any sense.

Granting, however, that God is one Being, as a man is one man, how is Intercession carried on? Can one Person intercede with himself, any more than one Being, or one Man? We have seen that this has been declared to be impossible; that to carry out the common idea of Intercession *three distinct Beings* must be conceived in thought, and are even by many of the learned orally confessed; that the Father is conceived to be the Being to whom Intercession is made; the Son the Being who intercedes; and the Holy Spirit the Being who by his influence effects. To address prayer to the Mediator as God would be to confound this order of thought, as also

to confound the distinct Persons and offices of the Trinity. And *what* confusion! We are told that* “What is addressed directly by man’s spirit to the Ultimate Spirit of the Universe (the Father), is not addressed to Christ;” if this be the case, since, as a matter of fact, nearly all the prayers of the Church are addressed to the Father, they are of course not addressed to Christ; or, if addressed to Him by name, we are told, “they are not addressed to Him as Mediator, but only through his general participation in the nature of the Godhead.” The consequence is that Christ is addressed as God and not as Man. It is not the *Man* or the *Christ* that is addressed, but the Son begotten from everlasting; and so a species of Nestorianism insinuates itself into all the Liturgies, and a Catholic confusion not to be described. Let us give a few examples.

In the present Canon of the Roman Mass, there is still such a prayer as this remaining after consecration of the bread and wine. The Priest, offering the host, or the very body and blood of Christ, says to the *Father*, “We offer to thy excellent majesty, of thy gifts and presents, a pure victim, an unspotted victim, the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation.” Here is the Priest mediating between the Father and what is believed to be the very flesh and blood or *humanity* of Christ; *i. e.*, mediating with the Father in behalf of this *humanity*, and praying that the Father would receive this

* Wilberforce on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*; fourth edition: p. 266.

humanity from the Priest as an acceptable gift. In what sense the flesh and blood are offered to the Father, is intimated in the words which follow—“Accept them as thou didst vouchsafe to accept the offerings of thy just servant Abel.” Now, as Abel offered of the firstlings of his flock, the Priest thus prays that the *humanity*, or very *flesh and blood* of Christ, may be as acceptable to the Father as the animal offered by Abel; or, if this offering be a type, that the thing typified may be as acceptable as the type, the substance as acceptable as the shadow.

But the Mediation does not end here; for after the mediation of the priest, an Angel also is introduced as mediating between the *humanity* or *flesh and blood*, and the Father; and presenting them to the Father for his acceptance—“We humbly beseech Thee, O Almighty God, command these things (the most holy flesh and blood) to be carried by the hands of thy holy Angel, to thy altar on high in the presence of thy Divine Majesty.” How does Christ, it has been asked, who sits at the right hand of the Father, need the mediation of Angels to be carried or presented to his Father at the heavenly altar?

But further: we are told that our Lord's acts of Mediation towards men, as well as his Intercession with the Father, are “a present* fact in the world of life, and not a mere fictitious representation.” What, then, is the nature of this present fact of Intercession? We are told that, “He is truly†

* Wilberforce on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 249.

† *Ibid.*, p. 209.

making Intercession for his brethren by the perpetual pleading of his crucified body at the right hand of God.”—“And thus* *a real service* is continually going on, in which our Mediator is pleading the merits of that crucified body which He offered for our sakes.”—First of all, we naturally ask how all this can be conceived as involving the idea of only one Being? How can one Being be prevailed upon by the intercession of the same Being pleading to the same Being the merits of his own crucified body? The answer is to this effect: We† do not pretend to harmonize the statements; but in order to carry out this notion of Intercession, we conceive‡ that “our Lord has an inherent and independent existence . . . both as regards the works of Creation and the Father Himself.” In this point of view, the Intercession can easily be understood, as well as the distinct offices of “the Almighty Three:” the one Being presents himself to our apprehension objectively as *Three Beings*, of whom each is to the other, it is said, an object of contemplation:§ and though we must in thought conceive Him as Three Beings, and yet He says He is only one, we must go into the other world with the idea of Three Beings, and we shall *there* learn how it is that God is not Three Beings but only One. In the meantime, we must regard the act of “the Son pleading His crucified body to the Father” as a real objective “service” going on in heaven, not as “a fictitious representation;” for as

* *Ibid.*, p. 213.† *Ibid.*, p. 128.‡ *Ibid.*, p. 109.§ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

the sacrifice of the Mass is a representation upon earth of what is going on in heaven, so if we regarded the Son's act of pleading the merits of His own crucified body to the Father as "a fictitious representation," the Mass itself would only represent a fiction; and as the very essence of the priesthood consists in offering the sacrifice of the Mass, the whole would become the baseless fabric of a vision.

