

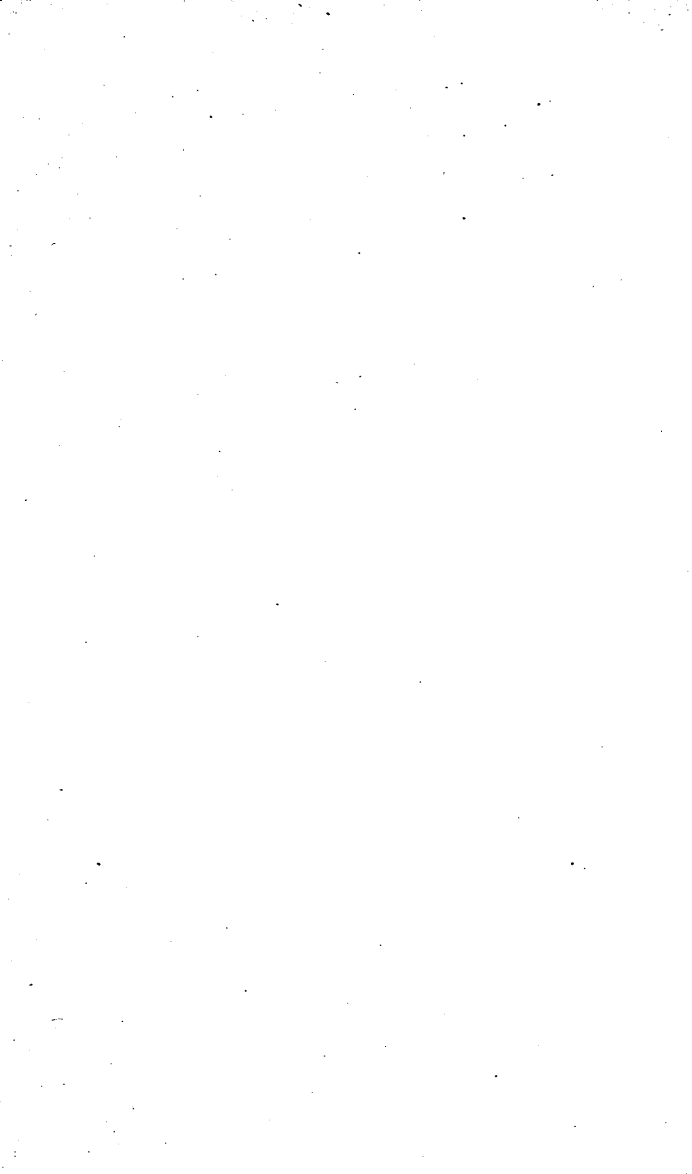
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SWEDENBORGIANISM

EXAMINED.

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PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BANGOR, ME.

REVISED EDITION.

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## P R E F A C E.

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The first edition of this work was published in the year 1846. As it has long been out of print, and as applications have frequently been made for it which could not be answered, it has been thought expedient to issue a second edition. In preparing it for the press, the whole has been subjected to a thorough revision. Some things have been added, but more suppressed; and especially those parts which were of a somewhat indelicate character. The works of Swedenborg contain many things which are indelicate, — *grossly so*, — things which ought never to have been written, much less translated. The worst of these passages were omitted in my first edition, and more would have been, but that, as I had undertaken to review Swedenborg, I felt bound to exhibit him in something like his true character. But from the present edition everything is excluded which will be likely, on the ground above indicated, to give offense.

When I entered upon the examination of Swedenborgianism, fourteen years ago, great efforts were being made by Prof. Bush and others, to disseminate the doctrine, and give it currency with the people. Public lectures were delivered in our cities and villages, and select por-

tions of the writings of Swedenborg, neatly printed and done up, and accompanied with prefatory and explanatory remarks, were industriously circulated. In these circumstances I felt — nor was I alone in the impression — that something should be done. Swedenborg must be thoroughly reviewed and canvassed. A little tract — an article of a few pages — a series of short newspaper paragraphs, would be to no purpose. Some one must go thoroughly into the subject, plough it up from the bottom, and make a full exposition of it. Then the community would be in a situation to understand it; and a like labor would not be called for in time to come.

From those who take exceptions to the peculiarities of Swedenborg, the most common reply has been: "You are not in a condition to judge of him; you do not understand him; you have not read his works." To obviate an objection like this, and at the same time to qualify myself for the undertaking I had proposed, I got together first of all, the religious publications of Swedenborg, amounting to more than thirty volumes, and the works of his principal disciples and advocates, amounting to forty volumes more, and gave them an attentive perusal. Some of them were read more than once, and notes were taken of them. Meanwhile, I was not able to find a single volume on the other side of the question. There was here and there a brief article in some periodical, or a few numbers in the columns of a newspaper; but a *book*, a *volume*, in opposition to the claims of Swedenborg, was not to be found. Several works of this kind had been published years before in England, but they had scarcely



found their way to this country, and were at that time unknown. Nor, with the exception of a little volume by the late Dr. Woods of Andover, am I aware that anything of importance in opposition to Swedenborg has been published since.

The following work was not regarded at the first, nor should it be now, as of strictly a controversial character. My purpose has been rather to *exhibit* Swedenborg, than to controvert him. If the former of these objects can be well accomplished, the latter, I have supposed, would be scarcely necessary.

While the pages which follow are open to the examination of all, it is but just to say that they have been prepared more especially for evangelical Christians. It will be no objection to Swedenborg, in the mind of a Unitarian, that he discards the doctrines of the atonement, and of justification by faith; while to the evangelical believer—the Christian after the pattern of Paul,—no objection could be more decisive.

Soon after the first edition of this work was published, it was reviewed, in the *New Jerusalem Magazine*, by Theophilus Parsons, Esq., of Boston. It was also reviewed, in separate pamphlets, by Rev. William B. Hayden, and N. F. Cabell, Esq., of Virginia. It was attacked, in the *New York Tribune*, by Rev. B. F. Barrett, and in England by Mr. J. J. G. Wilkinson. It will be seen that it has attracted a good deal of attention in the Swedenborgian community, and has drawn out numerous and powerful opponents, and yet they all profess to regard it as a very contemptible affair,—one not

entitled, on its own account, to the least consideration. I ought, however, to make one honorable exception. When my first edition was issued, there was a Swedenborgian in the country, — the most learned, candid and devoted of them all, — I refer, of course, to the late Prof. Bush, — who had the magnanimity to acknowledge that he regarded it as “the most formidable attack that had ever been made upon Swedenborgianism; that it was written, with some exceptions, in a good spirit; and that it could not fail to produce a very decided effect upon the Christian community.”

Unless I am entirely deceived, the following pages have been written, not in a spirit of hatred or envy, but of love. I have aspersed no one's character, I have impeached no one's motives; I have assailed no one, living or dead, with harsh and bitter words. If I have been under the necessity of publishing some unpleasant things, they are such as have grown directly out of the subject, and, of course, the fault is not mine. My single object has been to promote the cause of truth and righteousness; and in aiming at this, I have endeavored to treat all concerned kindly and fairly.

The whole has been written under a strong sense of duty, and with continual prayer for the divine direction and blessing, and I now commend it to the providence and grace of God; above all things desiring, whatever the result may be in regard to me personally, that it may tend to the furtherance of his kingdom, and the glory of his name.

Bangor, July 10, 1860.

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# SWEDENBORGIANISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### LIFE OF SWEDENBORG.

EMANUEL SWEDBURG was born at Stockholm, January 19, 1688. He was the eldest son of his father, who was a Swedish bishop, and a man of learning and celebrity in his time. The son was early the subject of many serious thoughts and exercises, and seems to have been deeply interested in religion, from his youth. "My thoughts," says he, "were constantly occupied in reflecting upon God and salvation, and on the spiritual affections of men." He saw many of the clergy at his father's house, with whom he used to converse respecting faith, and charity, and justification by faith, and the way of salvation by Christ.

Great care seems to have been bestowed upon the early training and instruction of young Swedenborg. His university education was completed at Upsal, where he distinguished himself by his attainments in philosophy, mathematics, natural history, chemis-

try, and anatomy, together with the ancient and modern languages. At this period of life, he also gave attention to poetry. Said one of his old friends, "I have now in my possession some remains of his Latin poetry, which Ovid would not be ashamed to own." That Swedburg possessed a most fruitful imagination which, duly cultivated, might have rendered him a poet of no ordinary distinction, his theological writings abundantly declare.

In the early part of his life, Swedburg was an almost continual traveler. He commenced his foreign excursions in the year 1710; going first to England, and thence to Holland, France, and Germany, and returning to his own country in 1714. About this time, he was introduced to Charles XII, king of Sweden, and enjoyed, to a high degree, the confidence and favor of that distinguished monarch. In 1716, he was appointed Assessor of the Metallic College, which office he retained more than thirty years, and the income of which he enjoyed till his death.

In 1718, he gave proof of remarkable mechanical ingenuity, in the invention of machines, by means of which a considerable naval armament was transported over the mountains which separate Sweden from Norway—a distance of about fourteen English miles. In consequence of this, the king was enabled to bring his heavy artillery under the very walls of Fredericshall. It was at the siege of Fredericshall that Charles XII lost his life, at the early age of thirty-six.

He was succeeded by his sister, queen Ulrica Eleonora. As a mark of her royal favor, Swedburg was ennobled the following year, and thenceforth took the name of Swedenborg. From this time he was entitled to a seat with the nobles, in the triennial assemblies of the States of the realm.

From 1719 to 1722, Swedenborg spent much of his time in foreign countries, conversing with learned men, examining the principal mines and smelting establishments, and endeavoring to qualify himself for the important office which he held. He was particularly noticed, at this period, by the Duke of Brunswick, who did much to aid him in his travels, and afterwards published, at his own expense, several of Swedenborg's philosophical works.

In the year 1724, he was elected professor of mathematics in the University of Upsal; but he thought it not proper to accept the appointment. He was chosen a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, in 1729; and a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, in 1734. In 1738, he took a journey into Italy, and resided a year in Venice and at Rome.

At a much earlier period in the life of Swedenborg—probably between the years 1716 and 1718,—an incident occurred which it may be proper to notice, as the impression of it seems never to have been lost from his heart. He was residing in the family of his friend Polhem, Counsellor of Commerce, and engaged with him in mathematical stud-

ies and pursuits. While here, to use the language of one of his biographers, "his heart glowed with love to the second daughter of Polhem," a lady much younger than himself. The father favored the match, but the daughter was irreconcilably averse to it. Hoping that, as she grew older, her feelings might change, Polhem entered into a written agreement with Swedenborg that, at some future day, she should be his. At this the young lady was so much distressed, that her brother, watching the opportunity, secretly got possession of the paper, and destroyed it. Swedenborg, in his grief, applied to the father, and entreated that the contract might be renewed. But perceiving how much it distressed the object of his affection, he consented, at length, to give up his claim. He soon departed from the house, resolved that he would make no more overtures of marriage while he lived; a resolution which he steadfastly fulfilled.

It was in the year 1709, at the early age of twenty-one, that Swedenborg commenced his career as an author. It is not necessary to give a complete list of his publications during the next thirty-five years. Suffice it to say, that they followed each other in quick succession, and were chiefly on mathematical and philosophical subjects. Not a few of them related to metallurgy and mineralogy — subjects with which his office made it necessary that he should be familiar. His philosophical works, (or so many of them as had then been prepared) were pub-

lished in Germany, in three volumes folio, in 1734. Subsequent to this, for several years, Swedenborg gave much attention to Anatomy and Physiology. In 1740, he published his "Economy of the Animal Kingdom;" in which he treats of the blood, the arteries, the veins, the heart, the motion of the brain, the cortical substance, and the human soul. Four years later, he published another great work, entitled "The Animal Kingdom." This treats of the viscera of the chest and the abdomen, and of the different organs of sense. Swedenborg was not himself a surgeon or dissector. His knowledge of anatomy was derived chiefly from the writings and experiments of others.

His great object, in pursuing inquiries of this nature, was to obtain a knowledge of the human soul, and of its mysterious, inscrutable connection with the body. By the most careful research, he was hoping to discover the hidden bond, which linked the material to the immaterial, the earthly to the spiritual; or at least, that he might acquaint himself with the properties of the latter, by means of its assumed correspondence with the former. But it will be safest to hear him on this interesting subject. In the introduction to the "Animal Kingdom," he says: "To accomplish this end," (the discovery of the soul) "I enter the circus, designing to consider and thoroughly to examine that whole world or microcosm which the soul inhabits; since I am persuaded she cannot be sought for anywhere but in

her own kingdom. For tell me, where else is she to be found, but in that system to which she is *ad-joined* and *in-joined*, in which she is represented, and every moment exhibits herself for contemplation? The body is her image, resemblance, and type. She herself is the model, the idea, the head, that is *the soul*, of her body; and thus is she represented in her body, as in a mirror. For this reason, I am induced to examine attentively the whole anatomy of her body, from the heel to the head, and from part to part; and that I may come nearer to my subject, I have determined to explore the brain itself, where the soul has arranged her first organs. Next, I shall examine the fibres, with the rest of the purer organical forms, and the forces and modes thence resulting.

“But whereas it is not possible to make a leap from the organical, physical, and material immediately to the soul, of which neither matter, nor any of the adjuncts of matter, are predicable; therefore it was necessary for me to prepare new ways by which I might be led to her, and might gain access to her palace. In other words, it was necessary, with the most intense application of mind, to unfold, extricate, and bring to light some new doctrines for my guidance, viz: the doctrines of forms, of orders and degrees; of series and society; of communications and influxes; of correspondences, representations, and modifications; all which you will see collected into *one treatise*,” referring to a projected

treatise, which seems never to have been written. "When this shall be accomplished," the writer goes on to say, "I am then admitted, as it were, by common consent, to the soul; who, sitting like a queen in her throne of state, the body, dispenses laws and governs all things, by her good pleasure, but yet by order and by truth. This will be the crown of my toils, when I shall have completed my course in this most spacious arena." Further on in his Introduction, Swedenborg says, "I have determined not to desist from my task, until I have explored the whole animal kingdom, even to the soul. And my hope is, if I bend my course continually inwards, that I shall be enabled, through the divine favor, to open all the doors which lead to her presence, and at length to be admitted to the view and contemplation of herself."

I have before said that the "Animal Kingdom" (from the Introduction to which, the foregoing passages are taken) was published in 1744. While the thoughts of the author were occupied in the manner here indicated — while, "with the most intense application of mind," he was endeavoring to reach and investigate the soul, through the medium of the body, he was arrested in the city of London, by a severe attack of fever, attended with delirium. The fact of this sickness has been called in question; but not, as it seems to me, with sufficient reason. Mr. Wesley speaks of it repeatedly and expressly, but I do not now rely on his testimony. The celebrated

Dr. Hartley was a cotemporary of Swedenborg, his intimate personal friend, and one of his earliest followers. He also speaks of Swedenborg's sickness and delirium, and justly complains that what he said and did in those circumstances should be reported to his disadvantage.\* The probability is, that this sickness occurred near the close of the year 1744, or early in the following year.

In the spring of 1745, an event took place, which was regarded by Swedenborg (and is so regarded by all his followers) as the most important in his whole life. He professed to have had his spiritual senses opened, so that he could look directly into the invisible world, and converse with departed souls, angels and demons, as freely as with men here on the earth. But the account must be given in his own words. "I have been called to a holy office, by the Lord himself, who most graciously manifested himself in person to me, his servant, when he opened my sight to the view of the spiritual world, and granted me the privilege of conversing with spirits and angels."† Again: "I can sacredly and solemnly declare, that the Lord himself, has been seen of me, and that he has sent me to do what I do; and for such purpose, he has opened the interior part of my soul, which is my spirit, so that I can see what

\* "He was seized with a fever, attended with a delirium," etc. In Noble's Appeal, p. 255.

† Letter to Dr. Hartley.



is in the spiritual world, and those that are therein; and this privilege has now been continued to me for twenty-two years."\* To another friend, who inquired how and when it was, that he was enabled to see what was done in heaven and hell, he gave the following answer. "I was in London, and one day dined rather late by myself, at a boarding house, where I kept a room in which, at pleasure, I could prosecute the study of the natural sciences. I was hungry, and ate with great appetite. At the end of the meal, I remarked that a vapor, as it were, clouded my sight, and the walls of my chamber appeared covered with frightful creeping things, such as serpents, toads and the like. I was filled with astonishment, but retained the full use of my perception and thoughts. The darkness attained its height, and soon passed away. I then perceived a man sitting in the corner of my chamber. As I thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly terrified; when he spoke and said, 'Eat not so much.' The cloud once more came over my sight, and when it passed away, I found myself alone in the chamber. This unexpected event hastened my return home. I did not mention the subject to the people of the house, but reflected upon it much, and believed it to have been the effect of accidental causes, or to have arisen from my physical state, at the time. I went home; but in the following night, the same man appeared

\* Letter to Dr. Oetenger.

to me again. He said, 'I am God, the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. I have chosen thee to lay before men the spiritual sense of the holy word. I will teach thee what thou art to write.' On that same night, were opened to my perception the heavens and the hells, where I saw many persons of my acquaintance, of all conditions. From that day forth, I gave up all mere worldly learning and labored only in spiritual things, according to what the Lord commanded me to write. Daily he opened the eyes of my spirit to see what was done in the other world, and gave me, in a state of full wakefulness, to converse with angels and spirits."\*

Such is Swedenborg's account of the manner in which his spiritual senses were opened; of his interviews with the Lord Jesus Christ; and of his commission to unfold the hidden sense of the word, and make other important disclosures to men. As to the particular state of his mind, while in the spirit, Swedenborg gave no further explanations. And this is a point, in regard to which his followers are not agreed. Mr. Hobart thinks "that Swedenborg can in nowise be compared with the ancient prophets." Mr. Noble and Mr. Bush hold, that "The psychological condition of the prophets was substantially *the same*" as his; while Dr. Hartley decides, that "he was endued with heavenly gifts,

\* See Robsam's Memoir of Swedenborg, in Hobart's Life, p. 214.

*beyond any of the prophets that preceded him.*"\* If the receivers of his doctrines can not settle this question among themselves, I shall not now undertake to decide it for them. The subject will come up in a following chapter.

It appears that Swedenborg was not disobedient to what he considered the heavenly vision. He at once accepted the charge which he had received. He "gave up all mere worldly learning," abandoned almost entirely secular pursuits, read little except the Bible in the original languages, and commenced printing and publishing the various *arcana*, which were seen by him, or revealed to him, in the spiritual world.

From this period, Swedenborg lived about twenty-seven years; during which time he published what would amount to twenty-seven volumes, octavo, of five hundred pages each.† Of these, not less than twenty volumes are occupied in unfolding what he deemed the spiritual sense of the holy Scriptures. The more important of this class of his writings, are the "Arcana Celestia," the "Apocalypse Explained," and the "Apocalypse Revealed."

Of his other works, some are doctrinal, some ethi-

\* See Hobart's Life, p. 42. Noble's Appeal, p. 320. Bush's Swedenborg Library, p. 3. Treatise on Influx, Hartley's edition, p. 161.

† Exclusive of his private, posthumous writings, some of which have since been published.

cal, some metaphysical (though it is said by one of his eulogists,\* that "he detested metaphysics"), while some relate chiefly to his *visions*, or to what he saw, or seemed to see, in the spiritual world. Of these (which may be termed his miscellaneous works) the more important are, "The True Christian Religion," which was the last book he ever wrote; "Divine Love and Wisdom;" "Divine Providence;" "The Last Judgment;" and "Heaven and Hell." To his work on Conjugal and Scortatory Love, Swedenborg evidently attached a high importance. I shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter.

Among the most amusing of Swedenborg's discoveries in the other world, are those relating to what he calls "The Earths in the Universe." † If he did not actually visit the planets, he conversed with vast numbers, who, during their natural life, had been their inhabitants, and in this way, collected much information respecting them.

It is a suspicious circumstance, to be sure, that he saw no spirits except from the moon, the earth, and the five other planets of the solar system, which alone, at that period, had been discovered. The numerous planets of our system which have since been discovered, were then in existence, revolving on their axes, around the great central sun; and Swedenborg decides positively that all the plan-

\* M. Sandel.

† The title of one of his publications.

ets are inhabited. *Why then did he not meet with any spirits from them?*

This question is the more puzzling, since he traveled in spirit far out of the solar system, and conversed with multitudes from worlds on which our sun never shines. Why then, we ask again, did he meet with none who had been dwellers upon Ceres, Pallas, Juno, Vesta, Herschel, Neptune, and all the rest, and so bring intelligence to the earth from these then undiscovered regions?

Nor is even this the most formidable difficulty in the case. Swedenborg decides positively that the planet Saturn is "*the farthest distant from the sun;*" and that for this reason it has "a large luminous belt, which supplies it with much light, though reflected.\* Modern astronomers have discovered that Herschel's distance from the sun is at least twice as great as that of Saturn, and that the distance of Neptune is vastly greater.

But leaving these perplexities for the present to the consideration of those whom they more immediately concern, I propose to lay before my readers a brief abstract of the intelligence which Swedenborg gathered among the spirits, relative to the "Earths of the Universe," and their inhabitants.

Of the *Mercurians*, he does not give us the most favorable account. They are an intellectual people, and have a great thirst for knowledge; but their in-

\* Earths in the Universe. § 3.

satiableness renders them obtrusive and impertinent. They have remarkable memories, and have the faculty of exploring the memories of others, but the reasoning power is not well developed, and they lack in judgment. They are haughty, petulant, self-conceited, and excessively loquacious. On one occasion, they became angry with Swedenborg and abused him, because he was not more communicative. They are less material and sensual than the men of our earth, and are hardly willing to appear as men, choosing rather the form of "crystalline globes." Swedenborg had a curiosity "to know what kind of face and body" the Mercurians had, during their natural life, and "whether they were like the men on our earth. Instantly," says he, there was presented before my eyes, a woman. She had a beautiful face, but it was smaller than that of a woman of our earth; her body also was more slender, but her height was equal. She wore on her head a linen cap, which was put on without art, but yet in a becoming manner. A man also was presented to view, who was more slender in body than the men of our earth. He was clad in a dark blue garment, closely fitted to his body. It was given me to understand that such was the form and dress of the men of that earth." Swedenborg also saw some "of their oxen and cows, which did not differ much from those on our earth, only that they were less, approaching to a species of deer." \*

\* Earths in the Universe, § 45.

Of the *Jupiterians*, our author saw more than of the inhabitants of any other planet; and he represents them as remarkably well disposed. They marry young, love their children, and are careful as to their education. They never covet or fight, and though they go almost naked, are very chaste. They have large handsome faces, of which they take especial care; and what is singular, they walk only half erect, helping themselves along with their hands. It is their custom to sit cross-legged, and to tarry long at meals; not that they eat immoderately, but that they may have time for discourse. They live in low wooden houses, and keep them neat. They lie down at night, but never with their face turned toward the wall. The planet Jupiter is densely inhabited. The horses of the country are large, run wild, and the people are exceedingly afraid of them. They are not a scientific people, but the mass of them are religious, and devotedly attached to the doctrines of the New Church. Heresy is punished with death, inflicted not by the people upon one another, but by guardian angels commissioned for the purpose. With all their goodness, our author learned that there was a species of Popery among them. Certain individuals set themselves up as lords and hierarchs, and demanded worship as mediators. The Jupiterians have some knowledge of our earth, and have an unfavorable impression in regard to its inhabitants. They have been vexed, from time to time, with Romish emis-

saries, and they seem to think us all no better than Jesuits. They seldom live more than thirty of our years, and commonly die easy, like one going to sleep.

The *inhabitants of Mars*, Swedenborg found to be even better men than those of Jupiter. They have no external speech or respiration, and no civil government, but live in associations, like our Fourier societies, from which the wicked are expelled. The people have a great sense of their unworthiness, regarding themselves as little better than fiends, and acknowledging all their goodness as from the Lord. The upper part of their faces is yellow, and the under part black. They have no beards; feed on fruits; are clothed in garments made of bark; and burn fluids both for light and heat.

The *Saturnians*, our author found to be upright, modest and very religious, though there were some heretics and apostates among them. They live in families, feed on fruits and pulse, are slightly clothed, and do not bury their dead, but cast them forth, and cover them with branches of trees. What appears to us as the belt of Saturn, has to them the appearance of something white in the heavens like snow.

On the beautiful planet *Venus*, Swedenborg learned that there are two kinds of people. Those on the further side of the planet are mild and humane; while those on the side next to us are savage and



almost brutal. They are giants in stature, nearly twice as tall as the men of our earth. Their delight is in rapine and gluttony, and they are utterly irreligious. Still, some of them are finally saved; but they must first pass through what Swedenborg terms a *vastation* (which is a sort of expurgation) in the other world.

The men of the moon, or *Moonites*, are small in stature, not larger than children ordinarily of seven years old. Their faces are not unhandsome, though much elongated, and they are accustomed to ride on each other's backs. They speak, not from the lungs, but the abdomen, and their voices are deep-toned, like the sound of thunder. They have no written language.\*

Swedenborg traveled frequently beyond the solar system, and conversed with spirits from the planets of other suns. On one of these planets, the people have remarkably little eyes and noses. The women spin thread, by sitting and winding the fiber round their toes, pulling it towards them, and twisting it with their hands. On another of these planets, the temples are constructed of living trees, planted in order and trained for the purpose. On yet another, far remote, he found the spirits were often annoyed by visitors from our earth, who tried to teach them

\* According to Swedenborg, there is no written language in any world but ours; and it was this circumstance which induced the Lord of glory to become incarnate, and to die upon the earth.

the doctrine of the Trinity. Swedenborg had much conversation with them, and pronounced them orthodox, according to the creed of the New Church. He had a preacher with him from our world, who fell in love with a woman whom he saw there; but she would have nothing to say to him, and fled from him. They saw other females tending sheep. The faces of the inhabitants of this distant planet are very peculiar. The upper part is white; the lower part black; but the noses are uncommonly white. Some few of the males are wholly black. The minister whom Swedenborg had with him from our world, desired to preach to them; but they would not hear him. The houses of the country are low and long, are built of turf, and have round roofs. The corn resembles Chinese wheat. The inhabitants bake bread in little square loaves, and have a species of wine made of berries. The length of their year is two hundred days and fifteen hours. The entire globe on which they live is scarcely five hundred German miles in circumference — less than two hundred in diameter — not larger than some of our asteroids.

Swedenborg has described still another planet out of the solar system; and at the hazard of tiring rather than amusing our readers, we must give them a few particulars. The inhabitants have preaching once in thirty days; and are favored, meanwhile, with revelations imparted in waking dreams. The spirits from this world, like those from the one last des-

cribed, are much troubled with monkish emissaries from our earth, who are intent upon teaching them the doctrine of the Trinity. The people live in low, flat-roofed houses, built of wood. They go almost or quite naked. They have a species of cows which have wool, like sheep, and their common drink is milk and water. Their marriage ceremonies are very peculiar, but the account is too long to be inserted here. The length of the year, on this planet, is two hundred days and nine hours.

I have presented this abstract of Swedenborg's account of some of "the Earths in the Universe," because the story is too amusing, and too strongly characteristic of him, to be altogether omitted, and I know not where else it could be introduced so well. It will be borne in mind, that to Swedenborg and his followers, what has been stated is not a mere fancy sketch or romance, but matter of *indubitable revelation*. It was all disclosed to the rapt seer (and a vast deal more of the same character) in the world of spirits.\*

Swedenborg wrought no miracles in attestation of his revelations, nor did he pretend to any. He admitted that the age of miracles was past. He is said to have made some unaccountable disclosures, by means of his intercourse with the spiritual world: but he attached no importance to them, as furnishing evidence in his favor. He was wise in this; for

\* See Swedenborg's work entitled "Earths in the Universe."

if the accounts which his followers have given us are to be depended on, his marvels do not at all exceed what is alleged to be done by mesmerizers, clairvoyants, necromancers, conjurers, and men of second sight, in our own times.

Subsequent to his supposed illumination, Swedenborg spent much of his time in London. He had facilities there, beyond what his own country afforded, for publishing his numerous works, and for making them known to the world. Still, he regarded the Swedish capital as his home; where he had a house and garden, in the southern part of the city, and where he resided, more or less, as his convenience or his inclination dictated. While there, he lived a retired and studious life, having no family or attendants, save his gardener and the gardener's wife. The following particulars respecting his domestic habits, I extract chiefly from a memoir of him, drawn up by his intimate friend, Mr. Robsam.

“Swedenborg often labored through the whole night, having no stated periods for employment or repose. ‘When I am sleepy,’ said he, ‘I go to bed.’ From his only servant, the gardener's wife, he required nothing, except that she should make his bed, and bring a large pitcher of water to his study daily. He made his own coffee, and drank much of it, by day and by night, without cream, but made quite sweet with sugar. At home, his dinner was a small loaf or roll, and boiled milk. He took neither wine, nor any other heating drink, and seldom ate

anything at night. When in company, he would eat with the company, and drink wine, but always with moderation." He did not absolutely prohibit animal food; yet he considered the use of it as inconsistent with a high state of the church. "No one who embraces his sentiments," says one of his biographers, "can justify to himself the use of animal food, on any other ground, than that he was born in evils of all kinds, hereditarily received from his parents, the extirpation of which, and his consequent restoration to order, must be a gradual, progressive work."

Swedenborg's study "dress was simple, yet neat and convenient. In winter he wore a garment of reindeer skins; and in summer, a study gown, as became a philosopher. When he dressed himself to go abroad, without the help of other people, it sometimes happened that some singularity might be noticed, showing that his mind was occupied with other things.

"Swedenborg could not talk fast without difficulty; and when he attempted it he was likely to stammer, more especially when he spoke in a foreign tongue. As soon as he began to speak, all conversation commonly ceased, and the slowness of his delivery served but to increase the curiosity of the listeners.

"It is remarkable that Swedenborg never attempted to make proselytes, nor pressed upon any one his explanations of the Word. He seldom went to

church, partly because what he heard there was at variance with the revelations made to him, and partly on account of the disease of the stone, from which he suffered. He also absented himself from the holy supper."

"Swedenborg's frequent journeys were made with no parade, and with but few of the conveniences of traveling. He took no servant with him, and commonly rode in an open wagon from Stockholm to Gottenburg, whenever he embarked for England or Holland, to have his manuscripts printed. In preparing his manuscripts, Swedenborg employed no copyist. His works were printed from his own handwriting. In his advanced age, it became very difficult to decipher this; but he said that the Dutch and English compositors could do it easily." The avails of his publications, at least in some instances, he is said to have devoted to the propagation of the gospel.

He was connected by means of his family and in other ways, with most of the great men of his country, whether in church or state. After mentioning some of his distinguished relatives, he goes on to say; "I live, besides, on terms of familiarity and friendship with all the bishops of my country, who are ten in number; as also with the sixteen senators, and the rest of the nobility. The king and queen also, and the three princes, their sons, show me much favor. I was once invited by the king and queen to dine at their table — an honor which, in

general, is granted only to the nobility of the highest rank. The same honor has since been shown me by the hereditary prince."

In person, Swedenborg was about five feet nine inches high, rather thin, and of a swarthy complexion. His eyes were of a brown gray, nearly hazel, and rather small. He was never seen to laugh, but had always a cheerful smile upon his countenance. When he appeared abroad, his dress and manners were those of a gentleman of the old school.

Swedenborg had certain rules for the regulation of his conduct, which are found written down in various parts of his manuscripts. They are as follows: "1. Often to read and to meditate on the word of the Lord. 2. To submit every thing to the will of Divine providence. 3. To observe in every thing, a propriety of behavior, and always to keep the conscience clear. 4. To discharge with fidelity, the functions of my employment, and the duties of my office, and to render myself, in all things, useful to society." If Swedenborg lived up to these rules, he must have been (what all history represents him) a moral, useful, and to some extent a religious man.

In his latter years, two Swedish clergymen, Bishop Filenius and Dr. Ekebon, instituted a prosecution against Swedenborg in the consistory of Gottenburg, whence it was transferred to the Diet. The charge against him was that of inculcating fundamental errors in religion. But he came out of the trial with safety, unaccused by the Diet, and protected by the king.

## CHAPTER II.

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG.

BEFORE remarking upon the doctrines of Swedenborg, it will be necessary to exhibit a brief statement of them; and this I shall do, so far as practicable, in the words either of himself or his followers.

He published a summary of his faith, in five short articles: "1. That there is one God, in whom is a divine trinity, and that he is the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. That saving faith is to believe in him. 3. That evils ought to be shunned, because they are of the devil, and from the devil. 4. That good works ought to be done, because they are of God, and from God. 5. That they ought to be done by man as *from himself*, but with a *belief* that they are from the Lord, operating in him and by him." \*

The following articles are from the "Book of Worship" of the New Church in America; and are

\* Brief Exposition, § 43.



said to be "copied from the Liturgy of the New Church General Conference of England." I shall present them entire, accompanying them with such additional statements and explanations as may be deemed necessary.