Now Catholic Liturgies being framed upon the principle of this Divine dramatic spectacle carried on between "the Almighty Three," and having its reflection upon earth in the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass; we may understand the language of those Manuals of Devotion which are written to aid in a right comprehension of the Catholic Liturgies; and which we might indeed quote at large, both Protestant and Roman Catholic; but the following will suffice, viz., *A Manual of Devotions for the Blessed Sacrament; compiled from various sources.* By the Rev. H. N. Oxenham, M.A.: 1854. Take an example: *—

"Him (Thy beloved Son) I offer Thee, O heavenly Father, with whom Thou art always well pleased; Him whom Thou hast lovingly delivered up to death for me, and given me in this most holy sacrament, which we frequent for the everlasting memorial of His death. He is our High Priest and Victim: He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world: He is our Advocate and Intercessor. Look down, then, upon Him, and for His sake look down upon me, and upon us all. Remember all His sufferings which He endured

* Pages 65, 40.

here in this mortal life ; His bitter anguish ; His agony and bloody sweat ; all the injuries and affronts, all the blows and stripes, all the bruises and wounds that He received from us. Remember His death, which Thou wast pleased should be the fountain of our life ; and for the sake of His sacred passion have mercy upon us.”

Here it will be seen, that it is not Christ that is pleading to the Father the merits of His own crucified body ; but the worshipper who is fulfilling this office in the place of Christ, and for the sake of Christ ; in other words, worshippers are pleading with the Father for Christ, instead of Christ pleading with the Father for them.

Thus again :—

“ Behold, O Eternal Father, the Victim whom Thou hast sent from heaven is offered, the sacrifice is finished. May it be acceptable to Thee, I beseech Thee ; for here is Thine own Son, in whom Thou art well pleased. Let Him now perform, I pray Thee, the office of Mediator and Advocate, where He sits on Thy right hand, and intercede for us. Remember all His patience, charity, and meekness,” etc., etc.

Here the sinner is introduced as mediating with the Father in behalf of the Mediator ; interceding for the Intercessor ; and if, as with most Protestants,* Christ is regarded as Mediator not only as to His humanity but as to His Divinity, it follows that the sinner is introduced as mediating between God the Father and God the Son.

But this Manual is not peculiar in this respect : we may take an example, though somewhat different,

* See Wilberforce on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 159.

from another Manual, entitled *Household Prayer, from Ancient and Authorized Sources*; published with the sanction of the Lord Bishop of Oxford, and therefore the least likely to contain incautious and unauthorized statements of doctrine :*—

“ O Lord Jesu Christ, . . . we beseech Thee that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to offer and shew forth before God the Father Almighty, Thy sweat of blood, which in Thine anguish Thou didst most abundantly shed for us, and wouldest plead it against the multitude of sins of this Thy servant,” etc.

“ O Lord Jesu Christ, . . . we beseech Thee that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to offer and to shew forth before God the Father Almighty all Thy bitter pains and sufferings which for us miserable sinners Thou didst endure upon the cross, especially at the time when Thy spotless soul departed out of Thy most holy body : and wouldest plead them for the soul of this Thy servant,” etc.

“ O Lord Jesu Christ, . . . we beseech Thee that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to offer and to shew forth before God the Father Almighty, that Thine unspeakable love which drew Thee down from heaven to earth to endure Thy bitter sufferings and death ; and wouldest plead it for the soul of this Thy servant,” etc.

Now to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ that the sinner may be made sensible of what His Saviour had done and suffered for him in the flesh, in His conflicts with the powers of hell, is a pious and legitimate prayer ; but to pray that the Father may be made sensible by Christ shewing forth to Him His hands, and feet, and wounds, as He did to the

* By the Rev. P. G. Medd, M.A. Pages 296, etc.

disciples and Thomas, is only to put the Father in the place of the sinner, and to pray to Christ for the sake of the Father. It is not the Father that needs to be duly impressed with what Christ has done, but the sinner. In fine, the whole doctrine of *Intercession* has been as much perverted as the doctrine of the *Atonement*.

We may now have some insight into the meaning and application of the following statements of *The True Christian Religion*, art. 177, 183 :—

“The Nicene and Athanasian doctrines concerning the Trinity have together given rise to a faith which has totally perverted the Christian Church. . . . A Trinity of Persons, each of which singly and by himself is God, according to the Athanasian Creed, has given rise to many absurd and heterogeneous notions concerning God, which are merely fanciful and abortive.”

For certain it is that the basis of all this worship is professedly laid in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds ; that the Catholic Church regards herself as upon this basis framing her Liturgies, and in her forms of worship as not the least departing either from the letter or spirit of these Creeds. Now if Mr. Oxenham will but have the courage to perform the same services with regard to these theories of Mediation, which he has already performed with regard to theories of the Atonement, namely, sweep them away altogether “with the besom of destruction,” he will be only rendering an additional and invaluable service to the Catholic Church. He has

a foundation for a better theology laid for him in the Roman Missal itself, in the *Introit*. for the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany :—

“ In excelso throno vidi sedere VIRUM, quem adorat multitudo angelorum, psallentes in unum, ecce cujus imperii nomen est in æternum. Jubilate Deo omnis terra. Servite Domino in lætitia.”

How many times may this Divine Man be the object of worship to men and angels, without the worshippers falling into *Sabellianism*? How many times may the angels worship Christ alone as the supreme God of heaven and earth, and not be guilty of heresy? for here is an instance of that worship which, in the present day, is called *Swedenborgian*. Here is objective worship—a worship in which there is one object of worship, the One Divine Man, the One Person who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last, which was, and which is, and which is to come—the Almighty.

Change the scene, and we behold presented to view the Tripersonal form of worship: Christ pleading to the Father his crucified body, nay, as a priest offering it still as a perpetual victim or sacrifice, and thus exhibiting a perpetual priesthood in heaven, the archetype of a corresponding priesthood upon earth. Thus it is that there is carried on in heaven, between the Three Divine Persons, the process—the “*work*” of saving mankind; a “*work*” done and still doing, having towards man, as we are told, an external and not merely an internal relation; and

as such being a work outside us, quite independent of our own individual feelings and thoughts; a* real objective “*service*” going on in the celestial courts for our sakes, whether we believe it or not.—But what if this representation be merely sensuous! What if it be worship made external, under the pretext of being made objective! What if it be a mere “fictitious representation” exhibited to the imagination of the natural man, upon the same principle that an image of wood, stone, ivory, gold, silver, or brass, is presented to the senses! All these objective forms of worship may be cultivated; devotional excitements of the external mind may be the result; yet there may be, nay, upon this principle there can be, no spiritual or internal sense of God’s mercy after all, no worship of God in spirit and in truth. Doubtless, the Lord will accept even our lowest states of worship, provided they are our best. But to fix upon the lowest as the best; to externalize them to the utmost in order to arrive at something objective; to represent to the imagination scenes conceivable by the natural mind in its grossest condition; to make them upon earth the very basis of the priestly office; to exalt them into a dramatic spectacle, carried on before the eyes of angels and archangels between the Three Persons of the Trinity, One presenting a crucified body to the Other, and appealing to Him *ad misericordiam* to arrest the sentence of death upon mankind by sending a Third to effect their salvation—this is not Christianity but

* Wilberforce on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 127, 307.

the very wrecks of Christianity, upheaved by some moral earthquake into the courts of heaven, and deposited even upon the very throne of Jehovah Himself. To call this an interpretation of the fifth chapter of the Apocalypse, is but little less than a parody upon its meaning; for in the Apocalypse it is the Lamb himself, the Mediator, the Christ, the glorified Humanity, that is the object of worship; whereas, in the present case, the Mediator is not the object of worship, but only the medium through whom worship is offered by us indirectly, while He Himself offers it directly—"to the ultimate Spirit of the Universe." He mingles His prayers with ours, His supplications with ours, all being addressed to the Father; His own Divinity passing for a cipher, or else itself joining in these acts of external devotion. And what wonder if this whole system of Naturalism should end at last in teaching that God* was the Son of Mary; that God condescended to engage in the trade of Joseph and the drudgery of domestic life at Nazareth; that Almighty God suf-