"1. That Jehovah God, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, is love itself, and wisdom itself, and good itself, and truth itself: That he is one, both in essence and in person, in whom, nevertheless, is the divine trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which are the essential divinity, the divine humanity, and the divine proceeding, answering to the soul, the body and the operative energy in man: And that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is that God.

2. That Jehovah God himself descended from heaven as divine truth, which is the word, and took upon him human nature, for the purpose of removing from man the powers of hell, and restoring to order all things in the spiritual world, and all things in the church: That he removed from man the powers of hell, by combats against and victories over them, in which consisted the great work of Redemption: That by the same acts, which were his temptations, the last of which was the passion of the cross, he united in his humanity divine truth to divine good, or divine wisdom to divine love, and so returned into his divinity, in which he was from eternity, together with, and in, his glorified humanity; whence he forever keeps the infernal powers in subjection to

himself: And that all who believe in him, with the understanding from the heart, and live accordingly, will be saved.

3. That the Sacred Scripture or word of God, is divine truth itself; containing a *spiritual sense* heretofore unknown, whence it is divinely inspired and holy in every syllable; as well as a *literal sense*, in which divine truth is in its fullness, its sanctity and its power; thus that it is accommodated to the apprehension of both angels and men: That the spiritual and natural senses are united by correspondences, like soul and body, every natural expression and image answering to and including a spiritual and divine idea: And thus that the word is the medium of communication with heaven, and of conjunction with the Lord.

4. That the government of the Lord's divine love and wisdom is the divine providence; which is universal, exercised according to certain fixed laws of order, and extending to the minutest particulars of the life of all men, both of the good and of the evil: That in all its operations, it has respect to what is infinite and eternal, and makes no account of things transitory but as they are subservient to eternal ends; thus that it mainly consists with man in the connection of things temporal with things eternal; for that the continued aim of the Lord, by his divine providence is to join man to himself and himself to man, that he may be able to give him the felicities of eternal life: And that the laws of per-

mission are also laws of divine providence; since evil can not be prevented, without destroying the nature of man as an accountable agent; and because also it can not be removed, unless it be known; and can not be known, unless it appear: Thus that no evil is permitted but to prevent a greater; and all is overruled, by the Lord's divine providence, for the greatest possible good.

5. That man is not life, but is only a recipient of life from the Lord, who, as he is love itself, and wisdom itself, is also life itself; which life is communicated by influx to all in the spiritual world, whether belonging to heaven or to hell, and to all in the natural world; but it is received differently by every one, according to his quality and consequent state of reception.

6. That man, during his abode in the world, is, as to his spirit, in the midst between heaven and hell, acted upon by influences from both, and thus kept in a state of spiritual equilibrium between good and evil; in consequence of which he enjoys free-will, or freedom of choice, in spiritual things as well as in natural, and possesses the capacity of either turning himself to the Lord and his kingdom, or turning himself away from the Lord, and connecting himself with the kingdom of darkness. And that unless man had such freedom of choice, the word would be of no use, the church would be a mere name, man would possess nothing by virtue

of which he could be conjoined to the Lord, and the cause of evil would be chargeable on God himself.

7. That man, at this day, is born into evil of all kinds, or with tendencies towards it: That therefore, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, he must be regenerated or created anew; which great work is effected in a progressive manner by the Lord alone, by charity and faith as mediums, during man's coöperation: That as all men are redeemed, all are capable of being regenerated, and consequently saved, every one according to his state: And that the regenerate man is in communion with the angels of heaven, and the unregenerate with the spirits of hell: But that no one is condemned for hereditary evil, any further than as he makes it his own by actual life; whence all who die in infancy are saved, special means being provided by the Lord in the other life, for that purpose.

8. That repentance is the first beginning of the church in man; and that it consists in a man's examining himself, both in regard to his deeds and his intentions, in knowing and acknowledging his sins, confessing them before the Lord, supplicating him for aid, and beginning a new life: That to this end, all evils, whether of affection, of thought, or of life are to be abhorred and shunned as sins against God, and because they proceed from infernal spirits, who, in the aggregate are called the Devil and Satan; and that good affections, good thoughts, and good actions

are to be cherished and performed, because they are of God and from God: That these things are to be done by man as of himself, nevertheless under the acknowledgement and belief that it is from the Lord, operating in him and by him: That so far as man shuns evils as sins, so far they are removed, remitted and forgiven; so far also he does good, not from himself, but from the Lord; and in the same degree he loves truth, has faith, and is a spiritual man: And that the decalogue teaches us what evils are sins.

9. That charity, faith, and good works are unitedly necessary to man's salvation; since charity, without faith, is not spiritual, but natural; and faith without charity is not living, but dead; and both charity and faith, without good works, are merely mental and perishable, because without use or fixedness: And that nothing of faith, of charity, or of good works is of man, but that all is of the Lord, and all the merit is his alone.

10. That baptism and the holy supper are sacraments of divine institution, and are to be permanently observed; baptism being an external medium of introduction into the church, and a sign representative of man's purification and regeneration; and the holy supper being an external medium to those who receive it worthily, of introduction as to spirit into heaven, and of conjunction with the Lord, of which also it is a sign and seal.

11. That immediately after death, which is only a putting off of the natural body, never to be resumed,

man rises again in a spiritual or substantial body, in which he continues to live to eternity; in heaven, if his ruling affections and thence his life have been good; and in hell, if his ruling affections and thence his life have been evil.

12. That now is the second advent of the Lord, which is a coming, not in person, but in the power and glory of his holy word: That it is attended, like his first coming, with the restoration to order of all things in the spiritual world, where the wonderful divine operation, commonly expected under the name of the last judgment, has in consequence been performed; and with the preparing of the way for a new church on the earth; the first christian church having spiritually come to its end or consummation, through evils of life and errors of doctrine, as foretold by the Lord in the gospels: And that this new or second christian church, which will be the crown of all churches and will stand for ever, is what was representatively seen by John, when he beheld the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

It will be seen from the first of the above Articles, that while Swedenborg taught the proper divinity of Christ, he denied the commonly received doctrine of the trinity, and was, in fact, a unitarian. A unitarian believes in the existence of one God in one person; a trinitarian, of one God in three persons.

The former was the doctrine of Swedenborg, who regarded the Lord Jesus Christ as the one Jehovah God, in one person. The trinity of which he speaks is little more than nominal, and is entirely consistent with his unitarian conceptions as to the mode of the divine existence.

From the second Article, it appears that the doctrine of redemption, according to Swedenborg, is a very different matter from that commonly received by evangelical christians. With him, redemption consists, not in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, but "in removing from man the powers of hell, and restoring to order all things in the spiritual world, and in the church."

The third Article sets forth his doctrine as to correspondences, and the spiritual sense of Scripture. He taught "that there is a correspondence between all things in heaven and all things in man; and that this science of correspondences is a key to the spiritual or internal sense of the sacred Scriptures." He believed that the Scriptures (or such parts of them as are inspired) have three senses; the *literal*, the *spiritual*, and the *celestial*. Indeed, he sometimes speaks of a still higher sense of the Word, in which it is understood only by the Lord.\* It was the second, or spiritual sense of the Word which he was especially instructed to open.

The fourth, fifth and sixth Articles set forth the

\* See Apocalypse Revealed. § 959.

doctrine of divine providence; also the free agency of man, and the grounds of it. Being situated "in the midst, between heaven and hell, where he is acted upon by influences from both, and thus kept in a state of equilibrium between good and evil; man enjoys free-will, or freedom of choice."

The seventh Article asserts, "that man, at this day, is born into evil of all kinds, or with tendencies towards it." Consequently he needs regeneration; and this is a gradual, progressive work. Man has no need of the special influences of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. "That influence which is usually referred to the Spirit of God, is, according to Swedenborg, imparted through the agency of *created spirits*, whose nature it is to flow into other spirits, and thus form them to the reception of good and truth." \*

The eighth Article describes more fully, the process of repentance and regeneration. It asserts that, "so far as man shuns evils as sins, so far they are removed, remitted, or forgiven." In the theology of Swedenborg, the removal of sins and the remission of them are the same.

The ninth Article, though cautiously framed, was intended, doubtless, to contradict the commonly received doctrine of justification by faith — a doctrine which gave great offense to Swedenborg.

The tenth Article treats of the sacraments, which

\* Bush's Swedenborg Library, Vol. I. p. 50.



“are of divine institution, and to be permanently observed.”

The eleventh Article contains a denial of the commonly received doctrine of the resurrection, and a statement of the Swedenborgian doctrine. It also teaches that after death, there is to be no change of the ruling, predominant affection, either in the holy or the sinful.

In the twelfth Article, it is asserted that the second advent of the Lord, and the general judgment are already past; that the first christian church, like the Jewish, has come to an end; and that “the new or second christian church” (the Swedenborgian) which “is the crown of all churches,” has been set up, and “will stand for ever.”

The foregoing articles contain the leading doctrines of the Swedenborgian faith. Before proceeding with our remarks, it may be necessary to add a few particulars, expressed (so far as possible) in the language of the New Church.

Swedenborg held, that “God is an infinite man, existing in a perfect human form;” and that he created all things, not from nothing, but “out of himself,” so that every created thing partakes of the very substance of the Deity. He also held, that all the inhabitants of the invisible world, both good and bad, are of the *human species*, and once lived in material bodies on the earths. He rejected the idea of a personal devil, or prince of devils, and held that

the Devil and Satan of the Scriptures are but names, applied to the congregated spirits of darkness.

He taught that our Saviour had not a human soul, but that "the divine essence itself, or the Father, was his soul." Also, that when he came into the world, he assumed "humanity, with all its evil loves and false persuasions, and put himself into every possible state that man ever has been in, or can be."

He taught that marriages are consummated in heaven, and that "true conjugal love, which can only exist between one husband and one wife, is more celestial, spiritual, holy, pure, and clean, than any other love in angels or men."

It was a leading doctrine of his, that "there is an intermediate state for departed souls, called the *world of spirits*, and that very few pass directly to heaven or to hell." This is a state, not properly of probation, but of *development*; a "state of purification to the good, but to the bad, a state where all extraneous good is separated from the radical evil, which constitutes the essence of their natures."

Swedenborg taught that both the heavens and the hells consist of different societies, each society being composed of individuals of like qualities and dispositions. When persons have been long enough in the spiritual world to have their *ruling love*—their *real, internal character* developed, they are naturally drawn each to his own company; so that whether they rise to heaven, or sink to hell, each goes ac-

ording to his own love or choice. He further taught, that each heavenly society is so constituted as to be in the human form; and that the heavenly societies collectively are in the same form. Accordingly, he speaks of heaven, in the general, as a *Grand Man*. Yet, strange to tell, neither heaven nor hell exist in place, but are only "internal, spiritual states!"

It was a doctrine of Swedenborg, not only that Mohammedans and heathens may be saved, but that vast numbers of them actually are so. He describes a heaven, appropriated exclusively to Mohammedans, living there in polygamy, as on the earth; and another heaven appropriated to idolaters, who are engaged, as on earth, in the worship of idols.\*

But I need not proceed further, in a general statement of his doctrines. In what follows, I shall have occasion, not only to remark upon what has been exhibited, but to notice other opinions, to which no allusion has yet been made. Enough, however, has been said, to give the reader a general idea of his religious system.

\* True Chris. Religion, § 832. Conj. Love, § 78.

## CHAPTER III.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND THE DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG.

IN deciding upon the claims and the doctrines of Swedenborg, I agree with Professor Bush, that the first and principal question relates to the fact of his *supernatural illumination*. Did he actually converse with spirits and angels? Was he immediately instructed by the Lord himself? Did he, in fact, receive revelations from heaven? If so, then whatever he taught must have been worthy of its Author, divinely true, and is to be regarded as the voice of God to men. There is no resisting this conclusion, and we have no desire to resist or evade it. But then there is another conclusion equally resistless, and most intimately connected with it. If it can be shown that Swedenborg taught much that is unworthy of God, untrue, not in accordance with reason, Scripture and fact; then he could not have received his instructions from the Lord, and his credit as a supernatural teacher, a revealer of heavenly things, is destroyed.

No Swedenborgian can reasonably object to our arguing the question on this ground; and such, in general, is the line of argument which I propose to pursue in the following pages. But without promising to confine myself to it strictly and universally, I proceed, with all possible brevity, to urge my objections to the claims and the doctrines of Swedenborg.

### *Objection 1.*

Swedenborgianism professes to *supersede the gospel dispensation*, and to introduce a new dispensation, as distinct from it, and superior to it, as that is superior to the Jewish. That such are the claims of Swedenborg and his followers, is evident to every one who reads their works. Mr. Clissold says "the internal sense of the holy word, as revealed to Swedenborg, is absolutely the opening of a *new dispensation*; a dispensation as different from the former, as the Christian dispensation was different from the Jewish."\* Mr. Barrett says, "It is maintained by the New Church, and taught in its writings, that the church instituted by our Lord, as his advent, has spiritually come to its end; and that a *new dispensation* of truth has been made to the world in the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg." Again, "the New Jerusalem church is not to be considered as a *sect*, or as one of the numerous pro-

\* Clissold's Letter, &c., p. 95.

gey of the old church. It is a church formed and existing under a *new dispensation*, which is altogether distinct from every former dispensation.”\* This new dispensation commenced, we are told, in the year 1757, when the last judgment took place, and the old church was superseded or destroyed.

Such then are the claims of Swedenborgians, in regard to the matter of a new dispensation. And I now ask, Where is the proof of them? It was a maxim with Swedenborg, and one oft repeated in his writings, that “*the doctrine of the church ought to be drawn from the literal sense of the word, and to be confirmed by it.*” “*Doctrine is not derived from the spiritual sense, but only illustrated and corroborated.*” † This is a very important canon of the New Church, and one which ought never to be forgotten. I ask then for proof, drawn from the literal sense of the word, that the dispensation which was introduced at the first coming of Christ, has passed away, or was ever expected to pass away, and that a new dispensation has succeeded it. There is evidence enough in the Apocalypse, and in the ancient prophets, that there is to be a latter day glory of the church on earth; that at some period, still future, the *Christian church* — the same which our Saviour and his apostles established — is to be greatly en-

\* Burnett's Lectures, pp. 80, 152.

† True Chris. Religion, § 229, 230. Divine Providence, § 256. Sacred Scriptures, § 50.

larged, purified and exalted. But where do the Scriptures, in their proper, literal sense, teach, that the Christian church is to come to an end, and be succeeded by another church; yea more, that it did actually come to an end, and was superseded, more than a hundred years ago? Till this point is fully established, and that too on *the literal sense of the word*, no one (even according to Swedenborg) ought to believe it. And that it never has been thus established, and never can be, is to my own mind perfectly clear.

That the Jewish dispensation, which was essentially typical, should in the fullness of time be superseded, was altogether natural, and even necessary. When the substance came, the shadows ceased, as a matter of course. When the great sacrifice of the cross was offered up, the bloody rites which prefigured it must pass away. But no such reason can be conceived of, why the Christian dispensation should ever terminate. What ancient predictions or typical rites — such as were fulfilled in Christ — remain to be fulfilled in Swedenborg, or have, in him, received their fulfillment?

But this question of a new church, a new dispensation, is clearly decided by the sacred writers. "In the days of these kings," says Daniel, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which *shall never be destroyed*; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

(chap. ii. 44.) Isaiah, predicting the ingathering of the Gentiles, and the glory of the church under the gospel dispensation, says, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an *eternal excellency, the joy of many generations*. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee *an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended*." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness *shall not depart from thee*, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (chap. liv. and lx.) It is the church under the gospel dispensation which is spoken of in these passages, as the connection clearly shows; and, certainly, the language does not imply that this church was to come to an end in the year 1757, and be superseded by another church. So far from it, the church here addressed, is to be "an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations." It is to be protected and blessed on the earth, to the end of time, and is to live and reign with Christ in heavenly places for ever.

That the gospel dispensation is never to pass away, is positively asserted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Speaking of the two dispensations, the Jewish and Christian, this writer represents the former as *shaken and removed*; but the latter as one that *can not be removed or shaken*,



one that is to remain. "Wherefore we, (Christians) receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." (chap. xii: 27, 28.) The gospel dispensation, then, is never to be removed. It is to remain to the end of the world. And the dispensation of Swedenborg, which claims to supersede that which was introduced by Christ and his Apostles, is of course, to be rejected.

### *Objection 2.*

The revelations of Swedenborg are not to be received; because they are not *sufficiently attested*. This objection divides itself into two parts. In the first place, the bare testimony of Swedenborg to the truth of what he professed to reveal is insufficient, because *it does not conform to the established laws or conditions of valid testimony*. There are laws, to which if the testimony in any given case conforms, we cannot reasonably withhold our faith. On the contrary, if the testimony does not conform to these laws, we are not required to yield our faith. Now the testimony of Swedenborg, in several most material points, is not in accordance with established laws.

One of the laws or conditions to which I refer is, that there must be a sufficient number of witnesses. There should be "*two or three witnesses*," at least, in order "that every word may be established." But in the case of Swedenborg, there is only one

witness. Everything depends on his own naked, unsupported assertion.

Again; testimony, to be received, must be a concurrent, consistent testimony. It must involve no palpable absurdities. It must not contradict itself. But I shall show, in a subsequent Chapter, (chap. ix.) that the testimony of Swedenborg is liable to both these exceptions. It does involve manifest absurdities; and is, in many points, self-contradictory.

I remark again, that testimony, to be conclusive, must be of such a nature, that the witnesses, if they have falsified, are open to detection. They must not be able to avoid exposure, by taking refuge under a veil of secrecy which no one besides themselves can penetrate. But most of the testimony of Swedenborg is of the kind here excepted to. Suppose he uttered a false testimony, how is he to be detected? Who shall follow him into the other world to expose him? Manifestly, no one *can* follow him, until he pass finally into that world; and then it will be too late to retrieve the errors into which a false testimony may have led him.\*

\* If it be said that the operation of this rule would destroy the force of *all* testimony, even that of God and of Christ, as to the things of the future world, I have only to reply, that *divine* testimony is one thing; *human* testimony another. The former is to be received, whether we can examine into its truth or not. The latter is more satisfactory, always, when of such a nature, that its falsehood, if it be false, can be easily detected.

I remark once more, that testimony, to be conclusive, must be, not contradicted, but confirmed (at least so far as could be reasonably expected) by other evidence. But even this is not true of the testimony of Swedenborg. His revelations do not relate exclusively to the other world. Some of them have respect to the things of this world — things which are open to the investigation and inspection of mortals. Such are his disclosures in regard to the existence of the ancient Word in Tartary, and of a branch of the New Church in the interior of Africa; also in regard to the nature of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and to numerous facts of history and science. I can not go into particulars here; but I shall show, as I proceed, that his testimony on the points to which I have referred has *not been confirmed*, as might have been expected on supposition of its truth, by other evidence. So far from this, it has been, in various points, directly contradicted.

I feel authorized to say therefore, without pursuing this topic further, that the testimony of Swedenborg fails, in several important particulars, to conform to the laws of valid testimony, and is, on this account, unworthy to be received.

We come now to the other part of the objection under consideration. Swedenborg's revelations were not attested, — as they should have been, in order to be received — by *miracles*.

A proper miracle is always a work of God — a work which no being besides him can perform.

And in the ages when God was making his revelations to the world, he was wont, from time to time, to confirm them by miracles. He was wont to interpose by his almighty power; arrest in some way the regular movements of nature; and thus show that the prophet by whom he spoke was actually his messenger to the world. It was thus that he attested his messages to Pharaoh, and his revelations to the children of Israel, by the hand of Moses. It was thus that he attested his subsequent revelations to the children of Israel, by Elijah, Elisha, and others of the prophets. In the same way, he attested the preaching of his Son, and of the inspired apostles. The leading object of these miraculous performances was in all cases the same. They were a divine *attestation* — God's unmistakable *witness* — to the divine mission of those who performed them, and to the divine authority of the messages which they were instructed to deliver.

The testimony which God thus gave to the fact of his revelations in ancient times, he may be expected to give at all times; i. e., if new revelations shall continue to be made. No good reason can be assigned why his revealed word should be miraculously attested in the first century after Christ, and not in the eighteenth; provided there *really was*, during the eighteenth century, a further revelation.

And as this is a species of evidence which God has been pleased to grant in former cases of acknowledged revelation, so it is one which men have a

right to demand, whenever a new revelation is proposed for their acceptance; and most happy had it been for this world of ours—delivering it from enormous masses of superstition and corruption—had this right been constantly and strenuously insisted on.

In the second century, Montanus appeared, professing to be the promised Comforter from heaven, who should teach the disciples all things, and bring all things to their remembrance. He published his revelations, and drew numbers after him, among whom were some of the learned fathers of the church. If Montanus had been put upon the test of working miracles, his career and his delusions might soon have passed away.

In the third century, Manes arose with the same pretensions. He too declared himself to be the promised Comforter. He uttered his revelations, made large additions to the doctrine of Christ, and drew away multitudes after him. If Manes had merely been asked for his *credentials*—his miraculous powers, and if no credit had been given to him till these were presented, his errors never could have prevailed, and the church might have been saved from his corruptions.

In the beginning of the seventh century, Mohammed appeared, professing to have direct intercourse with heaven, and to make new revelations for the benefit of the world. The story of his life and successes need not be told here. For the last thousand

years, his iron sway has been extended over not less than a fourth of the entire human race. Now it was objection enough to Mohammed, from the first, that he brought with him no proper credentials. The palpable evidence of a divine mission, which was furnished by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and the apostles, he failed to produce. He performed no miracles. He could perform none. Of course he should not have been listened to for a moment.

In more modern times, we have had numerous pretenders to divine revelations. We have had a Bockholdt and a Behmen in Germany; Anne Lee and Joanna Southcote, in England; and Jemima Wilkinson, Joseph Smith, and others of less name and influence in our own country. And although, in point of intellectual and moral elevation, Emanuel Swedenborg was incomparably superior to most of the individuals here named, in one respect, he falls into the same category. Like them, he pretended to have intercourse with angels, and to deliver messages from God; and like them he was destitute of the proper credentials. He wrought no miracles. He neither possessed, nor claimed to possess, miraculous powers. He failed to establish his peculiar claims by that species of evidence, which man has a right to demand, and which God has ever been wont to give, when new, independent, and important revelations were to be made to the world.

Swedenborg was well aware that his claims would be objected to, on the ground of his not performing

miracles. Indeed, he *was* closely questioned on this very subject, both in the natural and the spiritual world, by the men of this earth, and by those who had gone into the other state. And the reasons which he assigned for the absence of miracles, I feel constrained to say, are unfounded, self-contradictory, and, of course, unsatisfactory. At one time, he tells us that “miracles *force* men, and take away their free-agency in spiritual things.”\* But were not the hearers of our Saviour free-agents? Were *they* forced?

But the apology of force is not alone relied upon. The opposite one of *inefficiency* is sometimes introduced. “What did the miracles avail in Egypt, or among the Jewish nation, who nevertheless crucified the Lord? So if the Lord were to appear now in the sky, attended with angels and trumpets, it would have no other effect than it had then.” †

It is not denied (as it can not be) that considerable numbers were convinced in consequence of the miracles of the apostolic age; but then it is urged, that the “faith produced by miracles is not faith. There is nothing rational in it, still less spiritual; it being merely external, without any internal principle.” ‡ But was not the conversion of Paul, which was directly in consequence of a miracle, a sound

\* True Chris. Religion, § 501.

† Hobart's Life, &c., p. 44.

‡ Divine Providence, § 131.

conversion? Was it merely an external change? Was there nothing internal, spiritual in it?

Mohammed, like Swedenborg, was continually pressed by the demand "Why do you not show us a sign from heaven? Why not perform miracles?" And the shifts to which Swedenborg and his followers resort, strongly remind us of those to which the prophet of Mecca was driven, twelve hundred years ago. "The infidels say, unless a sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe. Answer, Thou art commissioned to be a preacher only, and not a worker of miracles. Verily God will lead into error whom he pleaseth; and will direct unto himself those who repent, believe, and whose hearts rest securely in the meditation of God. Am I other than a man, sent as an apostle? And no apostle hath the power to come with a sign, unless by the permission of God."\*

\* Sale's Koran, chap. 13, 17.



## CHAPTER IV.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG, CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 3.*

MY third objection to the claims of Swedenborg is based on his treatment of the *holy Scriptures*. In the first place, he rejects nearly one half of the Bible, as not having been written by inspiration, and as constituting no part of the word of God. The following are the rejected books of the Old Testament, viz: Ruth, the first and second books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The New Testament is all rejected, with the exception of the four Gospels and the Apocalypse. These rejected portions of the Bible are regarded as, in the main, good and useful productions, but not as possessing a divine authority. They are the word of man, not of God. In the language of Mr. Hindmarsh, "they can not for a moment be accounted equal to the other books, or be put in competition with them, for want of those infinitely

superior prerogatives which must ever distinguish between a *divine* and a *human* production."\* The pretense for rejecting the books above named is, not that there is any historical evidence against them, but they do not contain the hidden or mystical senses. They were not written according to the alleged science of correspondences.

But this leads me to say, in regard to the other books of Scripture — those which Swedenborg professes to receive — that he adopts such principles of interpretation as render them of comparatively little value. The obvious sense of Scripture — that which strikes the eye and affects the heart of the common reader — is, in comparison, of small account, while the utmost importance is attached to certain hidden, spiritual, mystical senses, which, so far, at least, as the uninitiated are concerned, seem almost entirely arbitrary. Thus, we are told that "by a garden, a grove, and a wood, are meant wisdom, intelligence, and science; that by the olive, the vine, the cedar, the poplar, and the oak, are meant the good and truth of the church, under the different characters of celestial, spiritual, rational, natural, and sensual; that by a lamb, a sheep, a goat, a calf, and an ox, are meant innocence, charity, and natural affection of different degrees; that by mountains, hills, and valleys, are meant the higher, the lower, and the lowest

\* Hindmarsh's Compendium, p. 44. Hobart's Life of Swedenborg, p. 119.

things relating to the church ; also, that by Egypt is signified what is scientific ; by Assyria, what is rational ; by Edom, what is natural ; by Moab, the adulteration of good ; by the children of Ammon, the adulteration of truth ; by the Philistines, faith without charity ; by Tyre and Sidon, the knowledge of good and truth ; and by Gog, external worship without internal.”\*

From a later interpreter, we learn that earth, Adam, Jerusalem, tree, signifies the church ; that blood, light, garden, water, signifies truth ; also, that water, in some connections, signifies falsehood ; that right-hand denotes “the power of truth from love ;” that “swords, spears and bows are truths fighting ;” that “flesh signifies the good of love ;” that “a white horse signifies a clear and true understanding of the word ;” that “serpent signifies the low and sensual principles of the mind ;” that “Egypt denotes the state of the natural man ;” that Canaanites are “false, infernal principles ;” that “figs signify good works,” &c. †

To help forward this art of mystical interpretation, a large “Dictionary of Correspondences” has been compiled — most necessary work, certainly, if this method of interpretation is to be pursued, and if any sense or consistency were discoverable in it. To show my readers how much of definiteness and

\* See Hindmarsh’s Compend. p. 132.

† Barrett’s Lectures, pp. 200 — 324.

certainly attaches to this method of interpretation, and how much aid is to be expected from the "Dictionary of Correspondences," I present them with the explanation of a single word, and that the first in the volume. "AARON; a *mountain of strength*. The first high priest of the Jews. Aaron, as a priest, represents *the Lord, as to the good of love*. Sometimes, he represented, in the opposite sense, *idolatrous worship*; as when he made a golden calf for the children of Israel. In Ex. 4:14, Aaron denotes *the doctrine of good and truth*. The garments of Aaron represented *the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, adjoined to his celestial kingdom*; and since that exists by this, therefore it is said, 'that the wise in heart should make the garments of Aaron and his sons.' Ex. 38:3. Aaron represented *the external of the church, of the word, and of worship*. Aaron and his sons represented *the Lord, as to divine good, and as to divine truth*. Aaron and his garments represented *the superior heavens, thus the celestial kingdom*: and his sons and their garments, *the inferior heavens, thus the spiritual kingdom*."

I have selected this word, not because the senses ascribed to it are more various, complicated and strange than those of almost any other word, but simply because it stands first in the volume. And now I ask any candid, intelligent reader what use he can possibly make of such a "Dictionary," or such a science (for strangely enough this matter of corres-

pendences is called a science) in the interpretation of the sacred volume. Here are no less than five distinct senses ascribed to the simple word Aaron, aside from those which are given to it when used in connection with sons, garments, and son's garments. Thus Aaron signifies "a mountain of strength," which is a mere translation of the word. It also signifies "the Lord, in respect to the good of love;" "idolatrous worship;" "the doctrine of good and truth;" and "the external of the church, of the word, and of worship."

In one of the extracts above given, Egypt is said to signify "what is scientific;" in the other, "Egypt denotes the state of the natural man." In the Dictionary, neither of these precise senses is given to the word Egypt, but we have *six other senses*, all distinct from, and some the opposites of each other. In the extracts above given, Assyria signifies "what is rational;" Edom "what is natural;" the right hand denotes "the power of truth from love;" and "figs signify good works." But in the Dictionary, Assyria "represents the external or natural principle of the church." Edom, "the Lord's human essence" (also five or six other different senses); the right hand "signifies the all of man as to intellectual power, consequently as to faith;" and figs are "the natural good of man, in conjunction with his spiritual good."\*

\* Mr. Tulk, in his "Spiritual Christianity," denies that there

If my readers are not yet satisfied as to the value of this kind of interpretation, I will present them with some choice, continuous specimens.

In reference to the story of the ark being sent home by the Philistines (1 Sam. v : 6), Swedenborg observes: "The Philistines represent those who exalt faith above charity; which was the occasion of their continual wars with the Israelites, who represent those who cherish faith in union with charity. The idol Dagon is the religion of those who are represented by the Philistines. The emerods are symbols of the appetites of the natural man, which, when separated from the spiritual affections, are unclean. The mice, by which the land was devastated, are images of the lust of destroying, by false interpreta-

"has been a single Swedenborgian writer," who has correctly understood the doctrine of correspondency. Every one, he says, "has either dropped all notice of *real* correspondency, and treated it as a system of symbols, or has merely stated the fact of there being an intimate connection between the sign and the thing signified, and left his reader to discover, as well as he could, the reason." This same author — who seems to be a leader among the New Church brethren — affirms that *the language of Swedenborg needs to be spiritualized*, — else, he says, we shall be compelled to receive greater mysteries in the New Church theology, than those from which we have escaped in the Old, pp. 10, 16—37. We honor the frankness of this Mr. Tulk. At the same time, we are anxious to know where this labor of *spiritualizing* is to end. Swedenborg spiritualizes the Scriptures; and Mr. Tulk spiritualizes Swedenborg; and the next improvement will be to spiritualize him.

tion, the spiritual nourishment which the church derives from the word of God. The emeralds of gold exhibit the natural appetites, as purified and made good. The golden mice signify the healing of the tendency to false interpretation, effected by admitting a regard to goodness. The cows are types of the natural man, in regard to such good qualities as he possesses. Their lowing by the way expresses the repugnance of the natural man to the process of conversion. And the offering them up for a burnt offering typifies that restoration of order which takes place in the mind, when the natural affections are submitted to the Lord."\*

The story of the forty and two children destroyed by bears (2 Kings ii : 24) is thus interpreted. "Elisha represented the Lord, as to the word. Baldness signifies the word, devoid of its literal sense, thus not anything. The number forty-two signifies blasphemy. And bears signify the literal sense of the word, read indeed, but not understood." †

The sealing of the tribes of Israel, spoken of in Rev. vii : 5 — 8, Swedenborg explains as follows:— "Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand — signifies celestial love, which is love to the Lord, and this with all who will be in the new heaven, and the new Church. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand — signifies wisdom derived from celestial love, with them who are there. Of the

\* True Chris. Religion, § 203. † Apocalypse Revealed, § 573.

tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand — signifies uses of life, derived from that love, with those who were there. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand — signifies mutual love with them. Of the tribe of Naphthalim were sealed twelve thousand — signifies a perception of use, and what use is with them. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand — signifies the will of serving, and of action with them. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand — signifies spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor with them. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand — signifies the affection of truth derived from good, from whence comes intelligence with them. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand — signifies good of life with them. Of the tribe of Zebulon were sealed twelve thousand — signifies the conjugal love of good and truth with them. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand — signifies the doctrine of good and truth with them. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand — signifies the life of truth according to doctrine with them.”\*

My readers, I am sure, will not require any further specimens of this kind of interpretation; although it would be easy to multiply them to almost any extent.