* All this is contained in the work entitled *Jesus the Son of Mary*, (1851,) by J. B. Morris, M.A., *sometime Petrean Fellow of Exeter College, and afterwards one of the Professors at Prior Park*. Vol. ii., p. 33, 94. These and other passages are too revolting to be quoted at length. That an author who can use such language, should complain that Sabellius was a Patripassian, is only one among other strange things. It seems that Naturalism may be attributed to the Deity to any extent; the heresy consists only in attributing it to the wrong Person. Swedenborg shows the folly and grossness of attributing passibility to the Deity in any sense whatever, whether in regard to Substance or Person.

fered and died upon the cross; that, as Christ is Mediator, so His mother is Mediatrix in the work of man's Redemption; for "Vengeance is mine," says God; "Mercy is mine, I will intercede," says His mother; nay, the very act of Christ pleading His wounds to the Father is often said to be at the request or command of His mother.

Now when doctrines of this kind prevail, and so many of the "well educated" in the Church of England are again more than tampering with them, we cannot help calling to mind, the statement of Swedenborg, that—"The present day is the last time of the Christian Church."

What, then, if we dispense with this idea of Christ pleading His crucified body to the Father, is there no such thing as Intercession or Mediation? Dr. Wilberforce seems to say that there is not: that our only alternative is between this objective Intercession on the one hand, or else on the other* "the bare Theism of the philosophic or the dreamy Pantheism of the poetic mind." It is clear, therefore, that when the religious mind is deprived of this external sensuous drama, it has no spiritual truth to fall back upon; the mind is completely emptied of all idea of Mediation and Intercession; and infidelity is the result. Hence it is, that so many who cannot receive these ideas of Mediation and Intercession, and yet have no choice except between these and nothing, become infidels. Yet it is certain, that it is this sensuous notion of Intercession that lies at

* Page 252.

the root of the modern love of Ritualism; which is more and more cultivated with a view of recovering others from infidelity, by making religion more objective, and hence also more ritualistic. The Eternal Son of God is the Priest; the victim or sacrifice is the crucified body; the Divine ritual is the perpetual offering of this sacrificed body, which is the perpetual Priesthood, and thus our Lord intervenes to arrest* the sentence of death passed upon Adam and his posterity! Now this ritual is carried out in its perfection in the Church of Rome, and thither accordingly Dr. Wilberforce retired.

As long as Protestants themselves adopt the doctrine of Christ interceding with the Father by exhibiting to Him the wounds and pleading the merits of his crucified body, they are powerless to oppose this Theology; for they are adopting only part and parcel of the same system of Naturalism; and there is no hope for Christianity but in making all things New. According to *The True Christian Religion*,† prayers offered upon this principle ascend among the angels not as the odours of fragrant incense, but as fetid breath from corrupted lungs. "This is the case from henceforward with all worship which is directed toward a Trinity of distinct Persons, and not toward a Trinity conjoined in one Person;" viz. The Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

What then is the doctrine of Intercession as taught by Swedenborg?

* Wilberforce on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 385.

† Art. 108.

“They* who do not know what Intercession is, cannot form to themselves any other idea concerning it, than that the Lord continually prays the Father, and thus intercedes for the sinner who devoutly supplicates and makes the promise of repentance. Yea, the simple think that the Lord sits with the Father, and speaks with Him concerning the sinner, and entreats Him to give unto Himself the sinner, that he may be in the Lord’s kingdom, and enjoy eternal felicity. Such an idea have very many concerning the Intercession spoken of in the Word, where it is said that the Lord will pray the Father for them. But who cannot see that these things were said in accommodation to the ideas of human thought? For every one at that time, as also very many at this day, could not think otherwise of the heavenly kingdom than as they think of an earthly kingdom; for from the latter an idea is conceived of the former, as is very manifest from the Lord’s apostles themselves, James and John, who asked to sit, one on the right hand, the other on the left in his kingdom; and also from the rest of the apostles, amongst whom there was a contention which of them should become greatest in the Lord’s kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; consequently that they should reign with Him (Mark x.; Luke xxii.). That these things were said according to their ideas, and thus according to their apprehension, and that in the interior sense they have another signification is evident.

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 8573.

“In respect to Intercession the case is this.

“In all love there is Intercession, consequently in all mercy, for mercy is of love. That he who loves or is merciful continually intercedes, may be manifest from examples. A husband who loves a wife and is willing that she should be kindly received by others and be well treated, does not say this in express terms, but continually thinks it, consequently is continually tacitly entreating it, and interceding for her. Parents act in like manner in favor of their children whom they love; they also who are in charity do the same for their neighbor; and they who are in friendship for a friend. From these considerations it may be manifest that in all love there is continual Intercession. The case is similar with respect to the Lord’s Intercession for the human race, and specifically for those who are in the good and truth of faith; for towards them there is a Divine, that is, an infinite love, and there is a Divine, that is, an infinite mercy; nor does He pray the Father for them and thus intercede; for this would be to act altogether after a human manner; but he continually excuses, and continually remits; for he continually pities; and this is done by the Lord Himself, for the Lord and the Father are one (John xiv. 8, etc. . . The Divine Truth which proceeds from the Lord intercedes in such a manner continually, because it proceeds from the Divine Love, etc.

“The Lord’s* Intercession for the human race was during His abode in the world, and indeed

* *Ibid.*, art. 2250.

during His state of humiliation; for in that state He spake with Jehovah as with another. But in the state of glorification, when the Human essence became united with the Divine, and was also made Jehovah, He doth not then intercede but sheweth mercy, and from his own Divinity administers help, and effects salvation. It is Mercy itself which is Intercession, for such is the essence of Mercy."

Lastly, let us proceed to the Doctrine of *Justification*, in its relation to the Tripersonality.

Mr. Oxenham has shewn how a "division of wills" has prevailed in the various theories of the Atonement; this "division of wills" being only a milder expression for open Tritheism; for how can there be a division of wills in one Divine Being? The doctrine of the Tripersonality, however, has been so conceived as to admit of it to any extent; indeed, without that doctrine, according to Swedenborg, it would not have prevailed; and even its advocates admit, that a diversity of Divine Persons is essential to the scheme of salvation. From this diversity of Persons has arisen that diversity of offices which brings out in full development the diverse relations of the Tripersonality. The Father is regarded as Creator, the Son as Redeemer, the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier. It is on this division of offices that is founded another, in regard to Justification. It is the Father, as one Agent, who imputes; the Son, as another Agent, whose merits are imputed; the Holy Spirit, as another Agent, who effects the imputation and thus Justification. On this subject

Mr Oxenham observes, that Swedenborg's opposition to this doctrine gave a distinctive character and aim to his theology; but that "in its ulterior developments it has exploded almost every distinctive tenet of the Christian faith." In proof of this, he says, that in an Expository work which some years ago had been lent him, he found* "every article of the *Apostles' Creed*, except the first, directly or indirectly denied."

—A remarkable assertion, considering that Swedenborg appeals to this very Creed in confirmation of his principles! The remark, however, has doubtless a primary reference to the doctrine of the Incarnation; Swedenborg regarding the Apostles' Creed as teaching that it is the Humanity which is the Son of God; and Mr. Oxenham, that it is the Divinity in virtue of an Eternal Generation. Moehler, however, had previously made a remark similar to that of Mr. Oxenham:†—

"Evident as it now is," says he, "that Swedenborg's reforming zeal was particularly directed against the errors in the Protestant doctrine of Justification; yet his attempts to undermine the same, were conducted with a destructive ignorance; for *he undermined withal the very foundations of Christianity*. Looking for the connection wherein the notion of faith, as prevalent among his former fellow-religionists, stood with other dogmas, he fell into the error that *the doctrine of the Trinity* was the basis of the former opinion, and hence he thought it incumbent upon him to subvert it."

* *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 130.

† *Symbolism*, vol. ii., p. 279.

It will be observed that Moehler here charges Swedenborg with a "destructive ignorance," in referring the doctrine of Justification to the Tripersonality; and when subverting the Tripersonality, with "undermining the very foundations of Christianity."