To this method of interpreting Scripture — this taking of plain, common words, and attaching to

\* Apocalypse Revealed, § 341.



them new and hidden senses—the most weighty objections may be urged. To ordinary minds, these senses, as I said, seem nearly, if not wholly, *arbitrary*. Without doubt, there is a sufficient resemblance or analogy between certain external and internal objects, to lay a foundation for the use of metaphors, comparisons and other figures of speech. But the language of the Bible is not wholly figurative, much less has it, throughout, the hidden senses which Swedenborgians ascribe to it. The very fact that these are said to be *hidden* senses implies that there are no obvious resemblances on which they are founded; and in attempting to trace such resemblances or correspondences, as in the examples above given, there is a necessity for substituting numerous meanings, which are wholly arbitrary. A garden, a grove, a wood, the olive, the vine, the cedar, the poplar, and half the other words contained in the “Dictionary of Correspondences,” may be made either of them to denote twenty things, with just as much propriety as those things which they are said to signify.

This method of interpretation is, moreover, *unreasonable*. If one of the inspired writers had occasion, for example, to speak of *science*, why did he not use the common word science? Why use the word Egypt to denote science, when the proper word might be used just as well. Besides, in one of the extracts above given, we are told that a *wood* signi-

fies science. Here, then, we have Egypt and a wood both signifying the same thing, and signifying that to which neither of them has the least obvious analogy or affinity. And if "Egypt signifies what is scientific, and Assyria what is rational, and Edom what is natural, and the Philistines faith without charity," in the books of the Kings, why should they not signify the same in the books of Chronicles? And why must the Chronicles be set aside, as not admitting of the mystical interpretation, while the kindred books of Samuel and the Kings are retained?

Will it be said that the books of the Chronicles are set aside, because they are filled up, to so great an extent with proper names? But proper names, with Swedenborg, are among the most fruitful sources of spiritual instruction. "Adam, Sheth, Enoch, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jared," all have a spiritual import assigned them in the book of Genesis; and why should they not have the same in the first book of the Chronicles?

I object farther to this method of interpretation, that it puts it into the power of ingenious, fanciful, designing men, to make anything or nothing of the Scriptures, as they please. The revelations of God are made to us through the medium of *words*—words used in their ordinary and established senses, as understood at the time when the revelations were delivered. If now we break in upon the established meaning of words, and use them in new, strange,

unauthorized senses, we destroy the medium through which revelation comes to us, and thereby nullify revelation itself. The Bible is no longer a safe guide in matters of religion, because nothing can be determined by it. To be sure, there are many good words in the Bible, but then each of these words may mean some half a dozen things; and if any do not like either of these meanings, they may, with the same propriety, add half a dozen more.

I know it is said, that the spiritual senses of Swedenborg are founded on correspondences, and that correspondences, with him, have all the precision and exactness of a science. But an hour's attention to the "Dictionary of Correspondences" is enough to refute this pretense for ever.\* Indeed, it is sufficiently refuted, in the extracts from Swedenborg which have been given. We have seen him, not only using words in the most strange and arbitrary senses, but dropping these senses at pleasure, and substituting others, and frequently setting all sense and consistency at defiance.

The history of allegorical, mystical interpretation is highly instructive, and goes to confirm the views

\* Correspondence is defined to be "the connexion between spiritual *causes*, and natural *effects*." Thus, "a city, a chariot, a bow, each signifies a *doctrine*." Hence, "a doctrine is a *cause*, one effect of which is a chariot," another a city, another a bow. See Tulk's Spiritual Christianity, p. 9. But how a doctrine can be the *producing cause* of a chariot, a city, or a bow, I leave to the advocates of the pretended science of correspondences to explain.

which have been presented. We first find it among the old Hindoo and Grecian philosophers, who attempted to allegorize the fables of their mythology, and draw out from them lessons of wisdom. We next find it among the Alexandrian Jews, before the commencement of the Christian era. Many of these Jews had become philosophers; and by the philosophy of the times had sadly corrupted their religion. They had so corrupted it, that they found it impossible to support it by a fair interpretation of their sacred books. Their religious systems and their Bibles would not go together. It was in this dilemma that they resorted to the expedient of interpreting their Scriptures *mystically, allegorically*. By undervaluing and decrying the obvious sense of Scripture, and searching after hidden, fanciful meanings, they were able to reconcile their Bibles to any system of philosophy which their inclinations led them to adopt.

Precisely the same causes operated to give currency to this kind of interpretation in the Christian church. The learned teachers at Alexandria, and in some other of the Eastern cities, assumed the character, the name, and the peculiar garb of philosophers. Their religion was a *divine philosophy*. By the mingling of heathen philosophy, the pure Christian system was soon corrupted; and then the allegorical interpretations must be introduced, to reconcile the gospel to the new and strange dogmas which were entertained.

I do not say that Swedenborg borrowed his interpretations from those of Origen and his school, though there is a remarkable similarity between them,\* and some of his followers speak of the allegorizers of antiquity as his exemplars, and mention them with high honor.† Neither do I say that he was influenced by the same motives with them, to adopt their methods of interpretation. I am willing to believe that he meant to *honor* the inspired word, attributing to it a secret, spiritual sense; and that

\* Origen like Swedenborg, taught that there is “a two-fold world, a visible and an invisible, and that the one is *emblematic of the other.*” “The heavenly, mystical world is above, and *corresponds in all its parts with the lower world, which was formed after its model.*” Here is the radical principle of Swedenborg’s whole system of correspondences. Origen further taught, like Swedenborg, that “the Scriptures resemble man. As man consists of three parts, a rational mind, a sensitive soul, and a visible body; so the Scriptures have a *three-fold sense,*” a *literal*, a *moral*, and a *mystical or spiritual*; or, as Swedenborg states it, a *literal*, a *spiritual*, and a *celestial*. In their endeavors to exalt the hidden sense, or senses, both Origen and Swedenborg were led to depreciate the literal sense. Some portions of Scripture, they both said, have no literal sense or meaning whatever. There are also quite as much precision and system in Origen’s interpretations, as in those of Swedenborg. Indeed, in many instances, they are much the same. Compare his Homilies on Genesis and Exodus, with Swedenborg’s Commentaries on the same books, in his *Arcana Celestia*. See also Mosheim’s *Comment. de Rebus Christianorum*, p. 629, &c.

† See Preface to *Arcana Celestia*, vol. 1. Edition of 1794. Also Noble on Inspiration, pp. 63—66, 388. Also Barrett’s Lectures, p. 164.

his followers, in general, mean the same. But I am constrained in all sincerity to say, that I think their system goes well nigh to destroy the Scriptures. They reject nearly one half of our sacred books, while their principles of interpretation go to confuse, and render almost valueless, the other half.

But I have still other objections to the system of Swedenborg, in its bearing upon the holy Scriptures. It leads those who adopt it, not only to undervalue the plain, obvious sense of the Bible, but to *decry it, speak evil of it*, and treat it much after the manner of infidels. This assertion I might justify by numerous quotations, but I need only refer to the lectures of Mr. Barrett. He not only insists, but endeavors at considerable length to show, that the sacred writers, according to the literal and obvious meaning of their words, *contradict each other palpably and often*; that they contradict *credible history* and the teachings of true science; that they contain many things which are of an *immoral character and tendency*, and utterly unworthy of God to reveal.\*

Such then is the character, and such the fruits of the mystical, allegorizing method of interpretation, such they have always been. These principles of

\* See Barrett's Lectures, pp. 122—130. Also Noble on Inspiration, Lectures I. and VI. It is remarkable that Mr. Barrett's objections to the literal sense of Scripture are, in general, the same that were urged, years ago, by Thomas Paine, against the Scriptures themselves; and a full answer to them may be found in the several Replies which were then given to Paine's "Age of Reason."

interpretation lead those who adopt them to speak disparagingly of the literal and proper sense of the Scriptures, at the same time, they go to unsettle and confound their meaning, and render them comparatively valueless.

## CHAPTER V.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 4.*

MY next objection to the system of Swedenborg is, that *he discards much important Scriptural truth, and inculcates on many points, essential error.* Although much of this may be gathered from the general statement of doctrine exhibited in chapter II. it will still be necessary, to go into the subject more particularly.

1. Swedenborg denies the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, insisting that the one God exists in one person only, and that this person is the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks, indeed, of a kind of Trinity; but his Trinity is entirely and confessedly different from the commonly received doctrine, which he every where repudiates with abhorrence.

2. Rejecting the Trinity, Swedenborg must of necessity, reject the personality and appropriate work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he says, is



“the divine love and the divine wisdom, proceeding from the Lord as a sun, and causing light and heat in heaven.” Swedenborg taught that “the influence which is usually referred directly to the Spirit of God, is imparted through the intermediate agency of *created spirits*, whose nature it is to flow into other spirits, and thus form them to the reception of God and truth.” \*

3. Swedenborg denies the existence of *angels*, both the holy and the fallen, as an order of beings distinct from men and superior to them. “The inhabitants of heaven, as well as those of hell, are all of the human race, without a single exception. The general opinion, that angels were originally created such, and placed immediately in heaven, without having first lived as men in the natural world, and that many of them afterwards rebelled, and were cast down from heaven, together with the instigator and leader of the insurrection, has no foundation whatever in the sacred Scriptures. Every man, according to the quality of his life in the world, becomes, after death, either an angel or a devil; an angel, if his life has been good, but a devil, if his life has been evil.” †

4. According to the system of Swedenborg, our Saviour had *no human soul*, and, of course, was not

\* See Bush's Swedenborgian Library, p. 50, Divine Love and Wisdom, § 150. Doctrine of the Lord, § 46.

† See Hindmarsh's Compendium, p. 104.

properly a human being. "There was this difference," says Mr. Noble, "between the Lord Jesus Christ, while in a body of flesh on earth, and all ordinary men; that whereas they take their soul, or spiritual part, from a human father, Jesus Christ, having no father but the Divine Father, had his soul, or internal part, from the divine essence; and as the divine essence is incapable of division, *the divine essence itself, or the Father, was in fact his soul or internal part*; while his body, or external part, including the affections of the natural man, was all that he took from his mother." Again; "whilst the human form which the Lord assumed by birth of the virgin, necessarily partook, at first, of her infirmities, *its soul was no other than the invisible Jehovah.*" \*

5. Although Christ is represented as having no human soul, yet, strange to tell, he is also represented as having been subject, while here on earth, to great *moral impurities and imperfections*. The literal David of the Old Testament was, in the spiritual sense of Swedenborg, *the Christ*; and accordingly, he interprets the Psalms of David — his supplications, misgivings, confessions, complaints — as no other than the language of Christ. Thus David's confession of sin, in the thirty-second Psalm, is represented by Swedenborg as the Lord's "confession of infirmities." And so the fifty-first Psalm, from the first to the seventh verse, is "a prayer of the

\* Noble's Appeal, pp. 388, 444.

Lord, that he may be purified from the infirmities which he had inherited from his mother."\* I can hardly see why the equivocal word *infirmities* should have been used here. In the Psalms referred to, there is a humble confession of *sin*; and if the language is Christ's, then *he confessed his sins*.

The language of Swedenborg's followers on this subject is even less guarded than his own. Mr. Reed says, "As our Lord was born of a woman, he inherited from her *the evils of the Jewish nation*." †

Mr. Noble speaks of the infirmities and *imperfections* which our Lord inherited from his mother. † Mr. Barrett teaches that Christ assumed "humanity, with all its *evil loves and false persuasions*; and as to that humanity, put himself in every possible state that man ever has been in, or can be." Following Christ "must mean, that we are to fight against and remove the evils and falses appertaining to our natural man, as he fought against and removed *the evils and falses which appertained to his natural or assumed humanity*." Again, "the steps by which the Lord glorified his human were a series of temptation

\* Summary Exposition, &c., pp. 75, 79. Mr. Noble represents our Saviour as in *doubt*, at times, whether he could ever accomplish the work of human salvation. Appeal, p. 391. And Swedenborg repeatedly represents him as in *despair*. He interprets no less than fourteen passages in the Old Testament, as referring to our Lord's "temptations, even to *despair*"!! See Summary Exposition, &c., p. 129.

† Growth of Mind, p. 157.

combats, or a constant warfare against those INFERNAL PRINCIPLES, of which his maternal humanity was FULL." "His assumed human nature, like the human nature of other men, was by inheritance FULL of *impure and unhallowed principles*, which needed to be subdued; or put away." Speaking of Christ after his resurrection, Mr. Barrett says, "He had put off all the impurities that appertain to men on earth, but there were impurities of a more subtle and interior nature, such as appertain to spirits and angels, which had not yet been wholly put off."\* I have quoted the more largely in regard to the alleged impurity and imperfection of our Lord's human nature, because I apprehend there is no point of Swedenborgian divinity, which will appear so strange and shocking to the whole Christian world as this. That immaculate personage, who is declared by the apostles to have been "holy, harmless, undefiled — without blemish and without spot," is here represented as under the influence of "*evil loves and false persuasions*" — as "*not yet pure and holy*" — as "*full of impure, unhallowed, and even of infernal principles*"!!

6. The Scriptures represent the sins of men as in some way connected with the fall of their first parents. "By the offense of *one*, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By *one man's* disobedience, many were made sinners." Rom. v : 18, 19. But according to Swedenborg, the sins and cor-

\* Lectures, pp. 305, 319 — 321, 352.

ruptions of men are in no way connected with the fall of Adam, but with the sins of their *immediate progenitors*. "The origins whence sins are hereditarily derived, are as many as there are fathers and mothers in the world." "What reason for deducing the origin of all evils from Adam and his seed? Is there not equal reason to derive it from *parents*? Does not *their* seed, in like manner, propagate itself? Whence does each derive his peculiar disposition, but from his father and mother? Why then is it to be traced to Adam," — a personage who, according to Swedenborg, never lived, but "by whom is denoted the first church upon the earth?" \*

7. To the doctrine of *predestination* or *election*, as set forth in the Scriptures, Swedenborg and his followers are exceedingly opposed. "Predestination is a birth, conceived and brought forth from the faith of the present church; because it originates in a belief of instantaneous salvation by an immediate act of mercy, and in a belief that man has not the smallest degree of ability or free-will in spiritual things. Predestination follows from these tenets, as one fiery serpent from another, or one spider from another." † Mr. Hargrove represents predestination as "the last rattle in the tail of the great red dragon, which standeth before the woman" (or the New Church) "ready to devour her man child." ‡

\* Appendix to True Chris. Religion, § 35.

† Brief Exposition, &c., § 66.

‡ Sermon, &c., p. 20.

8. Swedenborg denies the proper *atonement of Christ*, as consisting in his vicarious sufferings and death. That this is true, no reader of his theological works can for a moment doubt. But to set forth his real views on the important subject of man's redemption is not so easy a task. Perhaps the most unexceptionable mode of attempting the thing, will be to let him and his followers speak for themselves. "The first act of redemption," says he, "was the subjugation of the hells. The second act of redemption was the separation of the evil from the good, the casting of the evil into hell, and the raising of the good to heaven. Afterwards followed the reduction of all to order in hell, and of all to order in heaven; also instructions concerning truths which will be of faith, and in goods which will be of charity, and thus the establishment of a new church."\* Again: "The Lord came into the world, to reduce to order all things in heaven and in earth; and this was effected by spiritual combats against the hells, which at that time infested every man on his entrance into this world and departure out of it."† Mr. Hindmarsh says, "The work of redemption did not consist in the Son's offering himself as a sacrifice in the room of mankind;" but "in the actual subjugation of the powers of darkness, in the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and in the consequent

\* General Summary, pp. 29 — 33.

† Doctrine of the Lord, § 14.

foundation of a new spiritual church on earth."\* Mr. Clissold says, "Since the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ was no other than the reconciliation of the human nature to the divine, so this reconciliation was a progressive work, which was finally completed by the passion of the cross. Jesus Christ is our great archetype, our *exemplar*, which we are to follow. We are, therefore, called upon to work in ourselves, in *our* human nature, the same kind of work which he wrought in *his*; he after an infinite manner, we after a finite."† Mr. Barrett says; "Christ came into this natural world in a bodily form; clothed himself with the natural humanity—defiled, borne down and oppressed with evils of all kinds, as that humanity was; and by degrees purified it from all its defilements, and filled every region of it with his own divinity. Thus he glorified that humanity, or made it divine. He came as *the Word*—as *truth divine* or the Son; and by a series of temptation combats, he successively united that truth with love divine, or the Father, in the assumed humanity; that so he might thenceforward, be able to unite truth in the understanding with love in the will, in the minds of all men who will permit him to do so; and in this way gradually lead men back to their original happy state of conjunction with the Lord, which is heavenly and eternal life."‡

\* Compendium, p. 26.

† Letter &c., p. 47.

‡ Lectures, p. 301.

I have presented these extracts, that my readers might have the doctrine of Swedenborgian redemption set before them in the words of its own teachers. I am not sure the language will all be understood, or that I could rightly explain it, if I should make the attempt. It is obvious enough, however, that the process of redemption, according to Swedenborg, is entirely different from that of the Scriptures, as these are understood by evangelical Christians.

9. The regeneration which Swedenborg inculcates is a *gradual*, and not an instantaneous work, — a progressive improvement of moral and religious character. “The regeneration of a man,” says he, “is not effected in a moment, but *successively*, from the beginning to the end of life in the world: and after that, it is continued and perfected.” “Those who conceive otherwise of regeneration do not know anything concerning charity and faith.” \*

10. *Justification by faith* is another of the great doctrines of revelation, which Swedenborg impugns and rejects. “The popular doctrine of justification by faith,” says Mr. Clissold, “is one which we consider contrary to God’s word, and contrary to the real nature and constitution of things.” † Mr. Parsons calls it, “the dreadful doctrine of salvation by faith alone,” which “the Reformers placed in the

\* True Christian Religion, § 610, 586.

† Letter &c., p. 49.



center of their religion. It stood there, with all its deformity undisguised, all its power to wound and slay unmitigated. It stood there as the abomination of desolation, in the very sanctuary of the temple.”\* “Let every one beware,” says Swedenborg, “of this heresy, that man *is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*; for he who is in it and does not fully recede from it before life ends, after death consociates with *infernal geni*; for they are the goats concerning whom the Lord says; Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.”†

Swedenborg held the unscriptural doctrine of an *intermediate state*, between heaven and hell, into which (with few exceptions) the souls of men depart at death, and where they remain for a time, before entering on the awards of eternity. I call this an *unscriptural* doctrine; for I find not a particle of evidence in support of it, in either the Old Testament or the New. And Mr. Bush is of the same opinion. “That we have no express disclosures of the conditions of this state in the Scriptures,” says he, “is not a valid argument against the truth of Swedenborg’s representations; for it is impossible to

\* Essays, p. 163.

† Apocalypse Revealed, § 838. In another place Swedenborg denominates the clergy who preach the doctrine of justification by faith “Abaddons and Apollyons” — “angels of the abyss.” They “are Leviathans, crooked Leviathans, whom the Lord will visit with his hard and great sword. True Chris. Religion, § 182.

show that there may not be truths in regard to our future existence which are not revealed in the Bible." \* Mr. Bush had forgotten, when he penned this sentence, that it is one of the canons of the New Church theology, that "all doctrines must be drawn and proved, and all controversies decided by the *literal sense of the word.*" †

The intermediate state of Swedenborg, he denominates "the spiritual world," or "world of spirits;" and no inconsiderable part of his revelations has respect to transactions here. "There are three states," he says, "through which a man passes after death, previous to his coming either into heaven, or into hell. The first state is that of his *exteriors*; the second is that of his *interiors*; and the third is that of his *preparation*; all which states man passes through in the world of spirits. The first state of man after death is similar to his state in this world. He has a similar face, similar speech, and a similar mind; hence it is that he then knows no other than that he is still in the world; unless he adverts to those things which present themselves, and to what is told him by the angels, that he is now a spirit." "The second state of man after death is called the state of the *interiors*; because he is then let into the interiors, which are of his mind, or of the will and thought;

\* Swedenborg Library, p. 46.

† Noble on Inspiration, p. 80. See also True Christ. Religion, § 229. Div. Providence, § 256.

and the exteriors in which he had been in his first state, are laid asleep." It is in this state, that the real character of the man is developed, and it comes to be seen for what world he is preparing. "The third state of man after death is a state of *instruction*. This state appertains to those who come into heaven, and become angels, but not to those who come into hell; since these latter cannot be instructed."

12. Swedenborg denied the doctrine of the future resurrection of the body, holding that man is raised, as to his spirit, shortly after death,\* and that the body returns to dust, to live no more. "It is the common belief," says Mr. Hindmarsh, "that the material body which is committed to the grave, will rise again at the day of judgment;" but this, he goes on to say, is "a vain idea." "The external (the body) is rejected at death, and being no longer needful, is never re-assumed." †

13. The Scriptures assure us that this earth, as to its present organization, is *to be destroyed by fire*; and that simultaneously with this great catastrophe, there is to be a *general judgment*, to be accomplished, in person, by the Lord Jesus Christ. But this solemn truth, or rather this series of connected

\* Swedenborg taught that the soul, commonly, does not leave the body, until "*the third day*" after the heart ceases to beat. True Chris. Religion, § 281.

† Compendium, pp. 97, 99.

truths, Swedenborg and his followers unitedly reject. This world is to have "no end."\* The second coming of Christ "denotes, not his personal appearance in the air, but his appearance in the opened truths of the Word;" and this appearance is now past. The last judgment, too, has already taken place, not on earth, but in the spiritual world. Of this, Swedenborg was an eye-witness, in the year 1757. †

According to Swedenborg, there have been several general judgments, previous to that of which he was a witness. "The first was the judgment of the *most ancient* church, when all charity and faith perished; and which is described, in Genesis, under the similitude of a flood." To this succeeded the *ancient* church, which existed in the posterity of Noah, and came to its consummation, by the many idolatries which it originated. The judgment upon the *Israelitish* church, took place at the time of our Lord's appearing in the world. ‡ The last judgment upon the Christian church, (and there is to be no other general judgment) took place, as before remarked, in 1757.

The scene of these several judgments is, in every case, in the *intermediate state*, or *spiritual world*. Into this world all, or nearly so, enter at death; and

\* Noble's Appeal, p. 122.

† Last Judgment, § 45.

‡ Hindmarsh' Compendium p. 138.

formerly, the spirits remained there for a long time ; some of them from one general judgment to another. The consequence was, that in process of years, the spiritual world became excessively crowded ; and as wickedness more and more abounded on the earth, it became disproportionally filled up with evil spirits. In such circumstances, a judgment was needed, in order that there might be a kind of *jail delivery* ; when the wicked should be driven out of the spiritual world, to their final abodes in hell, and the good, (who still remained in that world) should be receive to heaven.

To prevent the necessity of any future general judgment, it is now ordained (so Swedenborg assures us) that no person henceforth shall remain in the spiritual world for more than thirty years. \*

I have shown, under the foregoing particulars, how much important scriptural truth is discarded in the theology of Swedenborg. On numerous *minor points*, he directly contradicts the teachings of the Bible.

For example, the sacred writers assert, that “ the Lord hath made all things *for himself*,” and that “ *for his pleasure* they are and they were created.” Prov. xvi: 4. Rev. iv: 11. But Swedenborg says, “ the Lord did *not* create the universe for his own sake, but for the sake of those with whom he will dwell in heaven.” †

\* See Appendix to true Chris. Religion.

† Divine Providence, § 27.

Paul assures us that "the invisible things of God are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;" Rom. i: 20. But Swedenborg affirms that "*without the word* no one can know God, or know anything of the Lord;" in short, that there is no such thing possible as *natural theology*.\*

Our Saviour represented it as exceedingly difficult for a rich man to go to heaven. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Luke, xviii: 25. But Swedenborg says, "It has been given me to know, of a certainty, that the rich come into heaven as easily as the poor;" and he goes on to describe the manner in which many rich people live in heaven, "excelling all others in opulence, dwelling in palaces, and enjoying an abundance of all things." †

Our Saviour declared that "in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven," Matt., xxii: 30. But Swedenborg insists that the spirits of heaven do marry, and not only marry, but have children.‡ He

\* Sacred Scriptures, § 114.

† Heaven and Hell, § 357, 361.

‡ Spiritual offspring, of course. On one occasion, Swedenborg heard certain novitiates in heaven ask the angelic spirits "whether, from ultimate delights, any *offspring* were born there. The spirits answered that there were not any natural offspring, but *spiritual offspring*. In another place, Swedenborg calls these

was himself present at a wedding in heaven, and describes the dresses of the bride and bridegroom, the cake and the wine, and all the ceremonies of the joyous occasion.\*

The heaven of the Scriptures is represented as a place of *unspotted purity*. "There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. xxi: 27. But the heavens of Swedenborg are not of this character. They are continually assaulted and in some instances infested, by the hells. He speaks, in one place, of seeing "an execrable rabble in heaven." He tells us also of some visitors in one of the heavens, — males, of course, — who became so unchaste and wanton in their desires, that the ladies of the place avoided them. †

Again; the heaven of the Scriptures is represented as a place of *unmingled happiness*. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,

spiritual offspring, "*spiritual proflifications*;" and adds, "If you are willing to believe it, *natural* proflifications are also from that origin." Conjugal Love, pp. 46, 104. Hence Mr. Hindmarsh is led to say, that the "spiritual offspring brought forth in heaven, terminate in, and are adjoined to, their proper receptive forms, in the natural world.

\* Conj. Love, § 20.

† See New Church Repository, Vol. vi, p. 179.

‡ Apoc. Revealed, § 611. Heaven and Hell, § 505. Conj. Love, § 22, 146.

neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi. 4. But the heavens of Swedenborg are as far from unmingled happiness, as they are from perfect holiness. To give but a single example: "The lot of those in whom the spiritual degree is not opened, and still not shut, after death is that forasmuch as they are still natural, and not spiritual, they are in the lowest parts of heaven, where they sometimes experience *severe suffering*."\*

Swedenborg taught that "no one suffers punishment in hell on account of the evils which he *had done in the world*, but on account of the evils which *he then does*."† But Paul says: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done in the body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil." 2 Cor. v. 9.

Swedenborg represents the damned, who toil well and fulfill their tasks, as furnished not only with food and clothing, but with beds on which to rest and sleep.‡ But in the Apocalypse it is said that "they have *no rest*, day nor night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Rev. xiv. 11.

It is an oft repeated sentiment of Swedenborg,

\* Divine Love and Wisdom, § 253.

† Heaven and Hell, § 509.

‡ See Conj. Love, § 80. Ath. Creed, § 112. Noble's Appeal, p. 346.



that the inhabitants of hell are as much in *error*, as in *sin*. Not only does the heart, in that world, love what is evil, but the understanding believes what is false.\* The New Testament, however, teaches a different doctrine. "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Luke iv. 34. "The devils also *believe* and tremble." James ii. 19.

I might adduce many examples similar to those which have been given, but it is not necessary. Swedenborg did not hesitate, when it suited his purpose, to set aside the plain teachings and doctrines of the Bible. As Mr. Hindmarsh says: "Many parts of the Bible are to be understood in a sense *diametrically opposite to the expression in the letter*; as when it is said that God is angry, that he punishes, casts into hell and destroys, the true sense is, that God is loving and merciful to all, hating none, punishing none, casting none into hell, destroying none."\*

\* Divine Love and Wisdom, § 397.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 5.*

I object further to the claims of Swedenborg, that while he pretended to utter revelations from heaven, *he palpably misrepresented the doctrines of others.* Supposing him to have had true revelations, his utterances might not *agree* with the doctrines of others. They *would not agree*, unless such doctrines were at an agreement with the truth. But, certainly, the angels of heaven, and much more the Lord of heaven, if intending to contradict or refute the doctrines of others, would state those doctrines *fairly*, they would not misrepresent and slander their opponents, they would set forth their errors *accurately and truly, and thus refute their real sentiments*, and not a mere caricature and perversion of them. The correctness of these principles no one can deny.

Now the point of my objection to the claims of Swedenborg to divine revelation is, that he grossly

*misrepresents* the doctrines he opposes, especially those of the Reformed Churches. He does not state them accurately or fairly. For example, he almost invariably represents trinitarians as believing in “*three Gods*” — “each of whom *singly* is God and Lord” — “each one a God *by himself*.” In short, he represents them as *tritheists*, and affirms that they can not be anything else.\* I need not say that all this is gross misrepresentation. The angels could not have taught him this, unless they taught him a lie. The doctrine of *one God* is as integral a part of the doctrine of the trinity, as is that of *three persons in one God*. Men may be tritheists and polytheists, if they will; but trinitarians they can not be, unless they believe in one God.

Swedenborg not only charged his opponents with tritheism, but affirmed that this was taught in the *Nicene* and *Athanasian creeds*. “The unity of God is not divided into three persons, each of whom, *singly*, is God and Lord, according to the *Athanasian creed*.” “At the council in the city of Nice was forged and produced the heresy, as yet persisting, that there were three divine persons from eternity, and *each one a God by himself*.” Now the truth is, that in neither the Nicene nor the Athanasian creeds are the persons of the trinity represented as existing *singly, each by himself*. The Son is declared to be (*omoussion*,) of *one substance* with the Father.

\* See Brief Exposition, § 30. True Chris. Religion, §§ 138, 487, 647. Apoc. Revealed, § 537.

Neither of the persons of the Trinity *subsists by himself*; of course, neither of them is *a God by himself*. Such is the unequivocal representation of the creeds referred to; and in charging tritheism upon them, Swedenborg slanders them.

Again; the Protestant churches, he says, "make God three, and the Lord two, and place salvation, not in amendment of life, but in certain words breathed out in a devout tone of voice; consequently, not in repentance, but in a confidence that they are justified and sanctified, provided they do but fold their hands, and look upwards, and utter some customary form of prayer."\* A grosser slander of the Protestant churches could not possibly have been uttered.

In the following passage, Swedenborg not only perverts the doctrine of the trinity, but profanely ridicules it. "The absurd, ludicrous and frivolous ideas which have arisen from the doctrine of three persons from eternity, and which arise with every one who remains in the belief of the words of that doctrine, and from the eyes and ears rise up into the sight of the thought, are these: That God the Father sits above the head on high, and the Son at his right hand, and the Holy Ghost before them, listening, and forthwith running all over the world; and according to their decision, he dispenses the gifts of justification, and inscribes them and makes them from sons

\* Apocalypse Revealed, § 263.

of wrath, sons of grace, and from condemned, elect. I appeal to the learned of the clergy and of the laity, whether they entertain any other than this ideal view in their minds." \* And I appeal to learned trinitarians, the world over, whether they *ever entertained such a view as this*; and whether they can consider the imputation of it in any other light than as a gross scandal!

Swedenborg falsely represents the Reformed churches as holding and teaching "that man, in his conversion, is like a *stock*, a *stone*, a *statue*, and that he cannot so much as accommodate and apply himself to receive grace, but is like something that *has not the use of any of the senses*." †

Again; "It is taught that the imputation of the merit of Christ is from an *arbitrary election*." "The imputation at this day, takes away from man all power from any free agency in spiritual things, and does not leave him even so much, that *he can shake off fire from his clothes, keep his body from harm, or extinguish his house when on fire, and rescue his family*." ‡

The believers in predestination, according to Swedenborg, represent God as having "designed that the bulk of mankind should be born for hell — born devoted to destruction — born to be devils and satans;" and that he "*makes no provision for those who lead*

\* Brief Exposition, § 69.

† Brief Exposition, § 69.

‡ True Chris. Religion, §§ 486, 629, 630.

*good lives and acknowledge God*, whereby they may escape everlasting fire and punishment.”\*

Some hold, says he, “that *the life is of no effect*, but *election*; and that redemption into heaven is of mercy alone, *whatever the life may have been*.” “They who have believed, and have confirmed themselves in this, that some are chosen, and the rest not chosen, and that admission into heaven is only out of mercy, *without regard to the life*,” find themselves much mistaken in the other world. He describes the condition of such in hell. “They are devils,” he says, “almost without the human form; some with face retracted, some as grates of teeth, and some as monsters in other shapes. They abhor themselves, and cast themselves headlong down into hell, and the more deeply, so much the better for them.”† I need not say that the above passages are but a continual tissue of misrepresentations, unworthy of a man of common fairness and honesty — impossible to one uttering divine revelations.

The following is Swedenborg’s caricature — for I can give it no better name — of the great doctrine of redemption, as held in the Reformed churches. “What at this day more fills and crams the books of the orthodox, or what is more zealously taught and inculcated in the schools, or more frequently preached and proclaimed from the pulpits, than that God the

\* Brief Exposition, §-66.

† Arcana Celestia, § 5057.