Now the date given to the first edition of Moehler's work on *Symbolism* is 1832. The date given to the *Essays on some of the Difficulties in the writings of St. Paul and in other parts of the New Testament*, by Dr. Whately, late Archbishop of Dublin, is 1828; about four years before the first edition of the *Symbolism*; so that nearly at the same time that Moehler was writing one comment in Germany on the relations between the Tripersonality and Justification, Dr. Whately was writing another in England, confirming the very statements of Swedenborg which Moehler ascribed to "destructive ignorance." In illustration of the evils resulting from the prevalent notions respecting the Tripersonality, Dr. Whately refers to this very doctrine of *Justification* by imputed righteousness; offering a testimony which must have been independent; for Moehler's work was not yet published, and if the Archbishop knew anything of Swedenborg's works, he was too independent a thinker to be indebted to the authority of any one.

First, with regard to the doctrine of the *Tripersonality*. In speaking of the perfect obedience manifested in the life of Christ upon earth, the Archbishop observes:*

* *Essay* "On Imputed Righteousness," p. 180.

“ I speak of course of his obedient life in reference to his *human* nature alone ; in respect of which He always declared, ‘ My Father is greater than I ;’ to speak of his obedience considered as a Divine Person, would be at least approaching very near to the Arian doctrine ; since all obedience necessarily implies a superior.”

And in a *Note* he observes ;—

“ There is, I fear, in many Christians a strong habitual leaning of the mind to this (Arian) view of the Scripture doctrines ; though they are unconscious of it from their having *formally* condemned Arianism, and distinctly asserted the equality of the Son and Holy Spirit with the Father : forgetting that this is no security against a tinge being given to their ordinary course of thought on the subject,—a tendency *practically* to contemplate *three distinct Divine Beings*,—the second inferior to the first, and the third to both. That it is possible for men to become something very near indeed to Arianism without knowing it, we have a curious instance in ecclesiastical history. In the early stages of Arianism, a confession of faith was agreed upon (at *Rimini*, A.D. 360), which was satisfactory to all parties, till some time after, the Arians began to boast of their triumph, and to point out the sanction which the formula adopted gave to their doctrine ; and then ‘ the Church,’ says Jerome, ‘ marvelled to find itself unexpectedly become Arian.’ Something of the same kind, on a smaller scale, took place very recently among ourselves. The discovery of Milton’s system of theology, startled many persons by its avowed Arianism, who had been accustomed to commend his poems for their sound theology ; though they convey the very same views, stated almost as plainly as, in a poem, they could be.”

Here then is shewn the prevalence of the doctrine of *Three Divine Beings*. Now what is the

connection between this doctrine and that of Justification? Precisely that which had been pointed out by Swedenborg; for the Archbishop adds this illustration:—

“Probably, indeed, *the whole doctrine of Justification*, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, may be traced in a great degree to these semi-arian views. Men are apt to conclude that the ‘righteousness of *Christ*’ must denote something distinct from the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit*, bringing forth fruit unto holiness; because they fear to confound together what they habitually, though unconsciously, consider *two different Agents*. Whereas Scripture, if they would submit to be implicitly led by it, promises that Christ will come unto his servants and ‘make his abode with them;’—that ‘hereby know we that He (Christ) dwelleth in us, by his Spirit which He hath given us;’ and that ‘the Lord is the (not ‘that’ as our translation has it) Spirit.’”

Here we have the prevalent notions of Justification, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, traced to the doctrine of the Tripersonality. Reference, moreover, is made by the Archbishop to the Council of Rimini or Ariminum; and as Swedenborg speaks of the corruption of Christianity after the Council of Nice, it may be well to notice, before proceeding further, what Cornelius a Lapide, one of the greatest commentators in the Church of Rome, has said upon this subject. Speaking of the Council of Ariminum he observes, in his commentary on the *Canticles*,* that the

* *Quarta Pars Dramatis*, chap. 5, v. 2.