Father, being arrayed against the human race, not only removed it from himself, but also concluded it under a universal damnation, and thus excommunicated it; but because he is gracious, that he *persuaded* or *excited* his Son to descend, and take upon himself the determined damnation, and thus appease the anger of his Father; and that thus, and not otherwise, he could look upon man with some favor." \*

"The paradoxes flowing from the faith of the church," he says, "are many; as that God the Father begat a Son from eternity, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both, and that each of these three is a person *by himself* and *a God*: That the above three persons, consequently *three Gods*, created the universe; and that one of them descended and assumed human nature, to reconcile the Father, and thus save mankind: That they who by grace obtain faith, and believe these paradoxes, are saved by the imputation, application, and translation of his righteousness to themselves: That man, at his first reception of faith is like a *statue*, a *stock*, or a *stone*, and that faith comes by the mere hearing of the word: That faith produces remission of sins, *without any previous repentance*; and that, merely by virtue of such remission, *the impenitent* are justified, regenerated, and sanctified." †

\* True Chris. Religion, § 132.

† Brief Exposition, § 54.

Swedenborg professed to have learned from the angels, that believers in justification by faith alone, “from their very principles of religion, have *no respect to the life, and to the deeds of love which make the life*, neither to any other means by which the Lord implants heaven in man, and renders him receptive of heavenly joys.”\* He also learned, that such persons “have a certain *deep-rooted opposition and aversion to actual repentance*, which is so obstinate that *they cannot force themselves to self-examination, neither can they look at their sins, nor confess them before God*; for they are seized as it were with horror, at the bare mention of such a duty.”† On one occasion, he says, “I conversed, in the spiritual world, with certain doctors of the church about what they meant by works of the law, and what by the law, under whose yoke, servitude, and sentence they declare themselves not to be. They said they meant *the works of the law of the decalogue*.”‡ In these extracts, the believers in justification by faith are represented as having “no respect to the life, or to those deeds of love which make the life” — as having “a deep-rooted opposition and aversion to repentance” — and as thinking themselves under no obligations to obey all or either of the ten commandments.

\* Heaven and Hell, § 526.

† Apocalypse Revealed, § 531.

‡ Apocalypse Revealed, §§ 578, 914.



Swedenborg further represents the Reformed church, like the Catholic, as inculcating the doctrine of *implicit faith*; viz., “that the understanding in matters of a theological nature, is to see nothing, but that *people are blindly to believe what the church teaches.*”\*

Swedenborg says, “I have heard Luther, with whom I have sometimes conversed in the spiritual world, curse Solifidianism, and say that, when *he established it*, he was warned by an angel of the Lord not to do it.” Now the truth is, Luther *never established Solifidianism*. Nothing could have been further from his intention, or his act. On the necessity of good works, he insisted as strongly as Swedenborg himself, and in a way much more accordant with the gospel. †

Swedenborg saw Calvin, also, in the spiritual world, and made him confess that, while on earth, he had taught the following doctrines: “That God created the greatest part of men for eternal damnation, and is *unwilling* that the greatest part should be converted and live: That the elect and regenerate can not lose faith and the Holy Spirit, although they should commit *great crimes, and sins of every kind*: But that those who are not elected are necessarily damned, and can not attain to salvation, although they should be baptized a thousand times, and come

\* Divine Providence, § 258.

† See Augsburg Confession, Articles VI and XX

to the eucharist every day, and besides lead as *holy and blameless lives as ever can be done.*" \* Now all I have to say in regard to this matter is, that if Calvin made any such confession in the other world, he confessed a lie; for he never taught such doctrines, while on the earth. He taught that which his enemies wrested and perverted into monstrosities of this nature; and two hundred years after his death, the good man is made to speak from the other world, and acknowledge them as his own legitimate offspring.

On reviewing the above extracts, I think no intelligent person can fail to see, that here is a *gross and continual misrepresentation* of the doctrines of evangelical Christians. I will not say that there was absolutely nothing in the faith of Protestant Christendom, at the time of Swedenborg, with which some part of his statements may agree; but I do say that, for a considerable part of them, there was then, as there is now, no foundation in truth; and most of the remainder is so colored, distorted and exaggerated, as to have all the effect of falsehood. Did Swedenborg then receive it by divine revelation? Was he taught it in heaven, and by the angels? Impossible. The thought is not to be admitted for a moment.

#### *Objection 6.*

I object further to the claims of Swedenborg, that

\* True Chris. Religion, § 798.

he speaks reproachfully of *the Church of God*; more especially of the Israelitish and the Christian churches. He says there have been four general churches, previous to the New Jerusalem church, viz: the Adamic, the Noahitic, the Israelitish and the Christian; each of which has perished in its own corruptions.\* Of the two former (if they were two) we know but little, and have no occasion now to speak. Of the two latter we have more knowledge; and it may be well to hear Swedenborg's account of them, and see whether it is worthy to be received.

Speaking of the Israelites he says, "The worship of this nation consisted of mere correspondences, and thence was representative of heavenly things; but still *they did not know what anything signified*, for they were *altogether natural men*; and hence *they would not, and could not, know anything concerning spiritual and heavenly things.*" † Again; "the mysteries of faith were never revealed to this people, so that it was not even declared to them openly that they should live after death, or that *the Lord should come into the world to save them*; nay, they were kept in so great ignorance and stupor, that *they did not know that any internal man exists*, or that *there is anything internal*. For had they known

\* Swedenborg sometimes speaks of *five* general churches, antecedent to the New Church; introducing a Hebrew church between the Noahitic and the Israelitish. See Div. Providence, § 328.

† True Chris. Religion, § 204.

these truths, they are a people of such a nature that they would have profaned them, and thus precluded themselves from all hope of salvation in another life." \* "The reason why miracles were wrought among this people was, because they were altogether *external men*, and were introduced into the land of Canaan merely that they might *represent* a church and its internals, by the externals of worship; and a wicked man may be a representative, as well as a good man. The reason why they could not be brought, by such representation, to the internals of worship was, because *they did not acknowledge the Lord*; although the whole word that was among them treateth of him only; and he who doth not acknowledge the Lord cannot receive any internal worship." †

As Swedenborg here speaks of the Israelites as "altogether natural men," and "external men," and their worship as external worship, it may be well that he should define his own terms. "Those who are in external worship, without internal," says he, "are they who frequent churches on Sabbaths and festivals, and on such occasions sing and pray, and hear sermons, and yet attend only to the language, and little or nothing to the substance of what is said; who are somewhat moved by prayers uttered with affection, but never reflect upon themselves and the

\* Arcana Celestia, § 301.

† Divine Providence, § 132.

lives they lead ; who receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper every year, pour out prayers morning and evening, say grace at dinner and supper, and sometimes discourse about God and heaven, and quote passages from the word, and *act the Christian*, when *they are not such*. For as soon as they have done these things, they make nothing of adultery and obscenity, revenge and hatred, lies and blasphemy," &c.\*

Such then are "*external men*," and "*natural men*;" and such altogether, according to Swedenborg, were the Israelites — the ancient covenant people of God. He makes no exceptions, nor does he allow us to make any. The representative position which the Israelites occupied required that they should be an *external* people; and they *were* so. They were selected on account of their possessing this peculiar quality, and most admirably did they exemplify it. Henceforward, then, when we think of Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, and Solomon, and the ancient prophets, and the whole company of those who, "through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens;" we must, if we believe in Swedenborg, think of them as "alto-

\* Apocalypse Revealed, § 859.

gether *external men*”—who knew not “that they should live after death, or that the Lord would come into the world to save them,”—who “were kept in so great ignorance and stupor, that they did not know that any internal man exists, or that there is anything internal;” in short, “who would not, and could not, know *anything* concerning spiritual and heavenly things.”

That I do not state this matter too strongly, will be evident if we consult one of Swedenborg’s ablest expositors—Mr. Parsons. “*Natural good*,” says he, “is the lowest form of goodness. It is the good of external life only. It is such good as a man *may* do, without religion; or such as he may do, when moved by the terms or the hopes of a religion which does not leave the earth. *This was the good of the Jewish church.*” “He who obeys the laws of God and of man merely from a *refined selfishness*, may lead a life of entire *external* good; and in speaking of it under some points of view, we may call his life a good life, yet there is no genuine goodness in him; and his life, accurately speaking, is only the form, the representative, of a good life. *Just so it was with the Jewish church.* It was the exact representative of a perfect church.” Mr. Parsons goes on to speak of the laws, rites and ceremonies of the Jews, of their tabernacle, temple, and worship, as *indicating* things true and good; but they knew nothing of “the meaning and purpose of these things,” and hence “they were exhorted to obey on *merely natural*,

*earthly grounds.* The motives held out to them were all from *this side* of the grave. To their eyes, no light from the life beyond its dark precincts streamed across the gloom." Mr. Parsons proceeds to say, what Swedenborg had said before him, that the Jews were "a *chosen people*," not because they were a peculiarly good people, nor because any special favors were intended for them, but because they were a singularly *natural, external* people. "They were less disposed than any other, to see or know, or wish to know, or be moved and influenced by, truths that were more than sensual. Their character was *earthly, and altogether earthly.*"\*

Having thus seen how Swedenborg and his followers regard the Jewish church, the Zion of the Old Testament, we will next inquire into their treatment of the *Christian church* — that which was instituted by Christ and his Apostles.

He lays it down as one of his leading propositions, "that from the Nicene and Athanasian trinity together, a faith arose which *has perverted the whole church.*" Another of his leading propositions is this: "That the error of believing redemption to consist in the passion of the cross, with the error concerning the divine persons from eternity, *has perverted the whole church, so that not anything spiritual is left remaining in it.* In discussing these propositions, Swedenborg says, "that the faith of the present time

\* Essays, pp. 183—186.

*has extinguished the light in the word, and removed the Lord from the church, and thus precipitated its morning into night.*" Again, he says that, because of this faith, "the ways to heaven are beset with thieves and robbers; and in the temples, the doors are thrown down, so that dragons and owls have entered, and sing together in horrible discord."\* He further says, that "all the truth of the word is now falsified;" and that "by falsifications of truth, men have alienated *all spiritual knowledge of good and truth from the church, and by applications to falses, have entirely destroyed them.*" † In another connection he says, "When a faith in three Gods was introduced into the church, which was done at the Nicene synod, *all the good of charity and all the truth of faith were exiled.* Since that time, the Christian temple has not only been shattered, but *has fallen in ruins.*" ‡ Indeed, he affirms that, in his time, the church had become so totally corrupt, "that unless a New Church be established by the Lord, *no flesh can be saved.*"

According to Swedenborg's interpretations, the Papal church is the great Babylon of the Apocalypse; and the Protestant churches are those represented "by the dragon and his two beasts; by the locusts; by the great city which is spiritually called Sodom

\* True Chris. Religion, §§ 132, 133, 177, 634.

† Apocalypse Revealed, §§ 541, 610.

‡ True Chris. Religion, §§ 132, 133, 177, 634.



and Egypt; also by the pit of the abyss whence the beasts came forth." These churches are also represented by the goats on the left hand of the Judge, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, who were sentenced to depart accursed into everlasting fire.\*

In fine, Swedenborg represents what he calls the first Christian church as having *come to its end more than a hundred years ago*. It was judged and destroyed, in the spiritual world, in the year 1757. Then it was that great Babylon (the Romish church) fell. Then it was that the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (i. e. the Protestant churches) were taken, and "cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever." There can be no doubt on this point among the followers of Swedenborg; for he declares that he was an eye-witness of the whole transaction, and he has described it with great particularity.†

The only question to be decided then is, *Are these things so?* Has the church, which Christ and his Apostles instituted, been spiritually overthrown, for more than a hundred years? During all this time, has Christ had no real, spiritual church in the world, except the little handful of Swedenborgians? There are church organizations and ordinances indeed; but are they, and have they been, mere dead forms? Has all spiritual life and holiness — everything which goes to give vitality and energy to a church, ceased?

\* Brief Exposition, §§ 83, 87, 91.

† Last Judgment, §§ 53, 60. Continuation, §§ 14—29.

I will not degrade myself nor my profession by undertaking to answer these questions. Swedenborg affirms that it is even so; for he was present and saw the overwhelming ruin. Those who accept his revelations *must believe him*; while those who can not believe him in this particular, as well as in others, have no alternative but to reject his claims.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 7.*

MY next objection to the claims of Swedenborg is founded on his representations in regard to some of the best and wisest men that have ever lived on the earth. Of the piety of no mere man that ever lived can we feel more satisfactorily assured, than that of David,—the monarch and the sweet psalmist of Israel. We have the evidence, not only of his recorded religious feelings and devotional exercises, but of the *divine testimony*, given in repeated instances, and in the most positive terms.\* But when David had been almost three thousand years dead, Swedenborg professed to meet him in the other world. And instead of seeing him, as might have been expected, among the blessed, he found him an

\* See 1 Kings, xiv. 8. Acts xiii. 22.

insane and outrageous devil, having "only adulteries and cruelties in his mind" — "intending and without conscience contriving evil." He fancied that he was a god, and that he had power to bind the Lord himself. Under the influence of this "phantasy," he was hurling down his fellow sinners, and inflicting upon them the severest torments. But there were some about him who did not accord to him divine honors. They said that "he was a dog," and that they "were permitted to treat him as a dog."\*

With united voice, the whole Christian world has spoken of the piety and usefulness of the apostle Paul. When he had been some seventeen hundred years dead, Swedenborg found *him* in the other world, and he thus describes his character and state. "Paul is among the worst of the apostles, as has been made known to me by ample experience. The love of self, whereby he was ensnared before he preached the gospel, remained with him afterwards. He did all things from the end of being greatest in heaven, and of judging the tribes of Israel. He is such that the rest of the apostles, in the other life, reject him from their company, and no longer recognize him as one of themselves. He associates himself with one of the worst devils, who would fain rule all things, and pledged himself to this spirit to obtain for him his end." Speaking of Paul in another

\* See Bush's Swedenborg Library, Part ii. pp. 70—81.

place Swedenborg says: "He now associated himself with the worst devils, and wished to form a heaven to himself of spirits, to whom he might give joys from himself. This also he attempted, but he became worse in consequence of it, and was cast down. I then spoke to him that this was not heaven, but hell; for such a heaven is turned into a black hell." Swedenborg has much to say, in the same strain, of the apostle Paul; and his followers are pretty much agreed that Paul must have been a bad character, and that he has gone to a bad place. One of them says: "As Judas, by perverting the goods and truths of the church, accomplished his own destruction, so Paul, by claiming a higher mission, and by a longer perseverance in evil, associated himself with the worst of devils. In this world he would scarce acknowledge subordination to the Lord himself—certainly not to his apostles, but sought to rule over all. So in the spiritual sphere, he would naturally aspire to build his own heaven, and reign its supreme Lord. Swedenborg testifies that he saw him there, conversed with him, and observed the phantasies in which he was involved." Swedenborg also testifies that this place was "hell—a black hell.\*"

Among the eminent men of modern times, it would be hard to select three, better entitled to the gratitude of the church and world, than Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin. Let us now see what ac-

\* See New Church Repository, Vol. 4, pp. 41, 42, 462.

count Swedenborg gives of the state and character of these men in the other life.

Of Luther he says, that after he entered the spiritual world, he continued to teach his peculiar dogmas much as he had done on earth, only with increased earnestness. He was continually surrounded by great multitudes of spirits; and in order to increase his power over them, he resorted to a species of wicked, not to say infernal, *incantation*. After practicing this a while, the consequences were so hurtful, that he was forbidden to resort to it any more. For some unexplained reason, Luther was not sent to hell at the time of the Judgment, in 1757, neither was he received to heaven. Shortly after this, he sought an interview with Swedenborg, and from him learned that the old church was at an end and that a new one was being established. At this Luther "became very indignant, and *stormed*;" but after a while his storming ceased. From this period, he desired to renounce his doctrine of faith alone, and to embrace the creed of the New Church; but found it exceedingly difficult to do so. "Therefore," says Swedenborg (in 1763), "he is still in the world of spirits, which is in the midst between heaven and hell, where he sometimes undergoes great sufferings." \*

The treatment of Melancthon in the spiritual world was more severe than that of Luther. He at

\* True Chris. Religion § 137.

first had a chamber furnished him, like that which he had occupied on earth, fitted up with table, desk, drawers and library. But as he was intent on his old doctrine of justification by faith, the conveniences of his chamber were ere long removed, and he was left almost to naked walls. Not being reclaimed by the deprivation, he was let down frequently into hell, and then brought back again to his cold stone chamber, "at which times he appeared clothed in a bear-skin, by reason of the cold, because faith without charity is cold." At length, his chamber became exceedingly filthy, so that he would "not admit strangers into it, who were desirous of seeing him." At the latest accounts, he seemed to have acquired some consistent ideas about charity. He was still confined, however, to his old, cold, filthy stone chamber.

In regard to Calvin, the representations of Swedenborg are irreconcilably inconsistent. In the year 1763, he speaks of him as "in a society of heaven," and was told by the "moderator of the society, that Calvin was accepted among them, because he was well disposed and made no disturbance." But in his latest publication, Swedenborg gives a much more full account of Calvin, and finally leaves him in one of the caverns, the work-shops of hell. Some of the main features of the account, it will be necessary to transcribe.

It was a long time after Calvin entered the spiritual world, before the angels could satisfy him that

he was not still in the body. This "was because he was a *sensual* man, believing nothing but what he had learned through his bodily senses." It seems that while on earth, Calvin never had any serious regard for the Scriptures, quoting them "only for the sake of the common people, that they might favor him with their assent." When he became satisfied that he was in the spiritual world, he sought earnestly for the Predestinarians, and at length found them shut up and concealed in a cavern under ground. He staid with them for a time, and enjoyed their company; but becoming weary at length, he went and joined a society of simpletons, who knew little about predestination, or anything else. We next hear of him in a certain governor's house; and then in a "house occupied by harlots, where he remained some time." Not long after this, Swedenborg had an interview with him, and did his utmost to convert him to the doctrines of the New Church. But Calvin (to borrow a hackneyed phrase) was a *hard case*. The seer could do nothing with him; and at last, losing all patience, he exclaimed, "You talk impiously! Begone, you evil spirit!" After this, Calvin departed to the infernal cavern, provided for the Predestinarians, where "they are forced to work for their victuals, and are all enemies one to another. Here they do evil one to another, to the extent of their power, and this is the delight of their life." \*

\* True Chris. Religion, §§ 796 — 798. Continuation of Last Judgment, §§ 54, 55.



In November, 1618, a general Synod of the Reformed churches was convened at Dort, in Holland, for the purpose of discussing the Arminian doctrines, which had begun to be inculcated in that country. There were present at the Synod, ecclesiastical deputies, not only from the United Provinces, but from the churches of England, Scotland, Hesse, Bremen, Switzerland, and the Palatinate. The foreign divines present, were twenty-eight; those of the United Provinces were thirty-six, besides five professors, and twenty elders;— eighty-nine in all. Probably, no ecclesiastical body was ever so outrageously slandered by the enemies of God's truth, as this; and yet few ecclesiastical bodies have demeaned themselves more worthily and unexceptionably; though no one, at this day, would think of justifying all their measures. Their unpardonable sin was, that a large majority of them were thorough, consistent Calvinists. Good Bishop Hall of England was a member of the Synod, and on leaving it, is reported to have said, "There is no place upon earth so like heaven, as the Synod of Dort, and none where I should be more willing to dwell." Speaking of the Articles published by the Synod, the venerable Thomas Scott says, "Fewer things appear to me unscriptural in these Articles, than in almost any human composition which I have read upon the subject." He speaks also of the "holy, guarded, and reverential manner in which the divines of this rep-

robated Synod stated and explained the doctrines of the gospel.”

Swedenborg saw the members of this Synod in the spiritual world, and there called them to a solemn account for inculcating upon earth the doctrine of predestination. “When I had said these things,” says he, “they looked at me with a *Satanic look* ;” and all power of further deception being taken away, they went on to confess themselves *gross hypocrites* ; — that they had assumed the appearance of religion for sinister ends, but that really they had no confidence in God’s word, or in anything good, but only in predestination. Swedenborg tried to reason with them out of the Scriptures, but in vain. They soon retired into their cave, “around which appeared a dusky fire, — a sign that they had neither faith nor charity.”\*

I know of no religious community in modern times, which has exhibited more of the genuine spirit of religion, than the Moravians, or United Brethren. This was specially true of them, during the first forty years after their establishment at Herrnhutt, all which time they were the cotemporaries of Swedenborg. Great numbers of them died, however, before Swedenborg — some in nearly every quarter of the globe, whither they had gone to proclaim the gospel ; and it was his privilege to meet them in

\* True Chris. Religion, § 487.

the other world. And what does he say of them? He declares them to be arrant knaves and hypocrites, having a "secret doctrine," which is communicated only to the initiated, and "being very crafty in conciliating favor." As a matter of experiment, they were twice admitted into heaven, but they could not live there at all. "They began to be inwardly tormented, and thrown into convulsive motions like persons in the agonies of death; wherefore, they cast themselves down out of heaven headlong." After this, they were explored, as to "the interior of their thoughts," when it was discovered that inwardly "they reviled the Lord; they rejected a life of charity so as to hold it in abhorrence; they rejected the Old Testament as useless, and despised the evangelists, selecting only certain passages from Paul, where mention is made of faith alone. These were the mysteries which they had concealed from the world."

Such, then, are the representations of Swedenborg, in regard to some of the best and wisest men, and most exemplary Christians, that have ever lived upon the earth. David and Paul have been long ages in hell. Luther and Melancthon are kept out of heaven, in a state often of severe if not endless suffering. Calvin too has gone to hell. The venerable divines of the Synod of Dort, and the devoted, self-sacrificing missionaries from Hernhutt, are all base hypocrites — little better than infidels — who have gone likewise to perdition. While at the same

time, we are assured that such men as Louis XIV, the despot of France and the persecutor of God's people, and Pope Sixtus V, the greatest miser and dissembler of his age, are safe in heaven;— while we are presented with whole heavens full of Mohammedans and heathens, living, as on earth, in polygamy and adultery! Those who yield to the claims of Swedenborg must *believe* all this; for he explicitly declares it on the authority of revelation. Those who can not believe it, as I said before, have no alternative but to reject his claims.

#### *Objection 8.*

I further object to the claims of Swedenborg, that he contradicts, in repeated instances, *the plain facts of history*. This is true both of sacred and profane history. The Bible tells us of the creation of the world, of our first parents, of their primeval happy state and subsequent apostasy, and of the early progenitors of our race. But Swedenborg assures us over and over again, that there is not a word of truth or fact in all this; that the whole of the first eleven chapters of the Bible is mere allegory.\*

Moses informs us of the destruction of the old world for its wickedness, by a deluge of waters;— a catastrophe to which frequent allusion is made by our Saviour and the apostles. But with Swedenborg and his followers, this again is all fable. "There has never been a universal deluge of natural waters

\* See Barrett's Lectures, pp. 57, 200.

upon the face of our earth, since the creation of man." \*

Swedenborg affirms that "sacrificial worship was first instituted" by Eber, who was of the fifth generation from Noah, in the line of Shem. Gen. x. 24. Before his time, sacrifices were entirely unknown. † But we are expressly informed that Noah, when he went forth from the ark, "buildded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor," &c. Gen. viii. 20. Now what was this but a *sacrifice* — a sacrifice, too, which God was pleased to accept? Indeed, long before this time, we read of Abel's bringing an offering unto the Lord, of the firstling of his flock, and of the fat. Gen. iv. 4.

Swedenborg asserts "that a trinity of persons was *unknown in the apostolical church*, and that it was *first broached by the Nicene Council*," in the fourth century. ‡ This is not the place to go into a Scriptural defense of the doctrine of the trinity. Every reader of the Bible knows, or may know, that the Father is there represented as God, and the Son as God, and the Holy Spirit as God; and still, there is but *one God*. Here, then, is the doctrine of the trinity in the apostolical church. And as to the ages succeeding the apostles, it is just as easy to

\* See Barrett's Lectures, pp. 57, 200.

† Div. Providence, § 328. Arcana Celestia, § 180.

‡ True Chris. Religion, § 174.

prove the trinity before the Nicene Council, as after it. Indeed, how could that Council have *originated* such a doctrine, on supposition that it had never been known before? Accordingly Swedenborg, with his characteristic consistency, acknowledges that Christians, even in the *first age*, did know and believe in the doctrine of the trinity. "Since the word is such, in the sense of the letter, that it distinguishes by several names those who nevertheless are one, therefore, the Christians of the *first ages*, who were plain, simple men, and understood all parts of the word according to the sense of the letter, *distinguished the Divinity into three persons*, — which, on account of their simplicity, was permitted," &c.\*

Swedenborg asserts that "the faith imputative of the merit of Christ," or in other words, the doctrine of justification by faith, "was *not known in the apostolic church*, but *first arose from the decrees of the Nicene Synod*." † If Paul taught the doctrine of justification by faith, then was the doctrine known in the Apostolic church. And if Paul did not teach it, then words can not teach anything. "Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God." "A man

\* Doctrine of the Lord, § 55. Swedenborg often speaks of the *first Christians* — the Apostles, their fellow laborers and successors, as "simple men" — little better than *simpletons*. This is the reason assigned, why the spiritual sense of the word was not disclosed to them. They could have understood nothing about it.

† True Chris. Religion, §§ 632, 636.

is not justified by the works of the law, but *by the faith of Jesus Christ.*" "We conclude that a man is *justified by faith*, without the deeds of the law." As to this doctrine's originating with "the Nicene synod," I need only say, that there is not a word in the Nicene creed or canons, on the subject.

In regard to this doctrine of justification, Swedenborg further informs us, that it arose from a "single expression" in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, (chap. iii. 28), the meaning of which is entirely misunderstood. Of this he is sure; because he had spent a whole year with the apostle Paul, and often conferred with him on the subject.\* On this whole statement, I remark, in the first place, that if the doctrine of justification by faith arose from "a single expression" of St. Paul, then it did not arise "from the decrees of the Nicene synod," and Swedenborg's last position is directly contradicted. But secondly, this doctrine did not arise from "a *single* expression" of Paul, as is evident from the passages above quoted. Paul *frequently* asserts the doctrine; and not he alone, but our Saviour, and the other Apostles and inspired writers. And thirdly, as to Swedenborg's conferences with the Apostle on the subject, and his learning from him that he had been misunderstood, we shall want more evidence of this, before we believe it, than Swedenborg's naked assertion.

Swedenborg says that "the Athanasian creed was

\* Hobart's Life, p. 44. Apoc. Revealed, §§ 417, 825. Div. Providence, § 115.

written *soon after the council of Nice, by one or more of those who had been present at the council*; and thence was received as œcumenical or catholic.\* The Athanasian creed, so called, could not have been written by Athanasius, or by any of his cotemporaries. It was never appealed to in the Arian controversy, nor was it heard of in the church, until a long time afterwards. It was probably composed in or about the sixth century. †

Swedenborg says, "That there is an internal, spiritual sense in the word, is a truth which has heretofore been *altogether unknown in the Christian world.*" ‡ Again, "the spiritual sense of the word hath been heretofore *unknown.*" § If this only means, that no Christian, before him, interpreted Scripture *just like himself*, the truth of the assertion may be admitted. But certainly the divines of the Alexandrian school, Clemens, Origen, and others, interpreted the Scriptures on *the same general, allegorical principles.* They interpreted as intelligibly and usefully as Swedenborg, and in many instances, precisely after his fashion. So true is this, that most of the followers of Swedenborg appeal to the ancient allegorists as his prototypes and exemplars. Mr. Noble, in his work on Inspiration, has devoted some

\* True Chris. Religion, § 632.

† See Cave's *Historia Literaria*, vol. I, p. 196. Also Pearson, Usher, Mosheim, &c.

‡ Hobart's *Life*, p. 159.

§ Sacred Scripture. § 20.



thirty pages to the purpose of showing, that Swedenborg's method of interpretation is *no new thing*; that it is sustained by the example, not only of some of the early Christians, but even of the sacred writers. (pp. 49—76, 388.) How then, I ask, can it be true, that the doctrine of an allegorical, spiritual sense "has heretofore been *altogether unknown in the Christian world*"?

These historical errors—a few of which have been pointed out—may be regarded by some of my readers as small matters. And so they would be small matters, in an author who laid no claim to spiritual illumination. "To err is human." But Swedenborg does lay claim to spiritual illumination — yea more, to divine revelation. When the Lord first appeared to him, he gave him this promise, "I will teach thee what thou art to write." And on his death-bed, Swedenborg affirmed, "Every thing that I have written is true." It is a fair question, then, to be looked into, *Is it all true?* And when it is shown conclusively that all is not true, the claim of the professed teacher of heavenly mysteries is invalidated.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 9.*

MY next objection to the teachings of Swedenborg is, that they contradict, in a great variety of instances, the plainest and most universally acknowledged facts of *science*. And this consideration is the more important, because his teachings are so based upon his philosophy, and mixed up with it, as to be inseparable from it.

When it is objected to the Bible, that some parts of it are not in strict accordance with the discoveries of modern science, it is a sufficient reply, that the Bible was not written by philosophers, nor does it profess to teach any system of philosophy. It has to do with higher matters. And when it touches upon the phenomena of earth, it speaks according to *invariable appearances*, using the language of common

life. But this apology will not answer for Swedenborg. He did profess to be a philosopher, and his teachings, interpretations, and revelations are so intermingled with, and based upon his philosophy, that they can not be separated from it. Such is the acknowledgment, I had almost said the boast of his followers. "The profoundest philosophy," says Mr. Bush, "lies at the basis of all his revelations."\* "Whatever may have been the nature of Swedenborg's distempered fancy," says Mr. Clissold, "we are not to look for this distemper primarily in his visions, but in the *philosophy which led to them*. Here is the origin of the evil, if it be one. The fanaticism, if it be such, is not primarily in the visions, but *in the philosophy*; and our opponents must take up the question on this ground, if they will take it up on the only ground on which it can be decided."† This, then, *is* the ground on which I propose now to consider the question. I urge it as a valid objection to the claims of Swedenborg, that he contradicts, in a variety of instances, the plainest and most universally acknowledged facts of science. This is true, both of *physical* and *mental* science. Let us first look at the question in reference to the former.

It is known that the planets Herschel and Neptune, — which have been discovered since the time of Swedenborg, — are at vastly greater distances from the Sun than Saturn. But Swedenborg decides

\* Swedenborg Library, p. 7.

† Letter, &c., p. 202.

positively, after the most ample means of information in the spiritual world, that "the planet Saturn is the farthest distant from the Sun," and that this is the reason why it is furnished with a "large, luminous belt."\*

Swedenborg knew nothing of the modern discoveries in chemistry, but adopted, among his revelations, the old theory of the *four elements*, — earth, air, fire, and water. He decides that the common principles, or elements, of which all things are composed, are earth, atmosphere, and water. But neither earth, atmosphere, nor water are, in any sense, *elements*. They are each of them most exquisite compounds, made up of elementary substances, — a fact of which, with all his revelations, Swedenborg was profoundly ignorant.

The following is Swedenborg's description of the atmosphere: It consists, he says, of "discrete substances (particles) of a very minute form, originating from the sun. The fire of the sun each of them receives, treasures it up, tempers it, and conveys it as heat to the earth; and in like manner also the light." What will our modern lecturers about oxygen, nitrogen and carbon say to this?

According to Swedenborg, *love* has an important work to perform in the physiology of the human system. The reason why *blood is red*, he says, is "the correspondence of the heart and the blood with *love*

\* Earths in the Universe, § 3.

*and its affections.*" "Forasmuch as there is a correspondence of *love* with the *heart*, therefore the blood can not be otherwise than red." Modern physiologists have ascertained that the redness of the blood is owing to the presence of *iron* in the system. But Swedenborg says *no*. It is owing rather to the presence of *love*.

It seems that love, too, is the sole cause of *vital, animal heat*. "That in man, and in every animal, there is vital heat, is known; but whence its origin, is not known. Every one speaks of it with conjecture." But Swedenborg, as he speaks from revelation, can speak with authority. "He who knoweth," says he, "that there is a correspondence of love and its affections with the heart and its derivations, may know that *love is the origin of vital heat*. For love proceeds from the spiritual sun as heat, and flows, by correspondence, into the heart and its blood, and gives it heat."\*

That the blood undergoes some change in the lungs, Swedenborg understood; but as to the nature and cause of the change, he entertained the wildest theories, all which he mixes up, as usual, with his spiritual correspondences. 1. "The blood *purifies itself* in the lungs from things undigested," as the "chyle collected from food and drink." 2. "From the air which is attracted, the blood also *nourisheth itself* with things conducive." This "is evident," he says,

\* "Heavenly heat, which is love, makes the vital heat which is in man." Arcana Celestia, § 6190.

“from the immense abundance of *odors* and *exhalations* issuing continually from shrubberies, flower-gardens, and nurseries of trees; and from the immense quantity of salts of various kinds, issuing with waters from the earth, rivers, and lakes; and from the immense quantity of exhalations and effluvia from men and animals, with which the air is impregnated. That these flow into the lungs, with the air which is attracted, can not be denied; nor can it be denied that the blood attracts from them such things as are conducive to it, or which *correspond to the affections of its love.*” “That the blood in the lungs purifieth and nourisheth itself, *correspondently to the affections of the mind*, is not yet known on earth; but it is very well known in *the spiritual world*; for the angels who are in the heavens are delighted only with those odors which correspond to the love of their wisdom; whereas the spirits in hell are delighted only with odors which correspond to the love which is in opposition to wisdom; the latter odors are stench, but the former odors are fragrances.”\* Swedenborg here brings in the angels to give authority to his doctrine, about the blood in the lungs purifying itself from chyle, and nourishing itself with odors, fragrant or offensive, corresponding to the character of its love. Those who admit his claims must, of course, *believe him*, whatever may become of their physiology, or their common sense.

\* See *Wisdom of Angels concerning Divine Love and Wisdom*, §§ 153—157, 173—178, 282—290, 302, 379, 380, 420.

We give another extract on the same subject, though presenting it in a somewhat different light. "With every one, the blood in the lungs is deprived of its phlegm, and is nourished by the volatile elements and odors supplied from the air; but yet altogether in a different manner with *the good*, from what it is with *the evil*. What is the nature of the purification and nourishment of the blood in the lungs, *with the good* and *with the evil*, may be concluded from the following experience: In the spiritual world, a good spirit attracts with his nostrils all fragrances and sweet smells with delight; but an evil spirit attracts with his nostrils what is putrid and stinking, with delight." Hence, the blood of a good man on the earth is nourished with sweet odors, but the blood of a bad man with such as are offensive. Swedenborg goes on to say, that "the human blood, in its inmost principles, is *spiritual*, but in its outermost principles is *corporeal*. Wherefore, they who are spiritual nourish it from such things in nature as correspond to things spiritual; but they who are natural nourish it from such things in nature as correspond to it. Hence, *the dissimilitude of the blood in men is as great as is the dissimilitude of their loves.*"\* On this principle, the character of a man might be exactly estimated, by an analysis of his blood; the better his character, the purer his blood, and vice versa.

\* Treatise on Divine Love and Wisdom, pp. 131, 132.

The Scriptures represent God as the Creator of *all things*. He "created heaven and the things which therein are, and the earth and the things which therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein." "By him were *all things* created that are in heaven, and that are in earth." "The great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great; behemoth, leviathan, dragons and all depths, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl," — all are represented as the workmanship of his hand. And these teachings of revelation are in strict accordance with those of philosophy and reason. Where is the being or thing, animal, vegetable or mineral; in the air, or on the earth, or under the earth, or in the sea, which reason does not assure us is sustained by the power and the providence of God, and which does not owe its existence to him? But these obvious teachings, both of science and revelation, Swedenborg directly contradicts. According to him, a vast multitude of creatures and things, perhaps a majority — animals, vegetables, and minerals, did not originate from God, but from *the hells*. "Such in the animal kingdom are poisonous serpents, scorpions, crocodiles, dragons, tigers, wolves, foxes, swine, \* owls, screech-owls, rats, mice, locusts, frogs, bats, spiders, flies, drones, moths, lice, mites, in a word, all those which consume grasses, leaves, fruits, seeds, meat and drink, and are noxious to beasts and

\* Let no Swedenborgian after this dare to eat pork.



men. In the vegetable kingdom, they are all malignant, virulent and poisonous herbs, and pulse and shrubs of the same kind; also in the mineral kingdom, all poisonous earths." Such things in the natural world *did not derive their origin from the Lord; neither were they created from the beginning; neither did they originate from nature, by her sun; but THEY ARE FROM HELL.*" "*The influx from hell immediately produces such things, when the temperament is favorable.*" "*They originate by immediate influx from hell.*"\* In another work he says, "beasts and wild animals, whose souls are similar evil affections, *were not created from the beginning; such as mice, venomous serpents, crocodiles, basilisks, vipers, and the like, with the various kinds of noxious insects; but have originated and arisen with hell, in stagnant lakes, marshes, putrid and fetid waters, &c., with which the malignant loves of the infernal societies communicate. From the beginning, only useful and clean beasts were created, whose souls are good affections.*"† In these decisions of Swedenborg, Mr. Noble entirely acquiesces. "It may be safely concluded," says he, "since nothing noxious can have its direct prototype in God, that all hurtful things

\* Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Love and Wisdom, §§ 338, 339, 343, 347. Swedenborgians teach that hell itself is a creation of man. "It was not created by God, since God is love; but *hell is from man. Man alone created it.*" Letters to a Man of the World, p. 121.

† Ath. Creed, § 90.

either first acquired their noxious nature, or first began to exist, when evil established itself in the human mind.”\*

Waiving all other objections to these statements, it follows conclusively from them, or rather is involved in them, that no odious, noxious creatures existed on this earth, previous to the creation and the fall of man. But how does this agree with the Scripture representation, that it was a *serpent* which tempted our first mother? And how shall it be made to harmonize with the recent discoveries of geologists? They tell us of frightful, horrible creatures — monsters both of the land and of the deep, armed with terrible weapons of destruction, and disclosing the remains of slaughtered myriads under their capacious ribs, which must have lived and died, and become imbedded in the solid rocks, at a period long anterior to the existence of man, or to the fitting up of the world for his creation.

Swedenborg taught that men, before the fall, “had no *external respiration*, and no sonorous, articulate language, such as took place afterwards; but communicated their ideas one to another, by numberless changes of the countenance, by the varied motions of the lips, and by the lively expressions of the eye.” But at the time of the fall, “external respiration commenced, and together with it external language.”† If I were to say, that this statement contradicts ex-

\* Inspiration, p. 113.

† Arcana Celestia, § 1118. Hindmarsh’s Compend. pp. 17, 22.

pressly some of the first chapters in the Bible, Swedenborgians might reply that these chapters are all fable. But I may and do assert, that the statement is so at war with reason and common sense, as to be wholly incredible. Men at that period had organs of respiration, else they were not men; and who believes that these organs were never exercised? Who believes that whole generations of men lived on the face of the earth, without ever breathing the breath of life, or having any *oral* communication with one another? They had *lungs*, as Swedenborg admits in other parts of his works; but instead of using them, like other men, they had only what he calls "an *internal* respiration, proceeding from the navel towards the heart."

Equally contradictory to all reason and science is Swedenborg's account of the origin of diseases. He ascribes them frequently, and perhaps universally, to the infestation of evil spirits. "Evil spirits," says he, "have been often, and for a long time, applied to me; and according to their presence, they induced pains, and also diseases." Under the influence of some, "I was seized with heaviness, with pain, with disease, which ceased in a moment, as soon as the spirits were expelled." Other spirits "infuse *unclean colds*, as are those of a cold fever, which also it was given me to know by repeated experience. The same spirits likewise cause *swoonings*." "Other spirits, when allowed to flow into the body, induce pain in *the teeth*; and upon their nearest presence, so severe,

that I could not endure it. And so far as they were removed, the pain ceased; which was shown me repeatedly, that no doubt might remain.\* Other spirits, when they are present, "induce great pain by weariness, which they inwardly increase even to the highest degree of impatience, inducing such infirmity in the mind, and thence in the body, that the man can scarce raise himself from the bed." "There have been spirits with me, who induced such a heaviness in the stomach, that I seemed to myself scarce able to live. The heaviness was so great, that with others it would have occasioned fainting; but the spirits were removed, and it then instantly ceased." "On a time, I perceived somewhat of anxiety in the lower part of the stomach, from which it was made manifest to me that such evil spirits were present. I spoke with them saying, that it was better they should retire." This class of demons seem to have annoyed Swedenborg not a little, as they frequently do other men of studious and sedentary habits. Speaking of them again, he says, "There are certain spirits that are not joined to hell, as being newly departed from the body, which delight in things undigested, such as meat corrupted in the stomach; and

\* Mr. Robsam says in his Memoir, "I once visited Swedenborg, when he complained of a grievous tooth ache, which he had endured many days. I recommended some common remedy, but he refused to use it, saying, "My pain proceeds, not from the nerve of the tooth, but from the influx of hypocritical spirits which beset me, and cause this plague." Hobart's Life, p. 216.

they hold their confabulations in such sinks of uncleanness in man, as are suitable to their impure affections. That they cause uneasiness, I am fully convinced; for I have seen and heard them, and felt the uneasiness caused by them, and I have also conversed with them." On some occasions, Swedenborg was possessed of spirits which cause a temporary suppression of urine.\* His biographer says he was troubled with the stone.

Swedenborg makes the above statements, it will be borne in mind, not as with him matters of opinion, but as undoubted *facts*, of which he had come to the knowledge through his intercourse with the invisible world. And, *if they be facts*, I have only to say, that the practice of *exorcism* should be at once revived, and should supersede every where that of dentistry and medicine. Let persons only be rid of their evil spirits, and they will no longer be troubled with diseases and pains.

Swedenborg has a favorite theory — one of which he speaks in repeated instances, as to the origin of idolatry, and the origin and nature of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. It is in brief, as follows: The most ancient people, those which existed before the flood and immediately after it, possessed the science of correspondences; or, in other words, they knew that every outward object in nature represented some inward thought or affection; and also *what* thoughts

\* Arcana Celestia, §§ 5179, 5386, 5711—5723.

and affections external objects did represent. Possessing this knowledge and greatly prizing it, they filled their houses and temples with the pictures and images of such things as represented moral and religious truths. This they did with no bad intent, but rather for their own instruction, and improvement. But in process of time, their descendants, not retaining the science of correspondences, and not knowing the import of the pictures and images, began to worship them as gods. Hence the origin of the ancient idolatry.\*

If this be a true statement, it follows that the ancient idolatry must all have been of the same kind. At least, the same objects of worship must have been found in all places. Whereas nothing can be more diverse than the objects of ancient idolatrous worship; some nations worshipping the sun, moon, and stars; others fire; others their own departed heroes; others images of the most grotesque and frightful forms; others stones, birds, beasts, insects, and creeping things.

Swedenborg says that the Egyptians retained the knowledge of correspondences longer than any other people; and that the whole system of hieroglyphical writing is founded upon it. According to him, the hieroglyphics are all of them of a symbolical character, each representing some doctrine or affection,

\* True Chris. Religion, §§ 205, 833. Appendix, § 43. Conj. Love, § 342. Sacred Scripture, § 23. Hindmarsh's Compendium, p. 134. Barrett's Lectures, p. 196.

some intellectual, moral or spiritual truth. "Each carved thing," he says, "represents some particular of virtue or truth, and many together represent virtue itself, or truth itself, in a common, extended form. These are what in Egypt were called hieroglyphics." As Swedenborg was in full possession of the science of correspondences, imparted to him directly from heaven, he must have understood this matter perfectly. He must have known whereof he affirmed. Indeed, Dr. Hartley, one of his personal friends and earliest followers, assures us that he did know. "The doctrine of correspondences," he says, "continued longest among the Egyptians, and the hieroglyphics are the last remains of it. The knowledge of these has long been lost to the world, and *only remains with our author (Swedenborg) who is possessed of it.*"\* The system of Swedenborg is then fully committed to this view of the hieroglyphics — the view which prevailed, perhaps universally, in the time of Swedenborg — that they are all of a *symbolical* or *enigmatical* character, each one representing some affection or truth. But unfortunately for the system, the hieroglyphics have since been deciphered. The hand-writing on the monuments and tombs of the ancient Egyptians has been read. The investigation reaches back to very ancient times — to a period earlier than that of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. And what is the result? Cham-

\* Influx, Hartley's Edition, § 6, note.

pollion assures us, that by far the greater portion of the Egyptian hieroglyphics are *simple alphabetical characters*. There is no more enigma or mystery about them than about our own A, B, C. Of the remainder, a part are mere *pictures*; the picture of a man standing for a man, and that of a lion for a lion, &c. A small portion of the hieroglyphics are used as symbols; and seem to have come into such use in the same manner as tropes and metaphors with us.\* So much for Swedenborg's alleged knowledge of hieroglyphics, and for the support they were expected to give to his doctrine of correspondences. The utter failure of the proposed theory is enough to overthrow the whole doctrine of correspondences, and to destroy all credit in him as an inspired and infallible teacher.

I have noticed several instances in which the teachings of Swedenborg contradict, or rather are contradicted by, the facts and deductions of *natural science*. I proceed to mention two or three, in which they are equally inconsistent with *mental science*.

Perhaps no fact in mental science is better established, on the ground of a common consciousness, and the general consent of the ablest metaphysicians, than that there are *three* great departments or susceptibilities of mind, the *intellectual*, the *sentient*, and the *voluntary*. † We have *ideas*, *emotions*, and *voli-*

\* See Greppo's Essay, pp. 34—46.

† Some metaphysicians speak of *four* mental susceptibilities,—



tions. We think, we feel, we will. These mental states are clearly distinguishable, one from the other, and perhaps there is no mental affection or operation of which we are conscious, which may not be referred to one or the other of these three general susceptibilities. But Swedenborg adheres to the old classification on this subject, merging the sentient in the voluntary, and making the whole mind to consist of *understanding* and *will*. This imperfect classification is incorporated with his correspondences, and lies at the foundation of his whole system of religion. His wisdom and love, good and truth, charity and faith, evil and false, are all based on his philosophy about understanding and will. Yet I have no hesitation in affirming that this is a false philosophy, and that it must obscure and falsify, more or less, every system of religion into which it enters.

Conscience is the faculty or power of the mind, by which we discern moral relations, perceive the difference between right and wrong, and feel the force of moral obligation. It is that power by which man is chiefly distinguished from the brutes, and is made a moral, accountable being. It is a *natural* endowment of the human mind, and can never be put off, so long as the mind exists. I here state no mere opinion of my own, but a well established and all but universally acknowledged *fact* of mental science, the *sensational*, the *intellectual*, the *emotional*, and the *voluntary*.

ence. Yet Swedenborg denies this fact altogether. He says that conscience is an *acquired* state or habit of mind, the result of education, and is peculiar to the present life. Neither the happiness nor the misery of the other world is in any degree the effect of conscience; for there is no conscience there. \*

Swedenborg thought that "every man has two memories, one exterior, the other interior;" the former of which "is proper to his body, the latter to his spirit." † I regard this as wholly a gratuitous assumption, not warranted by consciousness, and not necessary to account for any facts which come within our apprehension. He might with as much reason affirm that man has *ten* memories, as that he has two.

\* True Chris. Religion, §§ 665, 666. Arcana Celestia, § 965. Hindmarsh's Compendium, p. 80.

† Arcana Celestia, § 2469.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG, CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 10.*

I have spoken of the teachings of Swedenborg as being inconsistent with the facts both of history and science. I now add, that they are, in many points, *irreconcilably inconsistent with themselves*. Many instances of this nature which might be mentioned, and which I had actually noted for consideration, I shall be obliged to pass over. Enough, however, will be introduced to satisfy every reader, that my objection is not without foundation.

Swedenborg taught, that all the spirits and angels of the other world, good and bad, are of the human species, and once lived in bodies on the earths. He also taught, that "unless spirits and angels were continually present with men in this world, they would be utterly incapable of thought, affection, or even

of life." "Without communication by spirits with the world of spirits, and by angels with heaven, *it would be utterly impossible for man to live*. His life dependeth entirely upon such conjunction; so that supposing spirits and angels to depart from him, *he would instantly perish.*"\* But how, I ask, are these positions to stand together? Unless men live on this earth (or some other) and die, and go into the world of spirits, there are no spirits there. But without communication with spirits in *that* world, it is impossible for men to live at all in *this*. Man's "life dependeth *entirely* on such conjunction; so that supposing spirits and angels to depart from him, *he would instantly perish.*" There must be spirits in *this* world, before any can be in that; and there must be spirits *there*, or none could live here a moment!

The same inconsistency attaches to Swedenborg's account of man's *free-agency*. He strenuously insists, that every man is, and must be, a free agent.† But in what does his free agency consist, and where does it originate? "Its origin," he says, "is from the *spiritual world*;" and it consists in this, that man is in perpetual communication with good and evil spirits, and is held in a sort of *moral equilibrium* between the good and the bad influences which beset him; "in consequence of which," to use the

\* Arcana Celestia, § 50. Clowe's Plain Answer, p. 64.

† True Chris. Religion, chap. viii.

language of the New Church creed, "he enjoys *free-will*, or *freedom of choice*, in spiritual things, as well as in natural." But how is this theory of free agency consistent with itself? Without the equilibrium between good and bad spirits, we are told, there can be no free agency. And yet, without free agency, there can be no moral character, good or bad, and, of course, no good or bad spirits. The theory supposes, necessarily, the existence of good and bad spirits, before there can be free agency; and the existence of free agency, before there can be good or bad spirits, — which is absurd.

The same difficulty may be presented in another view. There can be no free agency, we are told, and consequently no sin, but through the influence of evil spirits. Indeed, Mr. Clissold says expressly: "To a wicked man, the ministration of evil spirits is indispensably necessary. Without them, he would have no power to will or to do what was evil." And Mr. Parsons says: "The passions and sinful propensities to which we yield would not have been stirred into activity, without the influence of those who live forever in such delights," i. e. "in hell."\* But on this ground, how are we to account for the first sinners? There must be sinners before the first sinners to stir up the evil passions and propensities to which the first sinners yielded, and before which they fell!

But these are not the only inconsistencies charge-

\* Clissold's Letter, p. 170. Parson's Essays, p. 64.

able upon Swedenborg, in regard to the matter of free agency. As remarked above, he was a strenuous asserter of human freedom; holding man to be in such sense free, that he *can not be restrained from sinning*, without destroying his accountable nature. When "it is said that God *permitteth*," says he, "it is not meant that he *willeth*, but that *he can not prevent such a thing*."\* And yet, according to Swedenborg, man *is* nothing, and *has* nothing, but what is from God. He is but a mere *passive recipient* of an influx from the Creator. Where then, I ask, is his freedom, his *activity*? Where, especially, is *such* freedom as Swedenborg ascribes to him? Manifestly all room and ground for it are taken away. Accordingly Swedenborg confesses, in more than one passage of his writings, that the free agency of man is *not real*, but only *apparent*. God alone is the first agent; and man suffers himself to be acted upon, and re-acts IN APPEARANCE *as from himself*; though in truth, such re-action deeply considered, *is also from God*.†

\* Div. Providence, § 234. Speaking of the cruelty of the Jews, Mr. Parsons says, "It was not checked, because, so far as they were concerned it *could not have been*, without doing violence to that freedom which is always regarded by Divine Providence." Essays, p. 187.

† Influx. § 14. In regard to this matter of free agency, Swedenborg insists that man is *deceived*, and *must be*, and *ought to be*. "Self-derived prudence is *nothing*; and only *appears* as if it was otherwise, and also *ought* so to appear." See the discussion of this proposition in Divine Providence, § 210.

But I have not yet done with Swedenborg's inconsistencies, in relation to this general subject. Although everything in man is by an influx from God, yet "the reception of this influx is according to the state of love and wisdom in man;"\* or in other words, according to his character. If his character is good, the influx produces good; but if bad, the influx produces bad. This position is assumed, in order to avoid the conclusion that God, by his influx, is the author of sin. But how, I ask, came man by his previous character; or by the previously favorable or unfavorable state of his receptivity? Did he make it himself? Then everything in him is not by influx from God. Did he inherit it from his parents? But how did they receive it? Obviously, everything in man is not by influx from God, else we are presented with another of the same class of absurdities, viz. an influx before the first influx, to form the state of love and wisdom in accordance with which the first influx is to operate.

In one of his publications, Swedenborg lays down the following propositions, and argues them at considerable length: "The *divine essence itself* is love and wisdom." "The divine love and the divine wisdom are a *substance* and a *form*." "The divine love and the divine wisdom are a substance and form *in themselves*, consequently *self-subsisting*." † The divine love and wisdom are usually and justly

\* Influx, § 11.

† Divine Love and Wisdom, §§ 28, 40, 44.

considered as *attributes* of God, and not as constituting his very *substance* and *essence*. And so they are represented by Swedenborg in other places. "The divine love and the divine wisdom," he says, "*proceed* as one from the Lord."\*

Swedenborg teaches, in one place, that the trinity did not exist until after the incarnation of Christ. "When God became incarnate, it (the trinity) was *provided and made*." But speaking in another place of the three angels who appeared to Abraham, as he sat in his tent door, he says, "It was the Lord our Saviour who appeared in his *divine trinity*, represented by three angels."† There was a trinity, then, in the days of Abraham.

Swedenborg says in one place, "I have spoken with angels concerning infants, whether they are pure from evils, because they have no actual evil, like adults; but it was told me that they are *equally in evil*; yea, that they also are *nothing but evil*."‡ Yet in other places he has much to say respecting the *innocence of infancy*. "That infants are *innocences* is known; but that their innocence flows in from the Lord is not known." They are so innocent, that their innocence "flows out of them into their parents." And this is the reason why mothers delight to kiss them, and "rest their mouth and face upon their bosoms," and "stroke their naked bodies with

\* Divine Providence, § 4.

† True Chris. Religion, § 170. Appendix, § 49.

‡ Swedenborg Library, p. 89.



their hands." Infants are so innocent, that the very term, "in the word, signifies innocence;" and the angels in the highest heaven appear there as naked infants.\* Yet the angels told Swedenborg, "that infants are *equally in evil*" as adults, and also that "they are *nothing but evil*."

Swedenborg very properly says, in one place, that the love of self, and the love of the world, rule in the hells, and make the hells; but that love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbor, rule in the heavens, and make the heavens.† But we find much in his writings, more especially in regard to *conjugal love*, which seems to me to be totally irreconcilable with this statement. Genuine "conjugal love," he says, "is an *image of heaven*." It is "*essential innocence*, which dwells with wisdom;" and those who have it, "are in wisdom *before all others in heaven*." "They are in the *inmost heaven*, which is called the heaven of innocence." Again; "conjugal love is the *foundation love of all loves*, excelling the rest in uses, and consequently in delights."‡ The angels say, that it "*exceeds every other love in sweetness*;" and "because it is pleasantness itself, it is called by them *heavenly sweetness*." The following propositions Swedenborg lays down for full discussion: 1. Conjugal love, from its origin, and from its correspondence, is heavenly, spiritual, holy, pure,

\* Conj. Love, §§ 395, 396. Heaven and Hell, §§ 276—283.

† Heaven and Hell, § 554.

‡ Arcana Celestia, §§ 2735, 2736, 5053.

and clean, *before every love which is from the Lord.*"

2. "It is also *the fundamental love* of all heavenly, spiritual, and thence of natural loves." 3. "Into this love are gathered *all joys and all delights*, from first to last." "*All the enjoyments of heaven stream forth from the enjoyments of conjugal love*, as sweet waters from the stream of a fountain." "It is the *love of loves*, and its delights are the *delights of delights.*" It is "*the precious pearl of human life, and the repository of the Christian religion.*"\* Such then are Swedenborg's views as to the nature of religion, of holiness, and of heavenly joys. Every thing pertaining to religion or heaven seems to center, and to be garnered up, in the one single idea of conjugal love. Before, he had said that "love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbor, rule in the heavens, and make the heavens;" as "the love of self, and the love of the world, rule in the hells, and make the hells." But now *conjugal love* is the very "*image of heaven*," and those who have it "dwell in the *inmost heaven.*" It is "*the foundation love of all loves*," into which "are gathered *all joys, and all delights*," and from which "stream forth *all the enjoyments of heaven.*" It is "*the love of loves*," the "*delight of delights*," the "*precious pearl of human life*," "*the repository of the Christian religion.*" Those who can reconcile these views of religion, of holiness, of heaven, with that before given, or with that presented in the word of God, are welcome to do

\* Conj. Love, §§ 55, 64—68, 229, 367, 457.

it. To me, the task would be utterly impracticable. In a previous chapter (chap. vi.) I exhibited the manner in which Swedenborg was accustomed to speak of the Reformed churches. He represents them as utterly perverted and vastated, so that not anything true or holy remains in them. They are the great red dragon, and the two beasts of the Apocalypse. They are that city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. They are the goats on the left hand of the Judge in the day of judgment. They are not only the locusts of the bottomless pit, but the pit itself. But when Swedenborg comes to answer the objection, that "possibly some may entertain doubts as to the wisdom of providence, in permitting such a church to exist, and to remain for so long a period," he takes back no small part of his vituperation and slander, and represents the Athanasian creed and the Reformed churches as in a very tolerable state of purity. "In all these churches," he says, "it is taught that there is no salvation, except a man examine himself, see his sins, acknowledge them, repent, desist from them, and enter upon a new course of life." "Hence it is evident that every one in these churches is taught that he must observe the decalogue, and that evils are to be shunned as sins."\* The same Swedenborg, it will be kept in mind, says all this, who had before represented these Reformed churches as in a state of utter perversion and corruption, fit only to go away accursed into everlasting fire.

Swedenborg taught that the other world is a mere *state* of being, and not a *place*. "The angels," he says, "have no *notion* or *idea* of place and of space." So Mr. Bush says, that at death, "the spirit is ushered into a world to which *time* and *space* do not belong. Heaven and hell are not *places*, but *states*. It cannot be said of the spiritual world, that it is above or below, here as there; but it is in man himself. Every one has actually in himself his heaven, or his hell."\* Yet Swedenborg is far from being consistent in all his representations as to this matter. He speaks of the other world as being an exact counterpart to this. It has its earth, air and water; its mountains, groves and plains, its food and clothing; its houses, cities, palaces; its animals and vegetables. He speaks in one place of the vast *extent* of heaven. "It was given me to see the extent of the heaven which is *inhabited*, and likewise of what is *not inhabited*; and I saw that the extent of heaven not inhabited was so great as to be incapable of being filled to eternity." Indeed, he speaks expressly and repeatedly of the spiritual world as a *place*. "The world of spirits is a middle *place* between heaven and hell; and likewise it is a middle *state* of man after death. That it is a middle *place* was made evident to me from this circumstance, that the hells are beneath, and the heavens above; and that it is a middle *state* from this circumstance, that man, so long as he is there, is not yet in heaven, neither is he in hell."\* Swe-

\* Heaven and Hell, §§ 419, 422.

denborg here distinguishes between state and place, and affirms that the spiritual world is both the one and the other; — in direct contradiction to his frequent assertions, that it is a mere state, and not a place. \*

Swedenborg taught, on some occasions, that there is no deception or hypocrisy in the other world, but each one is obliged to appear in his true character. "In the other life," he says, "no one is allowed to assume a semblance of affections which are not properly his own, but all, of every description, are there reduced to such a state as to speak as they think, and to express the inclinations of the will by the countenance and gestures; hence, therefore, it is that the faces of all are the faces and effigies of their affections." † But on other occasions, he taught quite a different doctrine. He has much to say of the *tricks* and *deceits* which are practised, not only in the spiritual world, but in the hells. Indeed, some of the hells are called "the hells of the *deceitful*." ‡ I present the following as fair specimens of his teaching on his subject. Speaking of certain Romish hypocrites in the spiritual world, he says: "By means of a holy *external*, they have communication with some of the societies of the lowest heaven; and by means of a profane *internal*, with the hells; so

\* Mr. Noble says that "hell is a *place* and *state* of misery." Appeal, pp. 360.

† Heaven and Hell, §§ 457, 535.

‡ Heaven and Hell, §§ 457, 535.

that they may be said to be in both. For which reason also they *entice* simple good spirits, allotting them habitations near themselves," upon whom "they attempt the most wicked designs; for the simple good spirits, who are in the lowest part of heaven, look no farther than to their holy externals." Speaking in another place of hypocritical Protestants in the other world, he says, "It was permitted them to form societies, and live together as in the world, and there, by *arts unknown in the world*, to make splendid representations, and thereby *persuade themselves and others that they were in heaven*." They built for themselves certain *mock heavens* in the spiritual world, and called them heavens, and drew others into them as into heaven. These heavens, he says, are "the former heaven and former earth, which passed away in the last judgment."\* Rev. xxi. 1.

It was a doctrine of Swedenborg, that "*the Lord casts no one down to hell*, but the spirit casts himself down." † This proposition he discusses through several pages. But he directly contradicts it, in many places in his works. "Those who have filled their wickedness with deceit," he says, "and have used goodness as a means of deceiving, *are cast immediately into hell*. I have seen some of this character *cast into hell* instantly after death; one of the most deceitful with his *head downwards*, and his *feet upwards*, and others in other ways." In the

\* Last Judgment, § 104. Continuation, § 18.

† Heaven and Hell, § 545, &c.

process of the last judgment, Swedenborg saw some of the Babylonians (Romanists) *cast* into black seas, and others into horrible gulfs, and one was *cast headlong into hell*. When the Hollanders were judged, he saw some of them “*cast* into a fiery gulf,” and others “into a dark cavern,” which are only different descriptions of hell.\*

Swedenborg taught that sinners in hell “are punished only as it becomes necessary to *prevent their molesting and tormenting each other*.” “They are permitted to live as they like, and to enjoy the delights they desire, with no other qualification, no other restraint, than is necessary to *prevent their making each other miserable*.” † But this idea is contradicted in a great many passages. Some in the hells are represented as bruising their fellow sinners in a mortar, with a pestle; others as grinding them up in a mill; and others as inflicting upon those around them every species of torture of which they are capable. ‡

It is a doctrine of Swedenborg, that there are no radical changes of character, one way or the other, after death. “It remains then such as it had been; nor can the life of hell be inscribed into the life of heaven, since they are opposite. Hence it is evident, that they who come into hell remain there to *eternity*; and that they who come into heaven re-

\* Last Judgment, § 61. Continuation, § 53.

† Parson's Essays, p. 207.

‡ Arcana Celestia, §§ 822, 824, 5057.

main there *to eternity.*” \* But this plain and scriptural statement is directly contradicted in other parts of Swedenborg’s writings. “It would be unreasonable,” says he, “to suppose that the Lord would permit any one to be punished in hell, much less *to eternity*, for the sins of a short life; especially, as each one considered his principles to be true, and was thus fixed in his persuasion. It is not to be thought, therefore, that the Lord would suffer any one to be punished, much less without intermission forever, except with a view to his reformation; as whatever is from the Lord is good, and for a good end; but eternal punishment could have no such end.” †

It is unnecessary to pursue the inconsistencies of Swedenborg further. They are exceedingly numerous, and some of them most palpable. It is a sufficient objection to his doctrines and claims, that he is on so many points inconsistent with himself.

\* Arcana Celestia, §§ 10, 749.

† Spiritual Diary, § 3489.



## CHAPTER X.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND THE DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG, CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 11.*

I object further to the system of Swedenborg, that it represents the way to heaven as comparatively easy, and tends to *depress*, if not to subvert, *the proper standard of Christian piety*. We might infer as much as this from the fact, that it dispenses altogether with the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit, leaving this to be performed (if performed at all) by the ministry of angels. The Holy Spirit, and he alone, is the sanctifier of men. It is he who translates them from the kingdom of darkness, and transforms them into the divine image. It is he who commences the work of sanctification in their souls, and carries it on to the day of complete redemption. I would by no means undervalue the benevolent ministry of holy angels. It is a delight-

ful thought to the Christian, that their guardian care and protection are round about him, — that they *are* “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.” But they can never perform the work of the Holy Spirit. They make no pretensions to it, and no approximation towards it. And a system of religion which dispenses with the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit, and devolves it on created spirits, must necessarily be wanting in spirituality.

In his work on Heaven and Hell, Swedenborg has a chapter under the following caption: “It is not so difficult as it is supposed, to live a life which leads to heaven.”\* In discussing this proposition, he goes on to say: “Some people believe that a spiritual life is difficult, since they have been told that a man must renounce the world, and deprive himself of the concupiscences of the body, and the flesh; which things they conceive as implying that they must reject worldly things, which consist chiefly in riches and honors; that they must walk continually in pious meditation about God, salvation, and eternal life; and that they must spend their days in prayer, and in reading the word and other pious books. This they call renouncing the world, and living in the spirit, and not in the flesh. But that the case is *altogether otherwise* has been given me to *know*,

\* Sect. 528. Mr. Noble says, “The Scriptures never represent the life that leads to heaven as a thing of great difficulty.” Appeal, p. 494.

from much experience, and from conversation with the angels. Indeed, they who renounce the world, and live in the Spirit, in the manner above described, procure to themselves a sorrowful life, which is *not receptible of heavenly joy*; for every one's life remains with him after death. But that man may receive the life of heaven it is altogether necessary that he *live in the world*, and in office and employment there; that in such case, by moral and civil life, *he may receive spiritual*; because *spiritual life can not otherwise be formed without him*." From this extract my readers will see what kind of Christian life Swedenborg abjures, and what he recommends. With him, a life of pious reading, meditation, and devotion, so far from contributing to genuine spirituality, is inconsistent with it. A life so conducted is "not receptible of heavenly joy." But men must "live in the world," and not renounce it, and enjoy "the concupiscences of the body and the flesh."