Church had already passed through the various states of infancy, adolescence, and manhood; and at that time (or about thirty-five years after the Council of Nice) had arrived at a state of decline and old age:—

“This state,” says he, “the Church began to experience after the times of Constantine, when perfect peace having been conferred by him upon the Church, and his jurisdiction and dominion having been propagated throughout the world, there commenced the luxury and ambition of many of those in power, which broke up the Church into various heresies and schisms; by which it came to pass, that even the rest of the faithful themselves fell away into sloth, gluttony, luxury, and other vices. The beginning of the evil was Arius, who drew over to his own opinion most of the bishops; so that in the Council of Ariminum, by means of the fraud of Valens and Ursaces, who were Arian bishops, the condemnation of the Homoousian and Nicene Synod was carried unanimously, and ‘the whole world,’ says Jerome, ‘ marvelled to find itself Arian.’ The origin of the evil was the negligence, avarice, and pride of some of the prelates; ‘for when men slept, the enemy, viz. the Devil, sowed tares.’ Whence at that time most of the faithful, being abandoned to pleasures, defiled the Church with their surfeiting, lust, and wickedness. The sounder part of the Church, however, persisted in faith and sanctity.”

How the sounder part of the Church have since come to reconcile Arius and Athanasius, we have already seen.

But there is another point on which testimony is given to the statements of *The True Christian Religion*.*

* Art. 139, 140.

Swedenborg observes that, "properly speaking the Divine Truth, and consequently *The Word*, is signified by the *Holy Spirit*; and, in this sense, that the Lord himself is also the *Holy Spirit*." Hence also he says, that the Divine Truth which is in the Lord, which is the Lord, and which proceeds from the Lord, is, in like manner, the same with the *Holy Spirit*; so that to partake of the holy *flesh* and *blood* at the Eucharist is to partake of the *Holy Spirit*. Now, in his *Essay on the Influence of the Holy Spirit*, the Archbishop observes on the words, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, the same dwelleth in me, and I in him,"*—

"What, then, is it of which the devout communicants are really partakers, under the outward symbols of bread and wine? Surely, of the Spirit of Christ; 'for hereby know we that He *dwelleth in us*, by His Spirit which He hath given us;' and hence St. Paul's expression, that we are all *made to drink* (1 Cor. xii. 13) into one Spirit. This obvious interpretation the Romanists (and afterwards the Lutherans) were led to overlook, partly at least, no doubt, from the habit of *keeping too much out of sight the Divine Unity*, and of regarding the Son and Holy Ghost too much as *distinct Beings*; so that to *partake of Christ* must, they thought, be something different from *partaking of the Holy Spirit*. Hence they inferred that communicants received the literal, material, body and blood of Christ; and they accordingly boast that they alone interpret the Scripture declarations not figuratively. There is no need to adduce the well-known refutations of this extravagant doctrine," etc.

The fact is, the Archbishop ever protests against

the doctrine of *Three Divine Beings*, and against everything which in the least implies it, either in word or thought; and, in return, he is charged with Sabellianism, and undermining all the doctrines of Christianity. Opposition to this alleged tendency to Sabellianism seems to have been one main object of the late Dr. Wilberforce in his work upon *The Incarnation*; but when he comes to the real point at issue between Athanasius and Sabellius, namely, whether there are Three Divine Beings or only One, he throws the onus of "incompatibility" upon Scripture, and says* that Scripture contains individual truths "which in our present state we are unable to harmonize;" that the mystery of the Trinity does not involve a contradiction in terms, but is simply a *mystery*; whereas, Dr. Newman says it is a *mystery*, because it involves a contradiction in terms, and not in terms only, but in our very ideas. This is precisely what Swedenborg affirms—the consequence of which contradiction is, an incoherency, perplexity, and unintelligibility in the whole system of Theology, and the fulfilment of the prophecy—"Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."—
—"The Consummation of the Age is the Last Time or End of the Church."—"The present day is the Last time or End of the Church, which the Lord foretold and described in the Gospels and Apocalypse."

In fine, the Church, in carrying on the debates

of the Council of Nice in these days, is not so doing with fifteen hundred years before her, but in the very evening of her life: she is fighting her last battles for her Three Divine Agents, or Three Divine Beings, not at the beginning but at the end of the Age, thus on the verge of a precipice. These debates cannot go on for ever; they may reach to the period when the time of the Church shall be no longer; but then the mystery of God is finished.

Such is the present position of the Church. Accordingly old things are already beginning to pass away: all things are becoming New; for, as it written, "*Incurvabitur sublimitas hominum, et humiliabitur altitudo virorum, et elevabitur DOMINUS SOLUS in die illa.*" (Is. ii. 17.)

FINIS.

12 AP 66