In his work on Charity, Swedenborg treats, at some length, of the "*Diversions of Charity*." After mentioning several kinds of diversions, "the delights and pleasures of the bodily senses," he adds: "Besides these, there are convivialities, feasts, entertainments, and all kinds of merry-makings, games which are played at home with dice, billiards and cards; and dances at wedding parties, and at festive meetings."\* Not only are these things not inconsistent with the discipline of the New Church, they are *recommended*

\* § 117.

to be observed. They are recommended on the *highest authority*, even that of an inspired and heaven taught teacher. Indeed, Swedenborg represents them, or some of them, as practised *in heaven*. In one of his relations, he speaks of ten men who were invited into one of the heavens, that they might learn the nature of heavenly joys. And here they were told of the *festivities* of the place; such as musical concerts, games, shows, and dramatic entertainments. In one part, were exhibited the "various sports of young men and boys, such as *running, hand-ball, rackets, &c.*" \* Ennobling employment this for young men and boys in the other world! What truant would not be in earnest to get to such a heaven!

Wishing to satisfy myself as to the *practical workings* of this kind of religion, I have made inquiries in several places where the New Church has been longest established, as to the *spiritual* character of its members. "Are they, or are they not, conformed to the world? Do they, or do they not, furnish evidence of being a humble, devoted, sanctified people, having their affections on things above, and their conversation in heaven?" These inquiries were made, I trust, in a proper spirit, and answers were returned, so far as I could judge, charitably. They were in substance as follows: "Our New Church folks exhibit, perhaps, a fair proportion of general morality and amiableness of deportment, and seem rather to pride themselves on these things; but of a contrite, watch-

\* Conj. Love, § 17.

ful, prayerful spirit — a spirit of self-denial, of deadness to the world, of serious and holy devotion to things unseen and eternal, there are few, if any, of what are considered as the natural indications. We cannot, indeed, look into their hearts, and ought not to judge them, but may safely say as much as this." With regard to the question of conformity to the world, one of my correspondents writes: "The Swedenborgians have held, in this place, the past winter (i. e. chiefly among themselves) weekly or semi-weekly *private* dancing parties; and once in a fortnight a *public* dancing party in one of our public halls, to which others, particularly young persons, have been invited. This seems to be a kind of *church-meeting*; and it occurs on the same evening, and at the same hour, in which evangelical Christians are coming together for their stated prayer-meeting. It is understood that these people play at cards, and other games, and encourage them on social occasions generally. The minister and church members dance often at parties of a promiscuous character, and have remained, in some instances, to a late hour of the night."—Verily, in some of Swedenborg's "*Diversions of Charity*," his followers in this place seem to abound. We hope they are as abundant in their *deeds* of charity.

On receiving this communication, I was at first surprised. It was what I did not expect. But why should it not be expected? The new-church-men referred to are only following out (though possibly

to some little excess) the recommendations of their great teacher. And then these card parties, and dancing parties, to which others are invited, afford a fine opportunity for drawing in the young, the gay, the thoughtless, the unwary — “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” — and impressing them favorably as to the character and principles, the measures and members of the New Church. Yes, reader, this is *the New Church!* the institution of which is represented as the introduction of a *new dispensation*, — as much superior to the Christian, as that was to the Jewish! *The New Church!* declared to be “the crown of all churches!” The “*new Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven,” which is to stand forever!

### Objection 12.

In following out my objections to the doctrines of Swedenborg, I am sorry to be obliged to say, that some of them are of decidedly an *immoral character and tendency*. I refer particularly to those which relate to *polygamy, concubinage, and scortation or fornication*. Swedenborg taught that “polygamy is not sin with those whose religion sanctions or permits it;” neither “with those who are in ignorance concerning the Lord.” Consequently, he goes on to say, it was no sin among the Israelites of old; nor is it sin among the Mohammedans and heathens of the present day. For the Mohammedans, he says, there are two heavens, “the lower and the higher.” In

the *lower heaven*, "*they live with many wives and concubines, as in the world* ; but those who renounce concubines, and live with one wife, are elevated into the higher heaven." Swedenborg visited the polygamists in their heaven, sat down with one of them in the vestibule of his harem, and entered into conversation with him respecting marriages. "We do not live with one wife," said the celestial, "but some with two, and three, and some with more ; because variety, obedience, and honor, delight us ; and these we have from our wives, if they are many. With one wife, there would be no pleasure from variety, but disgust and sameness ; nor would there be flattering courtesousness from obedience, but disquietude from equality ; nor would there be satisfaction and honor from dominion, but vexatious disputes concerning superiority. And *what is a woman* ? Is she not born *subject to the will of man*, — *to serve and not to rule* ? Wherefore here, every husband in his own house, has, as it were, royal majesty. And because this is our love, it is also *the blessedness of our life*." Swedenborg expostulated with the angel ; (for the man here speaking, it must be remembered, is an inhabitant of heaven) but he could make no impression. "What else makes a man blessed," he rejoined, but the emulation of wives, contending for the honor of the husband's highest favor ?" \* Strange source indeed of blessedness in heaven !!

Swedenborg taught, "that it is not lawful for a

\* Conj. Love, §§ 343, 348, 349, 78.

*Christian* to marry but one wife."\* Nor may a Christian be *formally, legally divorced from his wife*, except for a single cause — that assigned by our Saviour in Mat. xix. 9. † But there are *many* causes he says — causes "*legitimate, just, real, and sufficient,*" for taking a concubine into the wife's bed, provided the wife is not cohabited with at the same time.

Concerning concubinage in general, Swedenborg lays down twelve distinct propositions, which he discusses through some eight or ten pages. The following are two of them: "That concubinage, *conjointly with a wife*, is altogether unlawful to Christians. That concubinage *apart from the wife*, when it is engaged in from *legitimate, just, and truly sufficient causes*, is not unlawful." The sufficient causes of separation and concubinage, he said, are two-fold; those relating, first, to the *mind*, and secondly, to the *body*. Among the *mental* infirmities which are sufficient to justify the taking of a concubine, he mentions the following: "Mania, frenzy, raving, actual foolishness and idiocy, loss of memory, severe hysteric disease, extreme simplicity so that there is no perception of good and truth; the highest stubbornness in not obeying what is just and equal; the highest pleasure in prating and talking upon nothing but insignificant things and trifles; unbridled eagerness for publishing the secrets of the house; also for wrangling, striking, revenging, doing mischief,

\* Conj. Love, § 338.

† Conj. Love, § 468.



stealing, lying, cheating, blaspheming; neglect of infants, excess, luxury, too great prodigality, drunkenness, uncleanness, impurity, application to magic and tricks of deception, impiety, internal dissimilitude, and other like things. That these are *just* causes of concubinage, because they are just causes of separation," he says, "reason sees without a judge."

Among the *bodily infirmities* which justify concubinage, the following are distinctly mentioned; "Malignant and pestilential fevers, leprosies, venereal diseases, gangrenes, cancers, warts, pustules, scorbutic phthisic, virulent scab, especially if the face is defiled with it; foul, rank, crude eructations from the stomach; corrupt and putrid breath exhaled from imposthumes, ulcers, abscesses, from vitiated blood, or from vitiated lymph; lipothamia, which is a total languidness of body and defect of strength; palsy, which is a loosening of the membranes and ligaments subservient to motion; certain chronic diseases, arising from the loss of the tensibility and elasticity of the nerves, or from too great spissitude, tenacity and acrimony of the humors; permanent infirmity from apoplexies; consumptions, by which the body is destroyed; the iliac passion, the cœliac affection, hernia, epilepsy, and other like diseases."\*

Here are some fifty causes or reasons for separation and concubinage, distinctly assigned, either of which Swedenborg says is just and sufficient. He speaks of *more like causes*; but how many more we

\* Conj. Love, §§ 462, 252, 253, 470.

are not informed. The husband, too, is to decide for himself, whether any of these causes actually exist. "That these are just causes of separation and concubinage, *reason sees without a judge* ;" i. e., without their being submitted to any legal tribunal for adjudication. They are to be "adjudged by *the man alone* ;" or, as the translator explains it, "they are to be decided *by the man himself*, according to true principles."

On the foregoing statement, I have no disposition to remark. It speaks for itself. I only add, that it has been fairly and faithfully extracted from the acknowledged works of Swedenborg, and is not contradicted in any other of his writings. I leave it to the consideration of my readers.

As to the other subject referred to, viz., *fornication*, Swedenborg lays down the following principles: 1. "With some, the love of the sex *can not, without damage, be totally restrained from going forth into fornication*. It is vain," he adds, under this head, "*to recount the damages* which too great a restraint may cause and operate, with those who labor under venereal excitement. From this source are the origins of certain diseases of the body, and disorders of the mind." 2. "Fornication is light, so far as it looks to conjugal love, and prefers it." 3. "The lust of fornicating is grievous, so far as it looks to adultery." 4. "Care is to be taken, lest conjugal love, by *immoderate* and *inordinate fornications*, should be destroyed." 5. "Conjugal love — with

those who for various causes can not as yet enter into marriage, and *can not govern their lusts* — may be preserved, if *the love of the sex be restricted to one mistress.*” This last proposition is thus explained and discussed: “That by those who are salacious, immoderate and inordinate lust *can not be restrained, reason sees and experience teaches.* In order therefore, that this immoderateness and inordinateness — with those who labor under venereal excitement, and can not, for many causes, precipitate marriage — may be curbed, and reduced to something moderate and ordinate, there appears no other refuge and as it were asylum, than *the keeping of a mistress.*” Swedenborg goes on to assign no less than *six* reasons why, under the circumstances specified, *a mistress should be kept.* “By this means, promiscuous fornications are curbed and limited;” “the ardor of venery is allayed and mitigated;” “adulteries are guarded against,” &c. \*

These statements, like those before given, need no comment. My readers will perceive, at once, what utter havoc is here made of the plain precepts of the Bible, and the acknowledged principles of Christian morality. God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” But Swedenborg assigns some fifty causes, and says there are more, which will justify a man in separating from his wife and keeping a concubine, or,

\* Conj. and Scort. Love, §§ 450—460. Swedenborg was never married, but he confesses that at one period of his life he kept a mistress. See Wilkinson’s Life of Swedenborg, p. 233.

which is the same, in committing adultery. The Bible says, "Flee fornication." "This is the will of God that ye should abstain from fornication." "Let it not be once named among you."\* But Swedenborg states circumstances, in which fornication is not only permitted, but *recommended* and *enforced*,—more especially upon young men. There is no recounting *the damage* which they will sustain, if they do not resort to it. And he leaves every young man to judge whether these circumstances do, or do not, exist in his own case. I say he leaves the young *man* to judge; for in this whole matter, he seems to regard the woman, temporally and eternally, as existing only for the convenience of the man.† And yet I know of fine ladies, who read and profess to admire the works of Swedenborg! And I once heard a learned and venerable Swedenborgian say, when inquired of as to what he thought of the work on "Conjugal and Scortatory Love," "I think, Sir, that no man could have written that book, who had not been in heaven"!!

\* Cor. vi, 18. Eph. v. 3. 1 Thess. iv. 3.

† It appears that some of the original members of the New Church in London received these doctrines of Swedenborg in their literal and proper sense, and acted upon them, to the shame of those bodies which ought to be temples of the Holy Spirit! See New Church Repository, Vol. 6., p. 145.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND THE DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG, CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 13.*

My next objection to the claims of Swedenborg, is drawn from his representations of *heaven* and *hell*, and in general of *the invisible world*. Much that might, with propriety, be presented here has been anticipated; still something more requires to be said. And after all, it will be impossible to exhibit the subject fully or adequately. Those who have a curiosity to learn all that Swedenborg says about heaven and hell, and the invisible world, must read his works.

As before remarked, he represents every inhabitant of heaven as once a man on the earth, and as still retaining the human form. The heavens are divided into innumerable societies, consisting of congenial spirits; and *each of these societies is in the*

*human form*; some of the members of a particular society going to constitute the head, others the neck and breast, others the loins, others the arms, legs, feet, &c.

And not only is each of the innumerable societies of heaven in the human form, they collectively constitute a society in the human form. Hence, Swedenborg commonly speaks of the universal heavens as *the Grand Man*. And he goes on, page after page, to the extent of a volume, pointing out the correspondences between all the human organs and members, and the Grand Man, and showing what sorts of Christians, or rather of people, go to constitute his different parts. "They who appear above the head of the Grand Man, and near to it, are those who teach, and also suffer themselves easily to be taught; they who are beneath the occiput are those who act tacitly and prudently; they who are at the thorax or breast, are those who are in charity; they who are at the feet, are those who are natural; and they who are at the soles of the feet are the grosser of that class. They who are at the nostrils, are those who excel in perception; they who are at the ears, are those who obey; they who are at the eyes, are those who are intelligent, wise," &c.

Swedenborg taught that in heaven, or in the Grand Man, "there is a *pulse*, like that of the heart; and a *respiration*, like that of the lungs, but more interior. The pulse of the heart is various, according to the states of love; and the respiration, ac-

ording to the states of charity and faith." The Grand Man is nourished and increased, by the continual flow of people from this world into the world of spirits, and thence to heaven, or to hell. Those persons "with whom evils have obtained the predominion, after that they have been vexed in the stomach of the Grand Man, to no purpose, are conveyed through the stomach into the intestines, and are thence voided forth into the draught, i. e. *into hell*. But they with whom goods have had the predominion, after some vexations and purifications, become chyle, and pass off into the blood," and so into the body.\*

I have presented this sketch of "the Grand Man," because Swedenborg dwells much upon it, representing it as "a great arcanum," and attaching to it a vast importance. To my own apprehension, the whole account is supremely ridiculous; being destitute alike of sense and decency, and worthy only of contempt. Nor do I see how the latter part of it is to be interpreted, according to the science of correspondences. If there is any correspondence here, then the wicked must go through the whole midst of heaven in order to get into hell, as refuse food passes through the whole intestinal canal, before it is voided into the draught. Nor is this the worst of it. Swedenborg probably did not know that the contents of the intestinal canal are made up but in

\* *Arcana Celestia*, §§ 3884—3889, 5174.

part of the refuse of the stomach. With them is also mingled the refuse of the whole system, which the absorbents are continually taking up and passing off in the natural way. To carry out the correspondence, therefore, we must suppose that hell is continually supplied from heaven. When spirits have been a sufficient time in heaven, or the Grand Man, the absorbents take them up, and cast them out; and their places are supplied by others which are crowding in from the world. Yet Swedenborg would hardly allow that any portion of the Grand Man can ever come to such an end as this.

I have already spoken of *appearances* in heaven, or of things which are seen and done there. In general, it may be said, that there is almost everything there, that there is on earth; only that the heavenly things are spiritual, and the earthly natural, and the former exist, perhaps, in a state of greater perfection. "In the heavens," says Swedenborg, "I have seen lambs, sheep, she-goats, so similar to those seen in the world, that there is no difference; also, turtle doves, pigeons, birds of paradise, and several others of a beautiful form and color. I have seen various kinds of fish in the waters, but these in the lowest parts of heaven."

There are in the heavens, as in the earth, *vegetables* of all kinds and species. According to the degrees of light and of heat, there appear paradisiacal gardens, groves, fields, and plains, and in them flowerbeds, shrubberies, and grass plats. In the inmost or



third heaven, there are shrubs whose fruits drop oils; flower beds from which are scattered abroad the most fragrant odors; and grass plats which abound with similar scents. In the middle or second heaven are shrubs, whose fruits drop wine; beds of flowers from which exhale pleasant odors, with seeds of a delicate flavor, and grass plats in like manner."

Some novitiates, on a certain occasion, entered heaven, under the impression that it was a world of rest. But one of the angels soon undeceived them. "I will tell you a new thing from heaven," said he, "that there are there administrations, ministries, judiciary proceedings greater and less, also *mechanical arts and trades*." If there are "judiciary proceedings" in heaven, it would seem that there must be *litigation* there, and cases in law and equity to be decided.

Still further to satisfy the new comers as to the business of heaven, the angel took them into a large *library*, and showed them a vast many books, together with "parchment and paper, pen and ink." He took them also "to the abodes of the *scribes*, whose writings they inspected, and wondered that they were so neat and elegant. Next, he conducted them to the *museums*, *gymnasiums*, and *colleges*, where the literary exercises are had. Finally, the angel led them around the city to the rulers, administrators, and subordinate officers, and showed them wonderful specimens of workmanship which are made by the artificers." \*

\* Conj. Love, § 207.

The people of the outer heavens all wear garments, but those of the inmost or third heaven go entirely naked. Swedenborg says, that "the garments of the angels do not merely appear as garments, but *they really are garments*. This is certain, because they not only see them, but also *feel* them. Also they have more garments than one; they put them off and on; those which are not in use, they lay up; and when they again come into use, they re-assume them. That they are clad in various garments, has been seen by me a thousand times."

The people of heaven not only have garments, but they dwell in *houses*, as when on the earth. "I have been present with them," says Swedenborg, "in their houses, which are altogether like the houses of earth, only more beautiful. In them are chambers, inner-rooms, and bed-chambers in great numbers. There are also courts, and round about are gardens, shrubberies, and fields. Where the habitations are contiguous, they are arranged into the form of a city, with streets, ways and forums, altogether after the likeness of cities on our earth."

There are also *temples* in heaven, where the people have preaching and public worship. "The preacher stands in a pulpit eastward; before his face sit those who are in the light of wisdom above others; on the right hand and left are those who are in a lesser light. They are seated in the form of a circle, so that all are in view of the preacher. At the gate, and to the left of the pulpit, stand those who

are in a state of initiation. It is not allowed to any one, except them, to teach in the temples."

"*Angelic Speech*," says Swedenborg, "like human speech, is sonorous in its utterance, and sonorous in the ear of the person spoken to; for angels, like men, have a mouth, a tongue, and ears; and they have likewise an atmosphere, in which the sound of their speech is articulated." The *writing*, in the inmost heaven is very peculiar. "It consists of various inflected and circumflected forms; and the inflexions and circumflexions are according to the form of heaven. On a time," says Swedenborg, "a little paper was sent to me from heaven, containing some expressions written in Hebrew letters; and I was told that every *letter* involved arcana of wisdom, and that those arcana were contained in the *inflexions* and *curvatures* of the letters. Then I understood what is signified by these words of the Lord, 'Until heaven and earth pass away, one iota, or one *little horn*, shall not pass away from the law.' In the word, the arcana of heaven are contained even *in its iotas, apexes, and little horns.*"\*

It is wonderful that there should be mountains of sense in the little curvatures and apexes of a Hebrew letter; but this wonder of the Word is as nothing compared with some others of which Swedenborg informs us. "In the inmost recesses of the heavenly temples, the Word shines before the angels like a

\* Heaven and Hell, §§ 181, 184, 223, 235, 260.

*great star*, and sometimes like *the sun*. Also, when any single verse of the Word is written out upon paper, and the paper is thrown into the air, the paper itself shines in such a form as it was cut into; and what is still more wonderful, when any one rubs the face, the hands, or the clothes, with the Word open, applying the writing of it to them, the face itself, the hands, and the clothes shine, as if he were standing in a star, and surrounded with its light. This I have often seen," says Swedenborg, "and wondered at. Thence it was evident to me why the face of Moses shone, when he brought down the tables of the covenant from the mount." Moses, it seems, had rubbed his face against the tables.

Swedenborg speaks of other wonders of the Word in heaven, "as for instance, if any one who is in falses, *looks* at the Word, lying in the holy place, there arises a thick darkness before his eyes, and thence the Word appears to him black, and sometimes as it were covered over with soot. But if he also touches the Word, *an explosion is made with a loud noise, and he is thrown to a corner of the room, and for an hour lies there as if he was dead*. If any thing of the Word is written out upon paper, by any one who is in falses, and the paper is thrown up towards heaven, then a *similar explosion is made in the air*, and the paper is torn into atoms. "This," says Swedenborg, "I have often seen."\*

Swedenborg tells a story of an orthodox prelate,

\* True Chris. Religion, § 209.

a preacher of the doctrine of justification by faith, who was knocked over in heaven, in the manner above described. He insisted that he had not falsified the Word, and was willing to attest the truth of his assertion, by touching the terrific symbol. The angels warned him to beware, but he would not listen. "He approached the table, and touched the Word; when *suddenly there issued fire and smoke, attended with a loud explosion*, which cast "the poor Doctor into one corner of the room, where he lay for the space of an hour as if he were dead."\*

According to Swedenborg, there are morning, noon, and night in heaven, and regular hours for eating and sleeping, as on the earth. On one occasion, there were some visitors in heaven, who desired to see the Prince. "It is now morning, said the angel, and you will not be allowed to see him before noon. Till then, all are engaged in their offices and employments. But you have been invited to dinner, and then you will sit at table with the Prince." Meanwhile, the guests busied themselves in viewing the splendors of the palace, and the wonders of the garden, where they saw "trees of oil; and after these, trees of wine; and after these, trees of fragrance; and lastly, trees of timber useful for building." At noon, they were gorgeously attired, and introduced to "the grandees" of the palace, and then to the Prince himself, who said to them, "Come with me to eat bread." Swedenborg goes on to describe the

\* Apocalypse Revealed, § 566.

table and the dishes; "the sweet cakes and condiments;" a "fountain overflowing with nectareous wine, the stream of which dispersed itself and filled the cups;" \* the dresses of the Prince, his counselors and courtiers, even to "their breeches and stockings;" the conversation, &c. These were the guests spoken of in the last chapter, who, after dinner, were introduced to the diversions of heaven, such as "hand-ball, rackets," &c. At evening, they supped with one of the chief counselors; after which "they retired separately, each one to his own bed-chamber, and slept till morning." The next day, they attended a wedding in heaven, the whole process of which is described at length, and with the greatest particularity. The third day, the guests attended church in heaven, and were introduced to the preacher, who was very careful (as Swedenborg's angels always are) to set them right on the doctrines of the trinity, and of justification by faith.

Swedenborg's principal topic of interest in exploring the heavens, was his favorite one of *marriage* and *conjugal love*. He learned, not only that there are marriages in heaven, but that there are *proper marriages*, no where else. "Beneath the heavens, there are *nuptial connections* (*connubia*) but not marriages. †

Those who die in infancy go immediately to heaven,

\* What will our temperance friends say to such a dinner in heaven?

† Conj. Love, §§ 192, 75, 79.

to be taken care of and instructed; and at an early period, they are united in marriage; the boys at about the age of eighteen, and the girls of fifteen. The process, by which the parties are brought together and the nuptials celebrated, is fully described.

It may be a comfort to maidens and bachelors, who desired marriage on earth, but could not effect it, to learn that they are to be accommodated in heaven. "They who in the world have lived unmarried, and have altogether alienated their minds from marriage, if they be spiritual, will remain unmarried in heaven." "But it is otherwise with those who, in their celibacy, have *desired marriage*, and especially with those who have *solicited it without success*. For these, if they are spiritual, *blessed marriages are provided in heaven*." The unmarried are removed from the center to the side of heaven, where they dwell together. The reason of this is, that "the sphere of perpetual celibacy infests the sphere of conjugal love, which is the very sphere of heaven."\*

Swedenborg represents the heavens as universally and intensely interested in this matter of conjugal love. The angels have long and frequent discussions on the subject, to which it was Swedenborg's privilege often to listen, and in some of them to take a part. "One morning," he says, "before the rising of the sun, I looked forth towards the east in the spiritual world, and saw four horsemen as if flying out

\* Conj. Love, §§ 187, 54.

from a cloud, shining with the flame of the dawn. Wondering at them, I looked up into heaven and asked, Whither are those horsemen going? And I received for an answer, To the wise in the kingdoms of Europe (the spiritual Europe) who are of practised reason and keen sight, and who have stood high among their people in reputation for genius, that they may come and solve the secret concerning" — what? *What great secret is to be solved?* "*Concerning the origin of conjugal love, and concerning its ability, or potency.*" And soon a delegation of three was brought together from nine of the principal kingdoms of the spiritual Europe, viz., from Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland, to consider and determine this grave question. The delegates from each country deliberated by themselves, reduced their decision to writing, and handed it in to the presiding angel. These decisions were then publicly read, and Swedenborg has preserved them in his work on Conjugal Love. As it happened, they were all unsatisfactory to the angel, and it was left to a company of spectators from Africa (Swedenborg had a strong predilection for Africa,) to solve the secret truly, and bear away the palm.

On one occasion, Swedenborg "saw three novitate spirits" (young men) just arrived from this world, "who wandered about, examining and inquiring." In a short time, two angels appeared, who were sent to instruct them. And almost the only subjects about



which the new comers seemed to desire instruction, or the angels were inclined to give it, were *marriage*, *potency*, and *conjugal love*. The youths were amazingly interested to find that the love of the sex continued in heaven; and evidently desired to know more about the matter than they dared to ask. The angels, perceiving their desires, went on to assure them that "there is *altogether a similar love between consorts in heaven*, as on the earth;" and not only so, but that this resulted in "similar *ultimate delights*;" only that those delights are "much more blessed, because angelical perception and sensation are much more exquisite, than human perception and sensation." The new comers were made glad at this intelligence, and full of the desire of heaven, and in the hope of nuptials there, they said, 'We will study morality and a becoming conduct of life, that we may have what we desire.'\* What a motive this, for "studying morality, and a becoming conduct of life," and thus making preparation for heaven!

In discussions like the foregoing, Swedenborg's angels, for some reason, are always intensely interested. Indeed, one would suppose, from reading portions of his works, that they scarcely think of anything else.

In view of all that has been said, I feel constrained to ask, how much better is the heaven of Swedenborg, than that of Mohammed? Indeed, where

\* Conj. Love, §§ 103—114, 183, 44.

is the mighty difference between them? For the faithful Mussulman, says Mohammed, "the Lord hath prepared two gardens, planted with shady trees. In each of them are two fountains flowing, and of every fruit two kinds. Ye shall repose on couches, the linings whereof are thick silk, interwoven with gold; and the fruit of the gardens shall be near at hand to gather. Therein shall be beauteous damsels, refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their husbands, whom no man shall have deflowered before thee, neither any spirit, having complexions like rubies and pearls. Shall the reward of good works be any other than good? Besides these, there shall be two other gardens, of a dark green. In each of them shall be two fountains, pouring forth plenty of water. In each of them shall be fruits, and palm trees, and pomegranates. Therein shall be agreeable and beauteous damsels, having fine black eyes, and kept in pavilions from public view. Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny? Blessed be the name of the Lord, possessed of glory and honor."\* Swedenborg admits that the Mohammedan religion is from the Lord; and I have no doubt that a Swedenborgian, who had no acquaintance with the Koran, on hearing the above passages read, would suppose, of course, that they were taken from the work on "Conjugal Love."

\* Koran, chap. 55.

It will be gathered from what has been said, that Swedenborg's lowest heaven, and his highest hell, (for he has three hells as well as heavens), are not far asunder. And this conclusion he does not hesitate to avow. The orb on which both the good and the bad spirits dwell, he represents as *one*, being divided into six expanses, one below another. "In the highest expanse, dwell the angels of the third heaven; and beneath them the angels of the second heaven; and beneath these the angels of the first heaven. Below these dwell the spirits of the first hell; and beneath them the spirits of the second hell; and beneath these the spirits of the third; all things being so arranged, that the evil affections, which are spirits of hell, are held in bonds by the good affections, which are angels of heaven."\* It would appear from this statement, and from other representations on the subject, that Swedenborg's lowest heaven and his highest hell are not more different or distant from each other, than are his several heavens and hells among themselves.

All the inhabitants of hell, like those of heaven, are of the human species, and still retain something of the human form, though this form is miserably disfigured and distorted, to correspond to the evil affections of their hearts. "In general," says Swedenborg, "the faces of the inhabitants of that world are direful, and void of life-like carcasses. In some

\* Ath. Creed, § 34.

instances, they are black; in some fiery, like little torches; some, disfigured with pimples, warts, and ulcers. In several instances, no face appears, but in its stead something hairy or bony; and in some cases teeth only are extant.\* Their bodies also are monstrous, and their speech is the speech of anger, of hatred, or revenge; for every one speaks from his own falses, and the tone of his voice is from his own evil; in a word, they are images of their own hell.”†

The hells, like the heavens, consist of numerous societies, made up of those who resemble each other in wickedness; and these societies retain something of the human form, though misshapen and distorted, as in the case of the individual. Swedenborg says that in the gates or openings of the hells, there generally appear monsters, representing the forms of the societies within.

The hells also, in the general, retain something of the human form; or rather they resemble “one *grand devil*, and may be presented in the effigy of a devil.” Between the different parts and members of this monster devil, and the various societies of hell, there is a necessary correspondence; and Swedenborg tells us in various particulars, some of which are of the most loathsome and disgusting character,

\* In one place, Swedenborg says that the spirits of hell *have no teeth*. Arc. Celes. § 822. Here, it would seem, they are *nothing but teeth*.

† Heaven and Hell, 553.

to what parts of the monster devil the different societies and characters of hell belong.

As conjugal love is, with Swedenborg, the source of nearly all the blessedness of heaven, so "scortatory love" lies at the foundation of all the uncleanness of hell. "All hell," he says, "abounds in uncleanness; and the *universal origin* of them is obscene and impure scortatory love."

I have shown in a former chapter, that Swedenborg attaches much importance to *odors*, as affecting the blood; the blood of a good man being nourished by sweet odors, and that of a bad man by offensive ones. (Chap. 8.) This absurd principle he carries into the other world, filling all heaven with fragrance, and hell with the most intolerable stench; in which the inhabitants, however, greatly delight. His details are many of them too disgusting to be transcribed.

In several parts of his works, Swedenborg describes, with much particularity, the hells which are appropriated to particular characters. † "The punishment of assassins," he says, "is dreadful. After they have suffered infernal torments for a succession of ages, they at length acquire a shocking and most monstrous countenance or face; so that it is not a face, but a sort of coarse and ghastly substance.

\* It is remarkable that Swedenborg has no hell for *drunkards*. The probability is, either that he saw but little of this vice, or that he had no proper sense of its enormity.

Thus they put off all that is human, till every one who sees them shudders at the sight."

Swedenborg describes one of the hells as a "stagnant lake," on the bank of which "appear those who eat human flesh, and devour each other, with their teeth sticking in each others shoulders. At a farther distance, there appear great fishes and large sea-monsters, which devour men, and vomit them up again. At the farthest distance, there appear most deformed faces, particularly of old women, so monstrous that it is impossible to describe them, running to and fro like mad persons."

Another hell is appropriated to those "who have taken delight in cruelty, and at the same time in adultery." These "form to themselves instruments like pestles and mortars, with which they bruise and torture whomsoever they can. They make also broad axes, such as are used by executioners, and a sort of awl or auger, with which they cruelly torment each other."

In one of the hells, Swedenborg saw a grinding instrument, with which some malicious devil "was grinding up men with great delight." The angels told him that this represented the Israelites, to whom nothing was more delightful than to treat the nations with cruelty."

Swedenborg thus describes the hell of the Popes of Rome. "Afterwards hell was opened, and I saw two, one sitting upon a bench, holding his feet in a basket full of serpents, which seemed creeping softly

upwards over the breast, even to the neck. The other was sitting upon an ignited ass, at whose sides red serpents were creeping, raising their necks and heads, and following the rider. It was said to me that they were Popes, who deprived emperors of their dominion, and ill-treated them at Rome, whither they came supplicating and adoring them."

I need present no further extracts, to give my readers a sufficient idea of the hells of Swedenborg. And now what are we to think of them? Do these accounts resemble at all the solemn, impressive, awful representations of the Bible on the same subject? Do they not more resemble the vagaries of the Musulman, or the wild fancies of the uninstructed heathen? And are they not equally at variance with reason, with decency, and with common sense, as they are with the decisions of God's word? I wish to think charitably of Emmanuel Swedenborg, and *I do*. But there is only one supposition, as it seems to me, on which this is possible; and that I shall endeavor to explain in a subsequent chapter.

But I have not yet quite done with Swedenborg's representations of the invisible world. I have exhibited, to some extent, his heavens and his hells; but there was, with him, a *middle region*, an *intermediate state*; and into this also we must look before we close. The greater part of what he calls his "Memorable Relations," has respect to what is transacted here.

Swedenborg taught, as I have before said, that

“man after death is equally a man as before, and does not know, for a time, but that he is still in the former world. He walks, runs and sits, as in the former world; he lies down, sleeps and wakes up, as in the former world; he eats and drinks as in the former world; he enjoys conjugal delight as in the former world; in short, he is a man, as to all and every particular.”

“In the spiritual world, there are lands as in the natural world. There are plains and valleys, mountains and hills, fountains and rivers. There are paradises, gardens, groves and woods. There are cities, and in them palaces and houses, also writings and books. There are employments and trades; there are gold, silver and precious stones; in a word, there are all things whatsoever that are in the natural world, only some of them are in greater perfection.”

Swedenborg found the people of different nations and religions living *separately* in the spiritual world; and he gives us a particular account of the circumstances of the Dutch, the English, the Germans, the Papists, the Mohammedans, the Africans, and the Jews. “There are two great cities,” he says, “like London in the spiritual world, into which most of the English come after death. It has been given me to see the former city, and to walk over it.

The Roman Catholic *saints* are concealed in the other world under ground, and all communication with their former worshipers is taken away. For



the satisfaction of Swedenborg, "as many as a hundred were brought forth from the earth below, who knew of their canonization. They ascended behind my back, and only a few before my face, and I spoke with one of them, who they said was Xavier. While he talked with me, he was like a fool; yet he could tell that in his place, where he was shut up with others, he was not a fool, but that he becomes a fool as often as he thinks that he is a saint." Poor Saint Xavier!

For the Africans, Swedenborg seems to have felt a strong predilection. He found them "superior to the rest in interior judgment," and better prepared to receive the doctrines of the New Church. Indeed, "there is, at this day, a *revelation* made to the people of Africa, which, having commenced, goes from its region around, but yet not to the seas. They despise foreigners coming from Europe, who believe that man is saved by faith alone."

Swedenborg despised the Jews as much as he loved the Africans. He says "they trade in the other world, as they did on earth, in various things, but especially in precious stones." And what is remarkable, they succeeded in purloining a great quantity of pearls and precious stones out of heaven, and then went round peddling them all over the spiritual world. Yea, worse than this, the knavish creatures made some counterfeit diamonds, which they were putting off in connection with those which they had stolen.\*

\* True Chris. Religion, § 792—841.

The relations of Swedenborg of things which he saw in the spiritual world are some of them pretty, so far as the imagery is conceived; some are silly; some obscene; some monstrous; and all are strange. He evidently attached a high importance to them, as he has published the same, in some instances, three or four times over. To present them all would be to republish no inconsiderable part of his volumes; and in making a selection, it is difficult, to know where to begin or end. My limits will confine me to a mere abstract of two, which may be taken as samples of the rest.

Swedenborg was once present at a council in the spiritual world, convened for the discussion of faith, "and of the justification of the elect by it." "On the right side, stood the apostolic fathers, who lived before the council of Nice; and on the left stood distinguished theologians of later times. Many of these had their faces shaved, and their heads covered with wigs made of women's hair, and some of them had collars of twisted intestines, and some had collars of other stuff; but the former class had long beards, and wore their natural hair. Before them stood a man, who was judge and critic, with a staff in his hand, with which he struck the ground, and commanded silence. He then went up into the pulpit and breathed forth a groan, so deep that he was well nigh choked with it. At length, recovering himself, he said, O my brothers, what an age! There has risen up one from the herd of the laity," (meaning

Swedenborg) "having neither gown, cap nor laurel, who has pulled down their faith from heaven and cast it into the Styx! Oh horrible! And yet that faith alone is our star, which shines like Orion in the night, and like Lucifer in the morning." The President goes on bemoaning and complaining of what Swedenborg had done, and concludes by appealing to the council whether he had not spoken wisely. "At these words, the members on the left side, whose faces were shaven, and who wore wigs and collars, clapped their hands and exclaimed, 'You have spoken most wisely. Let that prophet tell us whence faith is, and what it is, if ours be not faith. To produce any other faith than this is as impossible, as it would be for a man to ride on horseback to a constellation in heaven, and take thence a star, and put it in his pocket, and bring it down.'" But the apostolic fathers on the right hand did not agree with their shorn and wigged brethren on the left. "Your faith," said they, "is like the empty sepulcher of the Saviour; or it is like the golden calf, around which the children of Israel danced, when Moses had gone into Mount Sinai." These apostolic fathers went on to express their faith in the New Church doctrines, and at length Swedenborg himself is called in to confirm them. The council issued more favorably than such meetings commonly do; as a considerable part of those on the left hand were converted to the New Church faith.

I present but another of Swedenborg's relations,

which is also a doctrinal one. "On a certain time," he says, "I was seized with a strong desire of seeing some country in the frigid zone of the spiritual world, where the boreal spirits dwell; and therefore I was led in spirit to the north, where all the land appeared covered with snow, and all the water congealed to ice. It was the Sabbath, and I saw men (i. e. spirits of the same stature as men) who were clad, as to the head, with the skin of a lion, whose mouth had been applied to their mouth; as to the body, with the skins of leopards; and as to the feet, with the skins of bears. Also I saw many riding in chariots, some of which were carved in the shape of a dragon, whose horns were extended forward. These chariots were drawn by little horses, whose tails had been cut off. These were running like terrible wild beasts, and the driver, holding the reins in his hands, was continually impelling and urging them in their course. I saw, at length, that the multitudes were flocking to a temple, which, because it was covered with snow, had not been seen. But the keepers of the temple were loosening the snow, and preparing an entrance for the worshipers, who went in and took their places." Swedenborg also went in with them; and he goes on to describe the interior of the temple, the lights, the altar, the preacher, and the sermon which he heard on "the grand mysteries of the gospel." "Oh how great a mystery," exclaimed the preacher, "that God in the highest begat a Son from eternity and by him brought

forth the Holy Ghost, which three joined themselves together in essence, but separated themselves by properties! But if we look into these things by reason, its sight is blinded. Wherefore, my hearers, let us keep the understanding under obedience to faith. And oh, how great a mystery is our holy faith. That God the Father imputes the righteousness of the Son, and sends the Holy Ghost, who, by that imputed righteousness, operates the pledges of justification, concerning which man knows no more than the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned; no more than a fish in the sea. But here, again, is a treasure so entirely covered and concealed, that not a grain of it appears. Wherefore, as to this also, let us keep the understanding in obedience to faith. After some sighs, the preacher exclaimed again, Oh, how great a mystery is election! He is elected to whom God imputes that faith, which, according to a free purpose, and of pure grace, he infuses into whomsoever he will, and when he will; and man is like a stock when it is being infused, but he becomes like a tree, when it is infused. But this, also, is a mystical truth, and we must keep the understanding in obedience to faith. And then, after a pause, the preacher continued, saying, From the store of mysteries I will produce yet one more, which is, that man, in spiritual things, has not a grain of free will, and can not think concerning them from reason, or speak from thought, otherwise than like a parrot, a magpie, or a raven; so that man is truly an

ass in spiritual things, and a man only in natural things. But lest this, my hearers, should trouble your reason, you should in this, as in all the rest, keep the understanding under obedience to faith. For our theology is an abyss without a bottom, into which, if you suffer your understanding to look, you will be drowned and lost. Nevertheless, we are in the very light of the gospel, shining high above our heads; but alas, the hair of our heads and the bones of our skulls prevent it from penetrating into the chamber of our understanding.”\*

Surely, never before was sermon preached under circumstances like this; and never before was heard such a sermon. I have presented an abstract of it, that my readers may know what kind of preaching Swedenborg pretends to have heard, under the snow-banks and in the frigid zone of the spiritual world. As an effort on the part of the author to ridicule the faith and the worship of evangelical Christians, the whole would be very tolerable. But we are not at liberty to regard it in this light. It is a *veritable narrative* of what Swedenborg declares that he saw and heard in the spiritual world. And now who believes in the existence of such things there? Who in his senses can believe it? As I said before, if Swedenborg was disposed to invent fables to ridicule the faith of evangelical Christians, he might. But to impose such nonsense upon the *faith* of men, as

\* True Chris. Religion, §§ 113, 185.

revelations from the spiritual world—this is too much. Verily, his followers have need to profit by the oft-repeated exhortation of the snow-bank preacher, and “keep their understandings under obedience to faith.”

I know it will be said, that the things here spoken of are mere *appearances*, *correspondences*, having no more actual existence than the phantasies of a dream.

But though Swedenborg could say as much as this, when it suited his purpose, and often did say it; yet in other connections he said directly the reverse. It was his boast, that the spiritual world, according to his theology, is a *substantial* world. He claimed a prodigious advantage over the commonly received opinions, on this very account. “All things here,” he says, “are *substantial*, though not material. Material things derive their origin from things spiritual, which are *substantial*. We who are here are spiritual men, because *substantial* and not material.”\* Speaking of the garments of angels, he says, “They do not merely *appear* as garments, but they really *are* garments. This is manifest from the consideration, that they not only see them, but *feel* them. Also, they have more garments than one. They put them off and on; and those which are not in use, they lay up, and when they come again into use, they re-assume them. That they are clothed

\* Conj. Love, § 207.

with various garments, has been seen by me a thousand times."\*

Swedenborgians may take which horn of this dilemma they prefer; for certainly they are not entitled to both. If they mean to say that the other life is one of mere appearances, correspondences, visions, shadows; then let them say it, and take the consequences. But if they mean to represent that world as one of *substantial realities* — not less so than the present, though it be spiritual; then let them account for it that it contains realities, and seems to be well nigh filled up with them, so hideous, ridiculous, gross, monstrous, and incredible, as those which have been described.

\* Heaven and Hell, § 181.



## CHAPTER XII.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS AND THE DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG, CONTINUED.

#### *Objection 14.*

My next objection lies not only against Swedenborg, but his followers. He proposed to them certain tests of the validity of his claims, drawn not from the other world, but this — tests which, without any supernatural illumination, they are able to apply. But they have never applied them, nor is it likely they ever will; since the result of the application could only be to demonstrate the falsehood of his pretensions. I shall have time to notice only two of these tests.

Swedenborg taught that, in his time, a new gospel or revelation was being made to the Africans, “which, having commenced, goes from its region around, but not yet to the seas.” These enlightened Africans “despise foreigners coming from Europe,

who believe that man is saved from faith alone.”\* In another of his works, Swedenborg introduces the same subject as follows: “Such being the character of the Africans, there is at this day a revelation begun among them, which is communicated from the center round about, but does not extend to the sea coasts. They acknowledge our Lord as the Lord of heaven and earth, and laugh at the monks who visit them, and at Christians who talk of a three-fold divinity, and of salvation by mere thought. I was informed *from heaven*, that the things contained in the doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord, concerning the Word, and in the doctrine of Life, are now revealed, by word of mouth, by angelic spirits, to the inhabitants of that country.” Of these people it is further said, that though “permitted by their laws to take several wives, they nevertheless have but one. Strangers from Europe are not freely admitted among them; and when any, especially if they are monks, penetrate into the country, they inquire of them what they know; and when they relate any particulars concerning their religion, they call them trifles which are offensive to their ears. And then they send them away to some useful employment; and in case they refuse to work, they sell them for slaves.” †

The amount of this disclosure is (and Swedenborg says he received it from heaven) that there exists, in

\* True Chris. Religion, § 840.

† Continuation of Last Judgment, § 76—78.

the interior of Africa, an important branch of the New Church. These Africans had a revelation made to them, "by word of mouth from the angels," almost a hundred years ago. They have received at least *three* of the "four leading doctrines of the New Church;" viz. those concerning the Lord, concerning the Word, and concerning Life. Of course, they have abjured idols, and polygamy, and hold the doctrine of correspondences. Though these people live in the interior of Africa, still they are not unknown in other lands. "Foreigners from Europe" sometimes go amongst them, especially the monks, some of whom they have sold into slavery. Such is the account; and now I ask, *is it credible?* Do Swedenborgians themselves believe it? Why have not the Europeans, who have been among them from time to time, during the past century, given us some account of this wonderful people? The monks, too, whom they have sold into slavery, why is it that nothing has been heard from them? The superiors of the several monkish orders, the Propagandists at Rome, are very likely to learn all about their missionaries; why is it that they have heard nothing respecting these poor monks, whom the New Church people in Africa have sold into slavery? More especially, why do not the Swedenborgians of England, of Germany, of France, of America, send agents forthwith into Africa, to search out their insulated brethren, and establish regular communications with them? But one answer can be given to

all these questions. *There are no such people in Africa, as Swedenborg describes.* If there were any such, most certainly they had been heard of during the last century. Or if Swedenborgians really believed there were any such, undoubtedly they had made some effort to search them out. It may be supposed that the inhabitants of interior Africa, who are comparatively removed from the influence of the slave trade, and from intercourse with unprincipled whites, are less degraded and corrupt than those on the coast; but that there is a people there, who have abjured polygamy,\* and idolatry; who have intercourse with the angels "by word of mouth," and hold the doctrines of the New Church, is one of the last things in this world to be believed. It never will be believed, until the people are searched out, and the facts of the case are brought to light. And yet the account is *essentially involved* in Swedenborg's revelations, and is strictly true, or *he was a false prophet.*

But to come to the other test, which is still more decisive, and which Swedenborg left it in solemn injunction upon his followers to apply. He taught that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, "with those of his society, collected correspondences, as they had received them from their forefathers, and handed down

\* Polygamy seems to prevail all over the interior of Africa. "The king of Ashantee has 3300 wives. The king of Yoruba told Clapperton that his wives, linked hand in hand, would reach entirely across his dominions."

the sciences thereof to posterity.”\* Enoch, therefore, was the writer of what Swedenborg calls “the most ancient Word.” From this Word, Moses copied the first eleven chapters of Genesis entire, and made frequent quotations from other parts of it. “Concerning this ancient Word,” says Swedenborg, “which had been in Asia before the Israelitish Word, it is permitted to relate this news, that *it is still reserved there among the people who live in great Tartary*. I have conversed with spirits and angels who were thence in the spiritual world, who informed me that *they possess the Word*, and that *they have preserved it from ancient times*, and that *they perform their divine worship according to this Word*, and that it consists of mere correspondences. They said that in it is the book of *Jasher*, mentioned in Joshua x. 12, 13, and in 2d Samuel i. 17, 18; also that with them are the books called *the Wars of the Lord*; and the *Enunciations*, mentioned by Moses, Numbers xxi. 14, 15, and 27—30. And when I read to them the words which Moses had taken thence, they looked to see if they were there, and found them. In conversing with them, they said that they worship Jehovah, some as an invisible God, and some as visible. They further told me that they do not suffer foreigners to come among them, except the Chinese,

\* Sacred Scripture, § 21. Enoch is here spoken of as an individual man; but in the *Arcana Celestia*, § 516, it is said that Enoch “signifies the *seventh church* ;” and Swedenborg goes on to speak of “the *church Enoch*.”

with whom they cultivate peace, because the Chinese Emperor is from their country; also that their country is exceedingly populous, beyond that of almost any other; which is quite credible, from the wall of so many miles which the Chinese built, to protect their country against invasion from them. Moreover I heard from *the angels*, that the first chapters of Genesis, which treat of the creation, and of the first ages of the world up to the time of Noah and his sons, are also in that Word, and that they were copied thence by Moses.\* Of this Word or Scripture, Swedenborg gives us repeatedly the same account, in every instance affirming that it is still preserved among the inhabitants of Great Tartary, and enjoining on his followers to search for it that they may find it. “*Seek for it in China, and peradventure you may find it there among the Tartars.*” †

To the existence of this most ancient Word in Tartary, the system of Swedenborg is fully committed. If he taught anything, he taught this. He declared too, that he learned it by revelation from the angels. Nor does he leave us in doubt as to the location of Great Tartary. It is directly north of the Chinese wall, which wall was built to exclude these Tartars from the Chinese empire. They are represented as an exceedingly numerous people; none in the world more so; and they conduct their religious

\* True Chris. Religion, § 279.

† Apoc. Revealed § 11. See also Appendix, to True Chris. Religion, § 39. Conj. Love, § 77.

worship according to the ancient Word. They have much intercourse with the Chinese, whose emperor is from their country. And now I ask, if what Swedenborg calls the most ancient Word is actually in existence among this people; if it is understood and received by them, and has been so from the most ancient times; and if their religious worship and rites are regulated according to it, why has it never been discovered? And why has not the great nation receiving it been discovered? This whole region has long been known to the nominally Christian world; was traversed by the Nestorian missionaries, and covered with their churches, during all the middle ages; why did not *they* discover the most ancient Word? Then here was the Christian empire of the renowned Prester John and his successors; why did *they* make no such discovery? The Romish missionaries have been in China and Chinese Tartary these hundreds of years; why have *they* found no such Scripture or people as Swedenborg describes? The Chinese Emperors, too, are of Tartar origin, and from the very people who are said to possess the most ancient Word; how is it that they know nothing of it, or if they know, have made no communications? Above all, why do not our Swedenborgians obey the injunction of their great teacher, and go and search for the ancient Word? How can they reconcile it to their consciences to stay at home, and make no inquisition for so great a treasure, in palpable violation of his instructions, and to the great reproach and detriment

of their cause? If they could find a manuscript in China or Tartary, containing the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the book of Jasher, the Enunciations, and the Wars of the Lord, with sufficient evidence that it had remained there from the days of the patriarchs; if they could find a people receiving such a book, and regulating their worship by it; there is no telling what an impulse it would give to the New Church. Such a manuscript is certainly there, and such a people are there, unless the angels imposed upon Swedenborg, and he upon the world; and he *commanded* his followers to go and find it. He put the truth of his mission upon this very test. And yet no Swedenborgian, to my knowledge, has ever been into China or Tartary, to make search for the ancient Word; and I venture to say none ever will go. These people *dare* not fairly and openly apply the test which their master has left them. The Christian world waits to see them do it. No intelligent Swedenborgian ought to think of urging his system farther, until the most ancient Word is found. When it is found (if it ever is) he will be able, with much better reason, to enforce his claims. If it can not be found, he ought to relinquish his claims for ever.

#### *Objection 15.*

I object, finally, to the doctrines of Swedenborg, that they terminate in *materialism* and *pantheism*. The present is a material world; and yet it exists, according to Swedenborg, from *the very substance of*



*God*. It is in fact, an *emanation from God*. Hence, the substance of God must be material.

And what, according to Swedenborg, is the human soul? It is no other than the *nervous* or *spirituous fluid*." "This fluid is *the spirit and soul* of its body." "We may take it for certain, that if this fluid and the soul agree with each other in their predicates, *the fluid must be accepted as the soul*."\* Swedenborg rejects the doctrine "of Dextantes and others, that *the soul is a substance distinct from the body*, in which it remains as long as the heart beats." "Every thing of the soul," he says, "is of the body, and every thing of the body is of the soul." "The mind is that element of the body which is in first principles," &c. †

These decisions of Swedenborg as to the nature of the soul are accepted by his followers, or at least by some of them. "The distinction between mind and matter," says Mr. Clissold, "lies not *in essence*, but in form." ‡ Mr. Dawson represents it as one of the great uses of Swedenborg's writings, that "they help to break down *the mischievous, man-made distinction between spirit and matter*." § And Mr. Wilkinson says, "We regard body and soul together as *distinctly and inseparably one*." ||

\* *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, Vol. II pp., 233, 236.

† See *New Church Repository*, Vol. I., p. 308.

‡ *Introduction to Animal Kingdom*, p. 54.

§ *N. J. Magazine*, Vol. xx, p. 497.

|| *Tracts for the New Times*, No. 3, p. 25.

This system also terminates logically, and that too by a very short process of reason, in *pantheism*. If what is commonly called the created universe is of the very substance of God, then there is really but one substance in the universe. God is everything, and everything God; and this is pantheism.

I know not whether the followers of Swedenborg are prepared to accept this conclusion; but really, as it seems to me, there is no avoiding it. If, in the beginning, God created all things, not from nothing, but "out of himself," so that everything partakes of the very substance of the Deity; who can deny that the system is pantheism,—as really so as that of Spinoza?

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF SWEDENBORG'S MIND, SUBSEQUENT TO HIS SUPPOSED ILLUMINATION.

HAVING now finished what I proposed to offer by way of objection to the doctrines and the claims of Swedenborg, it remains that we endeavor to form a correct estimate of his character. Was he sane, or insane? Was he a deluded fanatic, or a willful and wicked impostor?

I am anxious, if possible, to avoid the latter of these alternatives, and after all the attention which I have been able to give to the subject, I feel satisfied that this may and should be done. I do not believe that Swedenborg *was* a willful impostor. I regard him as, in the main, *honest* in his pretensions; and have no doubt that he really *thought* he enjoyed that kind of intercourse with angels and spirits of which he speaks. There is an artlessness, a simplicity, a sincerity about him, a disregard of personal reputation and influence, a seeming confidence in the truth

of his disclosures, which an impostor could not well assume. He evidently had the impression, so common in certain forms of insanity, that he had been raised up for a very great purpose; that his disclosures were of the last importance to the world; and he went forward, writing and publishing them, and making them known as fast as possible.

But in ascribing to Swedenborg some degree of insanity, we are not, of course, to suppose him a demented idiot, or a raving madman. He was neither the one, nor the other. He was a laborious student in his way — a calm, quiet, and benevolent man. He was as capable of reasoning on most subjects as he ever was, and retained the vigor of his faculties to old age, in a remarkable degree. His last publication, that entitled “the True Christian Religion,” issued when he was more than eighty, is on the whole the most respectable of any of his later works. We discover in it no marks of dotage, and no indications of mental imbecility or infirmity, other than those which appear everywhere in his theological writings.

My own opinion in regard to Swedenborg is this: that at the time of his supposed illumination, he fell into a species of *monomania* — that sometimes denominated *idolomania*. Or if any choose to consider it a state of *natural somnambulism*, I shall not quarrel with them about a name. At any rate, it was a state in which he seemed to himself to look in upon the other world, to behold around him spirits and angels, and to have intercourse and conversa-

tion with them. He was in this state not constantly, but frequently, perhaps usually. Nor does it seem to have been optional with him, at all times, whether he should be in this state, or not. It is said that in his last sickness he was deprived of his spiritual sight; on which account he was greatly troubled, and “vehemently cried out, O my God! hast thou then wholly forsaken thy servant at last? But in a few days he recovered his spiritual sight, which appeared to make him completely happy.”\*

The state into which I suppose Swedenborg fell would imply some disorder of the brain, and of the nervous system; and yet not such a degree of disorder as to deprive him of reason, or the free use of his faculties, on subjects not connected with that of his derangement. Nothing is more common than to see persons insane on some one particular subject, and sane in regard to everything else. Nor is it at all uncommon to find persons insane on precisely *the same subject* with Swedenborg, and in almost exactly the same condition. † I know of no facts in relation

\* Hobart's Memoir, p. 89.

† In the year 1813, Dr. John Ferriar of London published an Essay, on the subject of Apparitions. In it, he lays down the following proposition, which he establishes by a great variety of proof: “*A partial affection of the brain may exist which renders the patient liable to spectral illusions, without disordering the judgment or memory.* From this peculiar condition of the sensorium, the best supported stories of apparitions may be completely accounted for.” A venerable man now living, who once was almost, if not quite, a Swedenborgian, lately told me, that

to him, during the last thirty years of his life, which are not in harmony with the above supposition; while various facts and considerations may be adduced in proof of its correctness.

1. In this view, I may appeal, first, to what we know of Swedenborg's studies, and of the state of his body and mind, just previous to his supposed illumination; also to the account which he himself has given of the change. While "with the most intense application of mind" (to use his own language) he was pursuing his physiological inquiries, endeavoring to reach and investigate the soul through the medium of the body, and discover the hidden bond which unites the material to the spiritual, he was arrested, in the city of London, by a severe attack of fever, attended with delirium. So says Dr. Hartley, one of his earliest followers and friends. This took place near the close of the year 1744, or

it was Dr. Ferriar's Essay which opened his eyes to understand the real condition of Swedenborg. See a Review of Ferriar in the Christian Observer for Dec. 1813.

In the New Englander for July, 1846, there is an able article, by Dr. Knight of New Haven, on Diseases of the Nervous System. In a certain diseased state of the nerves of the senses, says Dr. K., "sensation is experienced, without the presence of the objects upon which it ordinarily depends." Such is the case with persons in *delirium tremens*, and in *acute fevers*. "These also are they, who see visions, and dream dreams, to whom revelations of hidden and mysterious things are made, and *who converse with angels, or with spirits of the dead*. Swedenborg's case, according to Dr. K., was one of a *diseased nervous system*.

early in the following year. In the spring of 1745 — probably before his mind and body were fully restored — we find him still in London, employed as usual in his favorite investigations. “I dined one day,” he says, “rather late by myself, at a boarding house, where I kept a room in which, at pleasure, I could prosecute the study of the natural sciences. I was hungry” (as men generally are when recovering from fever) “and ate with great appetite. At the end of the meal, I remarked that a vapor, as it were, clouded my sight, and the walls of my chamber appeared covered with frightful creeping things, such as serpents, toads, and the like. I was filled with astonishment, but retained the full use of my perceptions and thoughts. The darkness attained to its height, and soon passed away. I then perceived a man sitting in the corner of my chamber. As I thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly terrified, when he spoke and said, ‘*Eat not so much.*’ The cloud once more came over my sight, and when it passed away, I found myself alone in the chamber.” “In the following night, the same man appeared to me again, and said, ‘I am God, the Lord,’” &c. I know not how this account may appear to others; but to my own apprehension, if Swedenborg had undertaken to describe a transformation from a state of sanity to one of partial insanity — insanity in regard to a particular class of subjects, — he could hardly have done it in fitter terms. Nothing is more likely than that the unreasonable indulgence of his appe-

tite should have so affected his lately diseased and now but partially restored cerebral and nervous system, as to produce the strange appearances which he describes. While nothing is more unlikely than that the Lord should have seized an occasion such as this — an occasion of intemperate and censured indulgence, to bestow upon him the greatest honor, — to open, as he says, the eyes of his spirit, and commission him as his inspired messenger to the world.

I have said that Swedenborg was at this time deeply engaged in his physiological studies. It appears that he was not wholly so. I have before me one of his works, entitled “The Worship and the Love of God,” written just previous to his pretended illumination, but published after it. It is a sort of allegorical, poetical production on the creation of the world, and of the first human pair. Celestial spirits are continually introduced, to give completeness and interest to the story. It shows Swedenborg to have been a man of fancy, rather than of judgment — fond of theory and inclined to the marvelous — even in his best state. I could have predicted, after reading this book, that if the author ever fell into any kind of mania, it would be one in which he would have intercourse with imaginary beings.

2. Swedenborg speaks often of sensations in his head, and of the state of his brain, in a way to indicate *disorder* there. Take the following passages as specimens. “I was once seized suddenly with a dis-



ease that seemed to threaten my life. My whole head was oppressed with pain. A pestilential smoke was let in from the great city called Sodom and Egypt. Rev. xi. 8. Half dead with severe anguish, I expected every moment to be my last. Thus I lay in my bed for the space of three days and a half. My spirit was reduced to this state, and in consequence thereof, my body. Then I heard about me the voices of persons, saying, 'Lo, he lies dead in the street of our city, who preached repentance for the remission of sins.' And they asked several of the clergy whether he was worthy of burial, and they answered, 'No; let him lie to be made a spectacle of;' and they passed to and fro and mocked."\*

He speaks elsewhere of the *changes* in the state of his brain. "Immediately on this, I was made sensible of a remarkable *change* in the brain, and of a powerful operation thence proceeding."

3. It will be admitted, I suppose, that the minds of those who are subject to fits of *somnambulism*, strongly marked, coming upon them without any external means (and such cases are not infrequent) can not be in a perfectly healthy condition. Now that Swedenborg was one of this class is evident from his own confession, and is conceded by his followers.

For the sake of illustrating the fact of man's being a spirit as to his interiors, I am disposed to relate," says Swedenborg, "some experimental cases

\* Apoc. Revealed, § 531.

of the manner in which a man is *withdrawn from the body*, and is *taken away by the spirit to another place*. As to what concerns the first point, viz: *being withdrawn from the body*, the case is this: Man is brought into a certain state, which is a *middle state between sleeping and waking*; and when he is in this state, he *can not know that he is any other than that he is wide awake*, all his senses being awake as in the highest wakefulness of the body. In this state also, *spirits and angels are seen altogether to the life*; and they are likewise heard, and (what is wonderful) touched, and in this case, scarcely anything of the body intervenes. This is the state which is called *being withdrawn from the body*. Into this state *I have been let only three or four times*, that I might just know what was its quality." "As to what concerns the other point, viz: *being carried away by the spirit to another place*, it has been shown me by living experience what it is, and in what manner it is effected; but this only two or three times. One single experience I am disposed to adduce. Walking through the streets of a city, and through fields, and being engaged also in discourse with spirits, *I knew no other than that I was awake with my eyes open as at other times*, as I walked without error. In the meantime, I was in vision, seeing groves, rivers, palaces, houses, and many other objects. But after I had thus walked for some hours, suddenly I was in *bodily vision*, and found that I was in another place; at which being greatly aston-

ished, I perceived that I had been in a state similar to that of those of whom it is said, that they were translated by the spirit into another place; for, during the process, the way is not attended to, though it be of several miles; nor is time reflected on, whether it be of hours or days; neither is any fatigue perceived. On such occasions also, the man is directed through ways of which he is himself ignorant, without error, till he reaches the place of his destination.”\* That the cases here described are both of them genuine cases of *somnambulism*, I suppose no one at all acquainted with those forms of mental aberration can doubt. Indeed, Mr. Bush says expressly, after quoting the above passages, “The state here described is so strikingly analogous to that produced by mesmerism, that it can scarcely be regarded otherwise than as an actual development of the interior condition, brought about by that mysterious agency.” † Yet no outward means were employed with Swedenborg to induce this state. He *fell into it*. He did so, he acknowledges, *several times*. He may have been in this state more frequently than he imagined; for he says that while in it, “he knew no other than that he was awake.” He intimates in a following passage, that this was not the state in which he ordinarily held intercourse with spirits and angels, as that was one of “full wakefulness of body.” But how could he know that this

\* Heaven and Hell, §§ 439—441.

† Swed. Library, p. 25.

state was not one of "full wakefulness of body;" since he says expressly that, while in it, one "can not know any other than that he is altogether awake?" I do not affirm that all Swedenborg's supposed intercourse with the spiritual world occurred during his fits of somnambulism; though I cannot perceive, from his own account of the matter, how he could know or affirm the contrary. But what I mean to say is this: *He was subject to such fits.* This he confesses, and his friends allow. And certainly, his being *subject* to them, — *falling into them* from time to time, without any external appliances, is evidence enough of a mind diseased.

4. The private habits of Swedenborg during the last thirty years of his life, as detailed by those who were nearest to him and most intimate with him, clearly indicate derangement. The following passages are from Mr. Robsam's Memoir: "The old gardener and his wife told me, with much apparent sympathy and compassion, that when their master (Swedenborg) was alone in his chamber, he often spoke *loud* and *fervently*. They could hear him distinctly, because their chamber was adjoining his. When they inquired the cause of his restlessness during the night, he would answer, that bad spirits attempted to injure him, and for that cause he had spoken as he did." — "After one of these trials he went to bed, and remained there *many days and nights without rising*. His domestics felt great

anxiety on his account, and feared he had died of some great fright. They thought of calling his relations, and forcing open the door; but at length the gardener climbed up to a window, and on looking in, to his great joy saw his master turn himself in bed. On the following day, he rang his bell. The gardener's wife went to his chamber, and told him how much they had suffered from anxiety on his account; to which he replied, with a benignant countenance, that he was well, and had needed nothing."

"I inquired of the gardener's wife, if she had ever observed anything remarkable in Swedenborg's eyes, or the expression of his countenance, during the time he was in the spirit. She answered, 'One day, after dinner, I went into his room, and *saw his eyes shining with an appearance like clear fire*. I stepped back astonished and exclaimed, "For God's sake, what is the matter? You look fearfully? How then do I look, said he? I told him what I saw. Well, well, said he, do not fear. The Lord has opened my bodily eyes, and I am in the spirit; but I shall soon be out of this state, and it will not hurt me. It was even as he said; for in about half an hour the shining appearance ceased."

On one of his voyages from Sweden to England, Swedenborg remained almost the whole time in his berth, "but was often heard speaking, as if in conversation. The cabin boy and steward told the captain that *he appeared to be out of his head*. The captain answered, He may be out of his head, or

not; but so long as he remains quiet, I have no power over him." Of another of his voyages to London it is said, that for "most of the time, he lay in his berth and talked."\*

On another occasion, when about to leave England for his own country, he put up for the night at an inn near the port, expecting to embark in the morning. After he had been a while in bed, his friends heard a remarkable noise in his room; when, looking in through a window, they "saw him with his hands raised toward heaven, and his body appeared to tremble. He spoke much for the space of half an hour, but they could understand nothing of what he said, except that when he let down his hands, they heard him say with a loud voice, *my God!*" He afterwards explained the matter to them by saying, that he had "had a long discourse with heavenly friends." †

I do not urge these testimonies — all which become from the friends of Swedenborg, as conclusive proof of his insanity, and yet they obviously indicate it. A person pursuing just such a course of life among ourselves — exhibiting the same strangeness, occasional wildness, and eccentricity of deportment, could hardly avoid the imputation of being more or less insane.

5. Hence, it is not to be wondered at, that the opinion prevailed pretty extensively among Swedenborg's

\* In Hobart's life, pp. 216—218.

† Documents, &c., p. 68.

cotemporaries, that he was a *mentally disordered man*. Such was the opinion of Mr. Wesley; — an opinion formed, not from hostility to Swedenborg, or from any prejudice against him; for originally his prejudices were strong in his favor. “I sat down,” says he, “to day to read, and seriously to consider, some of the writings of Baron Swedenborg. I began with *huge prejudices in his favor*, knowing him to be a pious man, one of a strong understanding, of much learning, and one who thoroughly believed himself. But I could not hold out long. Any one of his visions puts his real character out of doubt. He is one of the most ingenious, lively, entertaining *madmen* that ever sat pen to paper. But his waking dreams are so wild, so far remote both from scripture and common sense, that one might as easily swallow the stories of Tom Thumb, or of Jack the Giant killer.”

Again, Mr. Wesley says, “In traveling this week, I looked over Baron Swedenborg’s account of heaven and hell. He was a man of piety, of a strong understanding, and a most lively imagination. But he had a violent fever when he was about fifty-five years old, *which quite overturned his understanding. Nor did he ever recover it, but it continued ‘majestic, though in ruins.’* From that time, he was exactly in the state of that man at Argos,

“ *Qui se credebat miros audire tragædos,  
In vacuo lætus sessor, plausorq; theatro.*”

“ Who wond’rous tragedies was wont to hear,  
Sitting alone in th’ empty theater.” \*

At the period when Swedenborg was so much in London, the Rev. Mr. Mathesius was minister of the Swedish chapel there. He is represented by Mr. Noble, as a personal enemy of Swedenborg; but I have seen no evidence of this, except that he regarded him as a deranged man. He told the same story as Wesley, and probably was the informant of Wesley, viz. that just previous to his pretended illumination, Swedenborg had a violent fever, attended with delirium; and though he recovered from the fever, his reason was never fully restored. As to the fever and delirium, Mr. Mathesius’ situation gave him the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the *facts*. In regard to subsequent derangement, he could only express an *opinion*; and that was as before stated. And this seems to have been the opinion generally entertained in England at that time, by those who knew anything of Swedenborg, and were not the receivers of his doctrines.

The same opinion also prevailed extensively in Swedenborg’s own country. At Dr. Beyer’s first interview with him at Gottenberg, he entertained, he says, “ the same sentiments with many others in that country, with respect to his being a *madman*.”

The following circumstance is recorded by Mr. Robsam. “ During the sitting of the Diet, in 1769, certain members of the ecclesiastical order contrived

\* Wesley’s Works, Vol. 3, p. 293. Vol. 4, p. 34



a very crafty plan of attack against Swedenborg. They purposed to bring him to trial, and in the first stage of the hearing, to declare that *he had lost his mind, and become insane*, by excessive endeavors to explore religious mysteries; and this plan would have taken away his freedom, and confined him in a mad house, as an insane person.\* Mr. Robsam goes on to say that the project was abandoned, only in consideration of Swedenborg's station in society, and the respectability of his family connections. Now admitting (what is very probable) that this whole design was malicious, as it certainly was unreasonable; for, sane or insane, Swedenborg was never a *dangerous* man; still, the fact that such a design was formed, and would have been executed but for the reason assigned, shows how deeply and generally the impression prevailed, that he was, at least partially, an insane person.

I might argue the prevalence of such an opinion, by referring, not only to the early attacks which were made upon Swedenborg, but to the *defenses of his friends*; nearly all of whom were careful to vindicate him, so far as possible, from the imputation of *insanity*; — a thing which they certainly would not have done, had not such an impression pretty extensively prevailed.

I have said that instances of insanity almost precisely similar to that of Swedenborg, are by no

\* Documents, &c., pp. 80, 89.

means uncommon. It may be important to adduce a few well attested cases.

The first to which I shall refer, is that of Nicolai, the celebrated Berlin bookseller. He was a philosopher, and a man of learning, but one in whom the imaginative power was very excitable, and in a high degree inventive or creative. In these respects he resembled Swedenborg. Having met with a series of vexations and disappointments, his wife and another person came into his room one morning, in order to console him; "but I was too much agitated," he says, "to be capable of attending to them. On a sudden, I perceived, at about the distance of ten steps, *a form like that of a deceased person*. I pointed at it, and asked my wife if she did not see it. It was but natural that she should not see anything. My question, therefore, alarmed her very much, and she immediately sent for a physician. The phantom continued about eight minutes, and disappeared." Nicolai afterwards slept a little; saw his physician; and both hoped that no unpleasant consequences would be realized. "But the violent agitation of my mind," says he, "had in some way *disordered my nerves*, and at four in the afternoon, the form which I had seen in the morning re-appeared. I was by myself when this happened, and being rather uneasy at the circumstance, I went to my wife's apartment; but there, likewise, I was followed by the apparition, which, at intervals, disappeared, and always presented itself in a standing posture.

About six o'clock, there appeared several walking figures, which had no connection with the first.

“After the first day, the form of the deceased person no more appeared, but its place was supplied with other phantoms, sometimes representing acquaintances, but mostly strangers; and of those whom I knew, some were living persons, and others deceased.\* These phantoms seemed equally clear and distinct at all times, by day and by night, alone and in company, in my own house and when abroad. When I shut my eyes, they would often vanish entirely, but appear again as soon as my eyes were opened. I saw human forms of both sexes; but usually they seemed not to take the smallest notice of each other, moving as in a market place, where all are eager to press through the crowd. At times, however, they seemed to be transacting business with each other.”

“All these phantoms appeared to me in their natural size, and *as distinct as if alive*, exhibiting different complexions, as well as different colors and fashions in their dresses. None of them appeared particularly terrible, comical, or disgusting. Most of them were of an indifferent shape, and some presented a pleasing aspect. About four weeks after the phantoms first appeared, they increased in number, and I began to *hear them talk*. They sometimes

\* Swedenborg's specters were not all of them deceased. Some were living on the earth at the time when he saw them, or seemed to see them in the other world. See Documents, &c., p. 113.

conversed among themselves, but more commonly directed their discourse to me. Their speeches were short, and never of an unpleasant character. At different times, dear friends of both sexes appeared to me, whose addresses tended to appease my grief, which had not yet wholly subsided. These consoling friends generally addressed me when alone; but not unfrequently in company, and sometimes while real persons were speaking to me."

Had Nicolai recorded these addresses, and published them as "Memorable Relations," I doubt not they had been quite as edifying as those of Swedenborg. Nicolai constantly regarded his case as one of disease, and was finally cured by the application of leeches.\*

The next case of which I shall give some account is that of Mrs. Kauffe, commonly called "the Seeress of Prevorst." A Memoir of her, of some three hundred pages, has been published by Dr. Kerner, her physician, at whose house she spent the latter part of her life. She was naturally nervous, hysterical and superstitious; and these infirmities of her nature were all heightened by the manner of her education. She was nurtured, so to speak, in the midst of specters, and was often affected, almost to madness, by the terrific character of her dreams.

\* Memoir on the appearance of Specters or Phantoms occasioned by Disease, read by Nicolai to the Royal Society of Berlin, Feb. 28th, 1799, as quoted by Hibbert, Part I. Chap. 1. Quoted also by Prof. Upham, in his "Disordered Mental Action," § 70.

She was a notable subject of the mesmeric influence, from which, at different times, she derived much benefit.

Her veritable ghost-seeing commenced not long after her marriage, some time in the year 1822. The first specter that visited her was that of "an old knight," who told her that he was miserable in the other world; "that he had murdered his brother; and that there was something concealed in a certain vault, the discovery of which would ease his remorse." The seeress, like Swedenborg, was a frequent instructor of the spirits; and as her instructions were more Scriptural than his, they were commonly attended with better results. She told the knight, that to open the vault would give him no relief. He must repent, and pray, and flee to the Saviour. She prayed with him herself in repeated instances. After a while, "his dark form became gradually brighter; he thanked her for leading him to Christ; and after appearing with his children, and singing a song of joy, he visited her no more."

Her next apparition was that of a "short figure, with a dark cowl like a monk, and an old looking, wrinkled face. He also confessed himself to have been a murderer. He continued his visits for a whole year. At length, under the influence of her good instructions, his form became brighter; he made less noise; and finally disappeared.

"A tall female, holding in her arms a new-born child, occasionally accompanied the old monk during

his later visits. She assured Mrs. Kauffe, that she could be happy, if she only knew how to approach the Redeemer. She came to her for her prayers and advice. Mrs. Kauffe urged her to pray for herself; and finally, after many visits, the specter came to her in a white robe, saying, 'The time is come for me to know that Jesus Christ is really the Son of God.' Mrs. Kauffe then prayed earnestly with her, after which she appeared no more."

Besides her native German, the seeress professed to speak in another language, which she called "her *inner tongue*. This she said was *the natural language of the soul*, and was *that spoken at the time of Jacob*."\*

Mrs. Kauffe described her spirit as capable of leaving her body, and moving through time and space. In this way, she occasionally saw her own body, while out of it. In her Memoir, there is an elaborate description of the spheres through which she passed while in this ethereal, spiritual state.

During the latter part of her life, her intercourse with spirits was more promiscuous and constant. They appeared to her at all times of the day, and under all circumstances. She saw them more clearly by a good light, than in the dark. Their appearance was the same as when they were alive. The

\* So Swedenborg taught that spirits have a language peculiar to themselves. It is not, however, the language of Jacob, nor one that "was ever spoken in the natural world." Conj. Love, § 326.

spirits of wicked persons were darker, trod more heavily, and made more noise, than those of the good. The latter "had long, flowing, shining robes, with a girdle round the waist, and they appeared to glide or float, rather than to walk." Mrs. Kauffe's spirits, like those of Swedenborg, are represented as occupying a middle region, in which they are preparing for a higher state of bliss; but unlike him, she represents it as possible for the very *worst* spirits — even those of murderers, to be here regenerated. She uniformly taught them to seek forgiveness in prayer, and faith in the Saviour; and in nearly every case, she had the satisfaction of seeing them grow gradually brighter under her tuition, till at length they soared away into a higher state, beyond her sphere of spiritual vision.

The external evidence of Mrs. Kauffe's intercourse with the spiritual world (if we may credit her physician and other witnesses) was incomparably superior to that afforded by Swedenborg. For her spirits made all sorts of noises, opened and shut doors and books, moved articles, &c., all which things were palpable to the senses of spectators.

Then they revealed to her secrets, and gave her a knowledge of things remotely past, and far distant, to an extent which puts the marvels of Swedenborg, quite into shade. \*

\* The following is the title of Dr. Kerner's Memoir. "The

I have given a longer account of the case here introduced than I, at first, intended; but perhaps not longer than it merits. No one can read the whole story of "the Seeress of Prevorst" without being satisfied that she was a poor, shattered, nervous, brain-sick woman, some of whose fancies are amusing enough, but in the *truth* of which no person ought to place the slightest confidence. Yet they are as well attested, every way, as the revelations of Swedenborg. The evidence in support of them, external and internal, is as great, at least, as that which is so earnestly pleaded for him.

It would be needless to multiply accounts of such cases; they are frequently described in papers and books, and are of continual occurrence among clairvoyants and spiritualists, at the present day.

It is interesting to know that cases of this kind, however various in some of their aspects, are subject, in one view, to the same general law. The specters or angels which any one sees have a manifest connection with *his state of mind at the time*; with his habits of thought and feeling, with his opinions, studies, and pursuits. Indeed, the specters which he sees may be said to grow out of his mental states and habits, to fall in with them, and instead of adding

*Seeress of Prevorst, being Revelations concerning the inner Life of Man, and the Inter-diffusion of a World of Spirits in the one we inhabit.*" There is a Review of the Memoir in the British Quarterly Review; also in the American Eclectic Magazine for Jan. 1846.



to his stock of real knowledge, serve only to confirm him in what he was before. It is well understood that a person's *dreams* have an intimate connection with his existing state of mind and body. I suppose his specters (if he sees any) will have about the same connection.

It is a common remark, that English and American ghosts are almost always robed in white; while Italian ghosts more generally appear in black, and not unfrequently drag a chain. This is owing, undoubtedly, to the impressions prevailing among the people of these countries as to the appropriate figure and costume of such personages.

Christians commonly think of angels as young persons with wings; and who ever saw an angel appear in any other form or shape? Even Swedenborg's angels (or some of them) had wings.

When a Millerite had a trance, or a vision of angels, they always told him of the approaching end of the world; and until the set time had passed, were sure to point him to 1843. And so of other religionists who are in the habit of seeing visions; they only learn, as a general thing, from the other world, to be more than ever confirmed in their several peculiarities.

Mary Matthews, a pious, nervous, marvel-seeking and wonder-believing old woman, was the intimate friend and parishioner of the late excellent Mr. Fletcher, of Madely. When her pastor died, she was a sincere mourner, and for a long time could

think of little else in heaven, besides the Lord Jesus and Mr. Fletcher. Well, at length she had a vision of heaven; and what did she see there? "Falling back in my chair, I remembered no more of anything outward, but thought I was at the threshold of a most beautiful place. I could just look in. The first thing I saw was the Lord Jesus, sitting on a throne. There was a beautiful crown over his head. A glorious light appeared on one side, and all around him was glory. Turning my eyes a little, I saw close to my Saviour, my dear minister, Mr. Fletcher. He looked continually on the Lord Jesus, with a sweet smile. But he had a very different appearance from what he had in the body, and yet there was such an exact resemblance, that I could have known him among a thousand. Features and limbs just the same, but not of flesh. It seemed to be all light; I never saw anything like it. I looked on him a long time, and saw every feature, with its old likeness. He then turned his eyes on me, and held out his hands to me, just as he used to do. I seemed to have lost my old, weak, shaking body. I seemed to myself as if I could have gone to the world's end, as light as air." \*

The celebrated William Tennent once had a trance, in which he continued for several days, until his friends were about to bury him, as one dead. He seemed to himself to go to heaven;—and what was the kind of heaven which he saw? The account is

\* In Noble's Appeal, p. 316.

too long to be inserted here. Suffice it to say, that it was just such a heaven as an ardent, devoted, orthodox young minister might be expected to see; not differing materially, I presume, from the truth; though I ground my presumption not at all on his testimony, but on the fact that his account agrees so essentially with the Bible.

Nicolai lived in a great city, and was a man of business; and owing to numberless perplexities in business, his brain became excited, and he saw specters. And how does he describe their appearance? They seemed to be "moving as in a market place, where all are eager to press through the crowd. At times, however, they seemed to be transacting business with each other."

Mrs. Kauffe early received the impression that the *unquiet* dead — those who cannot rest in their graves until they have unburdened themselves to the living on the earth — are such as have committed murders or other great crimes, have concealed treasures, &c. Consequently, such were the characters of the specters which first appeared to her, and which remained the longest time with her.

Some years ago, Dr. Hitchcock of Amherst College had a fever, which did not deprive him of reason, but it subjected him to numberless optical illusions. I do not recollect that he saw specters, but he saw almost everything else. And what is specially to be noted, the scenes, the appearances, the objects which he saw, were most signally coinci-

dent with his previous studies, theories, habits, predilections, and pursuits. Indeed, they obviously *grew right out of these*, as any one may perceive by examining the account.\*

But I need not adduce further examples in illustration of the law above laid down, as the existence of it is fully conceded by Swedenborg and his followers. In assigning reasons why frequent, open intercourse with spirits is not desirable, Swedenborg says, "The spirits which attend a man are such as are *in agreement with his affections and thoughts*. Hence, did he openly converse with them, they would only *confirm him in his existing state of mind*, and add their testimony to the truth of all his falses, and the good of all his evils. Enthusiasts would thus be confirmed in their enthusiasm, and fanatics in their fanaticism." †

Never, probably, did Swedenborg utter a greater truth than this, or one of a more important practical influence. He lays down the law of specters and apparitions, with perfect accuracy and truth. The only difference between him and me, relates to the *nature* of the specters in question, he regarding them as real beings, and I as imaginary. But whether real or imaginary, we are agreed as to the law according to which they ordinarily appear; and I shall proceed to show that this law is strictly applicable

\* In the New Englander for April, 1845.

† In Clissold's Letter, p. 197. See also New Jerusalem Magazine, Vol. 19, p. 25.

to Swedenborg's own case. His angels and spirits were *just what we might expect them to be*, considering his previous studies, habits, opinions and character. As Mr. Emerson says, "his interlocutors all *Swedenborgize*." They fall in exactly with his existing feelings, opinions, and trains of thought, and do little more than confirm him in what he had before elaborated.

For example, Swedenborg was a *learned* man for his time — especially so in the natural sciences; and his angels, in general, are *learned angels* — very different from those of Jacob Behmen, or of Mrs. Kauffe.\* They knew just as much as he did, about anatomy, physiology, mineralogy, astronomy, and chemistry. Where his knowledge was accurate, so was theirs; and where he blundered, they blundered also. He thought that Saturn was the most distant planet from the sun; and so did they. He thought that love was the cause of the redness of the blood, and also of animal heat; and so did they. He thought that the change of the blood in the lungs was effected by inhaled odors: and so did they. And hence the passion of his celestials for sweet odors, and of his infernals for those of an offensive nature.

Again, the *subjects*, which most occupied the thoughts and impressed the heart of Swedenborg, were precisely those in which his angels felt the deepest interest. For example, the two articles of

\* Mrs. Kauffe's angels became more learned, after she went to reside with Dr. Kerner.

the Lutheran creed, at which he took the greatest offence, were those of the trinity, and justification by faith. And these, with proportionately the greatest frequency, enter into the discussions of his angels.

The same principle may be illustrated by a more striking example. Swedenborg, in the early part of his life, was *sorely, incurably* disappointed in love. He could *resign* the beautiful daughter of Polhem, but he could not forget her. Her image seems to have haunted him, as long as he lived.\* He thought a great deal, undoubtedly, of conjugal love; of its sweetness and happiness, especially when unalloyed, and when it was fully and mutually gratified. He could conceive of no enjoyment, no heaven, to be compared to this. Accordingly his angels are the most of them *desperate lovers*. With them, conjugal love is the love of all loves, and the delight of all delights. They can think and talk of little else, but the sweetness, the blessedness of conjugal love.

I have no doubt that grave and learned Swedenborgians have often been puzzled at the strange and extravagant manner in which their illustrious teacher allows himself to speak on this subject. I have not quoted his strongest and most offensive passages.

\* In his old age, when she who was once Emerentia Polhem had long since been married, had had a family, and was dead, Swedenborg told her daughters, who came to see him in his garden, "that he could now converse with their departed mother whenever he pleased." Hobart's Life, p. 103.

There are some which can be regarded in no other light, than as the ebullitions of a love-sick frenzy. But on the theory I propose, the whole matter is easily enough accounted for. Swedenborg, in his youth, was a love-sick man; and the disease continued upon him, more or less, to the end of life. Consequently, his spirits and angels partook of the same feeling. And they talked, and reasoned, and laid down propositions, and convened councils in heaven to consider them; and sometimes they became so much excited that they could not reason, but rather ranted forth their frenzy, as best they were able. Dr. Tafel, a learned German of the New Church, expresses the opinion that Swedenborg's love-sickness "tended gradually to prepare him for his great work." I have no doubt it did; though in a very different way from what the good Doctor seems to suppose.

It must be further evident to every reader of Swedenborg, that he had adopted nearly all the peculiarities of his system, before what he calls his illumination; so that his spirits and angels, when they came upon the stage, had little else to do, but to illustrate and enlarge upon his existing theories, and confirm him the more strongly in the belief of them. His peculiar notions of the trinity, and of justification were probably imbibed in early life. According to his own account of the matter, he used to dispute with the clergy upon these and other theological

points, almost from childhood.\* In his work on "the Worship and Love of God," written before his illumination, his theory of creation is unfolded, just as he afterwards received it from the angels. The natural earths are from the atmosphere of the natural law, — which is from the atmosphere of the spiritual sun, — which is from God. It is certain, also, that he had adopted his whole theory of correspondences, and prepared his "Hieroglyphical Key to Representatives and Correspondences," some considerable time before he began to have intercourse with the spiritual world. And his correspondences enter into everything which he afterwards wrote. They lie at the foundation of nearly all that is peculiar in his system.

The case in regard to Swedenborg may therefore be summed up as follows: He claimed to have direct intercourse with the other world, and to bring us new revelations from God. This claim, for various reasons which have been detailed in the foregoing chapters, we reject. The question then arises, What are we to think of Swedenborg? Did he *design* to impose upon the world, or not? Was he a *willful impostor*, or a self-deluded *monomaniac*? The latter is the more charitable supposition, and I think the more reasonable one. It is that which, with much confidence, I adopt. In support of it, I have adduced Swedenborg's own published account of the change through which he passed. I have quoted what he

\* Hobart's Life, p. 144.



said of himself — of his peculiar feelings and his experience, afterwards. I have shown that his appearance and habits in private life indicated a degree of insanity; and that this was the opinion generally formed of him by those of his cotemporaries who did not receive his doctrines.

I have further shown, that his is by no means a peculiar case. Instances are frequently occurring of *acknowledged* monomania — where there is, obviously, a disturbed, disordered state of the brain and of the nervous system — which, in greater or less degrees (and some of them almost precisely) resemble his.

I have, moreover, pointed out what may be regarded as a *law* of spectral appearances in such cases, and have shown that it is strictly applicable to the specters of Swedenborg. They as naturally *grew out of* his habitual states of thought and feeling, as a person's dreams ordinarily arise from his waking thoughts and habits, and from his intercourse in life.

To my own mind, therefore, the case of Swedenborg is a *clear* one — as clear as, under the circumstances, and with our present means of information, could be expected. He was as rational as ever, on all subjects except one or two; and when these were not introduced or touched upon, he wrote, he published, he appeared in society, much as usual. But in reference to these subjects — I mean those pertaining to his revelations, his mind was disordered;

it had become unbalanced ; and he was, to a degree, *insane*. There can be no reasonable doubt of it. Still, there was method, even in his insanity. His specters did not run riot with him. They followed chiefly in the train of his natural thoughts, giving a sort of personal existence and reality to what were before the theories, the abstractions, the mere conceptions of his own mind. This theory harmonizes all the known facts in the case of Swedenborg ; and to my apprehension it is the only one that does. I propose it therefore, and I accept it, as *the truth*.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

My object in preparing this work is now in great measure accomplished. I have presented a sketch of Swedenborg's life, together with the leading principles of his religious system. I have urged at considerable length my objections to his doctrines and claims. I have gone into a consideration of the character and state of his mind, that my readers may have the means of forming an intelligent opinion in regard to him.

It may be objected, perhaps, that I have not treated Swedenborg fairly, in that I have only quoted insulated passages, and these, in general, not his best passages. In reply I admit that I have quoted insulated passages. I could not reasonably be expected to quote whole volumes. But my readers will bear me witness that the passages have been numerous, some of them long; and they have all been presented

in such a way as to give the real meaning of the author.

And if I have not quoted the best passages in Swedenborg, so neither have I the worst. There are passages not a few in his writings, which never can be quoted by any decent commentator. Indeed, they should never be translated into English. In translating his diary, Prof. Bush found passages of "so gross a character," that he was constrained to omit them.\*

We approve his discretion. Well had it been, not only for the honor of Swedenborg, but for the sensibilities of readers, if previous translators had been as wise.

It may be thought by some, that I have misapprehended the meaning of Swedenborg, and consequently have misrepresented him. To this I can only say in reply, that I make no pretensions to a sixth or seventh sense, or to any supernatural insight into things darkly and dubiously revealed. I claim only the ordinary intelligence of a man; and if, in the exercise of this, I have not understood the writings of Swedenborg, it is because they *can not be understood* by one of ordinary capacities and powers. I have read nearly all Swedenborg's theological writings which have been translated, and with the deepest attention of which I am capable. I have read the remarks and comments of his followers. I

\* See Swed. Library, Part ii., Vol. iii., p. 9.

have honestly endeavored to understand them ; and I do understand the ordinary meaning of the terms employed. And if any will say, after all, that I have misapprehended them, and consequently have failed to represent them fairly, I can only reply that they are then *unintelligible*. And this is reason enough for rejecting them, as constituting a revelation from God.

It follows from the exhibition which has been made of Swedenborgianism, that it is not properly Christianity. Nor can it be regarded as a *sect*, a *form* of Christianity. It constitutes a different system of faith and worship. It constitutes, in fact, a different religion. So say learned Swedenborgians, and I fully agree with them. "The New Jerusalem Church," says Mr. Barrett, "is not to be considered as a *sect*, or as one of the numerous progeny of the old church. It is a church formed and existing under a *new dispensation*, which is altogether distinct from every former dispensation. It claims no nearer relationship to any of the numerous sects in Christendom, than the first Christian church claimed to any of the Jewish sects." \* If Christianity is not Judaism, nor Judaism Christianity ; no more, according to Mr. Barrett, is Swedenborgianism Christianity.

That the system of Swedenborg is not properly Christianity, will appear from the following considerations :

Lectures, p. 152.

1. The Swedenborgian does not worship *the same God* as the Christian, nor in the same manner. The Christian's God exists in a three-fold distinction of persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Swedenborgian's God exists in one person only, and in a human form. The Christian's worship is *to the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit*. (Eph. ii. 18.) He is specially instructed to present his prayers in *the name of Christ*. But to such a mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, both the Swedenborgian's creed, and his practice, are alike strangers.

2. The Swedenborgian has not the same *Bible* as the Christian. The Christian's Bible consists of sixty-six canonical books, interpreted after the ordinary, standard rules of exegesis. The Swedenborgian's Bible consists of but about half this number of inspired books, and these to be interpreted in an entirely different way. He also regards the theological writings of Swedenborg, amounting to some forty or fifty volumes, as possessing a sort of divine authority, — as being, in fact, *revelations* from God.

3. The Swedenborgian has not the same *foundation of hope, or method of salvation*, as the Christian. The Christian builds all his hope on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the Swedenborgian rejects. The Christian receives pardon and justification by faith alone; whereas the Swedenborgian expects to be justified in some other way.

4. The Swedenborgian has not the same standard of *piety, or rules of morality*, as the Christian. After

what was said above, (chap. x.) this point needs no further illustration.

5. The *future state*, as exhibited in the Swedenborgian theology, is entirely different from that of the Christian. Of Swedenborg's world of spirits, or intermediate state, the Christian Scriptures know absolutely nothing; while the doctrines of the resurrection, the general judgment, and the end of the world, of which the Scriptures so clearly inform us, Swedenborg utterly discards. And then his heaven and his hell, the final abodes of the righteous and the wicked, are less in accordance with the Christian revelation, than they are with the absurd fancies of the Koran.

Without pursuing the contrast of these two systems further, it is perfectly obvious that between the Christian church, and what is commonly called the New church, there is, and there can be, *no proper Christian fellowship*. The members of these churches hold so little in common, while their views are so utterly diverse and repugnant on all the great principles of religion, that there really is no room for *Christian fellowship* remaining. I can respect my Swedenborgian neighbor as a citizen and a man; I can perform for him every kind and friendly office; I can accord to him all his civil and social rights, and seek his good for time and eternity; but when asked to extend to him, or to his church, the right hand of *Christian fellowship*, I must, in all consistency, decline. And he must pursue the same course in re-

gard to me. He can no more receive me to fellowship, than I him.

I know that some Swedenborgian ministers in England have retained their livings, and received their salaries in the established church; and that there are Swedenborgians, here and there, still connected with our churches; but I am unable to see the consistency of such connections; and Swedenborg abjures them even more strongly than I do. "The faith of the New Church," says he, "cannot by any means *be* together with the faith of the former church; and in case they be together, such a collision and conflict will ensue, as to destroy every thing relating to the church in man." The reason he assigns for this is, that the two churches "do not agree in one third, no, *nor even in one tenth part.*"\* So Mr. S. Worcester says, the members of the New church "can not regard the old church and the world, as holding the doctrines of the true Christian religion, and can not with propriety recognize *any communion of belief*, except so far as the common false doctrines are rejected, and those of the New church are received." †

In representing, however, as I have felt constrained to do, that Swedenborgianism is not Christianity, and that between those holding the two systems there

\* Brief Exposition, &c., §§ 102, 103. Yet Swedenborg never formally separated himself from the Lutheran church, but received the sacrament from one of its ministers on his death-bed.

† Remarks on two Pamphlets, &c., p. 25.



can be no proper christian fellowship, I must not be understood as saying that *no professed Swedenborgian can be a Christian*. I am under no necessity of drawing such a conclusion as this. People sometimes are much *better* than their religious systems; sometimes they are *worse*. I may decide against what seems to me a *system* of error and delusion, without passing judgment on the characters of individuals who profess to have embraced it. I trust there are true Christians in what is called the New church. I hope there are many such. But for myself, I do not see how they can long live and thrive there as Christians, where the appropriate *food*, the *nutriment* of Christian piety is so essentially wanting.

The question is often asked, How shall it be accounted for that so many intelligent and sensible persons fall into the errors and absurdities of Swedenborg? For if *his* mind was, to some extent, diseased and deranged, theirs are not. If he had partially lost his reason, they retain theirs. And how is it that such persons adopt his strange, incoherent notions, and become his followers? In replying to these questions, I must be permitted to ask several others. How can it be accounted for that the great and learned Tertullian, in the second century, should have become a Montanist, and should really have believed that the crazy Montanus was the *Paraclete* from heaven? How can it be accounted for that the acute and eloquent Augustine should have been for

years a Manichæan? How can it be accounted for that Anna Lee should have collected so many followers, and established so extensively her shaking communities, some of which continue to the present time? How can it be accounted for that the Mormon leaders should have made fools of hundreds and thousands of intelligent men and women, filched from them their property, and acquired such an unbounded influence over them? The truth is, that man is naturally a religious being. He must and he will have some kind of religion. And when he departs from the plain standard of the Bible, there is *no* accounting for his vagaries. There is no telling into what extravagances he may be left to fall.

It is also true, that some persons are more exposed, constitutionally, to extravagances of this kind, than others. They are not satisfied to walk in a plain, beaten path. They crave something new. They are fond of the *marvelous*, more especially so in matters of religion. And the more strange and incredible the disclosures of any pretender are, the more likely will he be to gain followers from this class.

Some *special* reasons may be assigned why Swedenborg has obtained followers, and these too, in some instances, from the more intelligent classes of society. In the first place, his religion may be called a *poetical* religion. He had himself a lively, inventive imagination; and as reason faltered under the pressure of mental disease, his fancy became more

than ever the predominant faculty. His numberless analogies and correspondences are almost all fanciful; and they afford abundant scope for the dreams and the reveries of his followers. And then this mingling up of the spiritual world with the natural — this perpetual intercourse with invisible beings, our departed friends among the rest — the thought, too, that we are ourselves about to become angels, and may almost become such while in the body; — all this is exceedingly fascinating to a certain class of minds. Their fancies dwell upon it, and revel in it; they drink it in, and enjoy it, and call it religion; not stopping to inquire whether it is any better than the religion of a dream.

Another thing which recommends Swedenborgianism to not a few, is its utter rejection of *offensive gospel doctrines*. Some are dissatisfied with the Christian doctrine of the trinity; and still they do not wish to become Unitarians, in the more common acceptation of the term. And so they adopt the Swedenborgian theory on the subject, which they think removes all difficulties, and makes the matter perfectly plain. Others are unwilling to renounce their own righteousness as a foundation of hope, put their trust in the Saviour, and receive salvation as the gift of his grace; and so they embrace a religion which sets aside the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and encourages them to seek for heaven in some other way. Others still are offended with the Bible doctrine of future punishment — with the

*nature* and *grounds* of it, as well as its duration; and so they flee to a religion, which assures them that "God casts no one down to hell, but the spirit casts himself down;" that the very devils are "the objects of infinite mercy," and are "made as happy as they can be," consistently with their characters.

Then it is to be considered, that the religion of Swedenborg is a very *easy* religion, with regard to its acquirements and restraints. "It is not so difficult," says he, "to live the life that leads to heaven, as some people suppose." "The Scriptures," says Mr. Noble, "*never* represent the life that leads to heaven as a thing of great difficulty." Gross immoralities, of *most* kinds, are indeed condemned, and persons are required to "avoid evils as sins." But the question arises, What are evils? Not fashionable diversions and amusements, such as "convivialities, feasts, entertainments, and all kinds of merry makings; cards, dice, billiards, dancing parties," &c. Not conformity to the world, and "the concupiscences of the body and the flesh." These are rather encouraged, than otherwise. They are recommended, and not forbidden. But to "walk continually in pious meditation about God, salvation, and eternal life" — to spend one's days "in prayer, in reading the word, and other pious books" — this is "to procure a sorrowful life, which is not receptive of heavenly joy." Now it is not strange that a religion such as this should be highly pleasing to a large class in society. It is not strange that numbers, who wish to have the

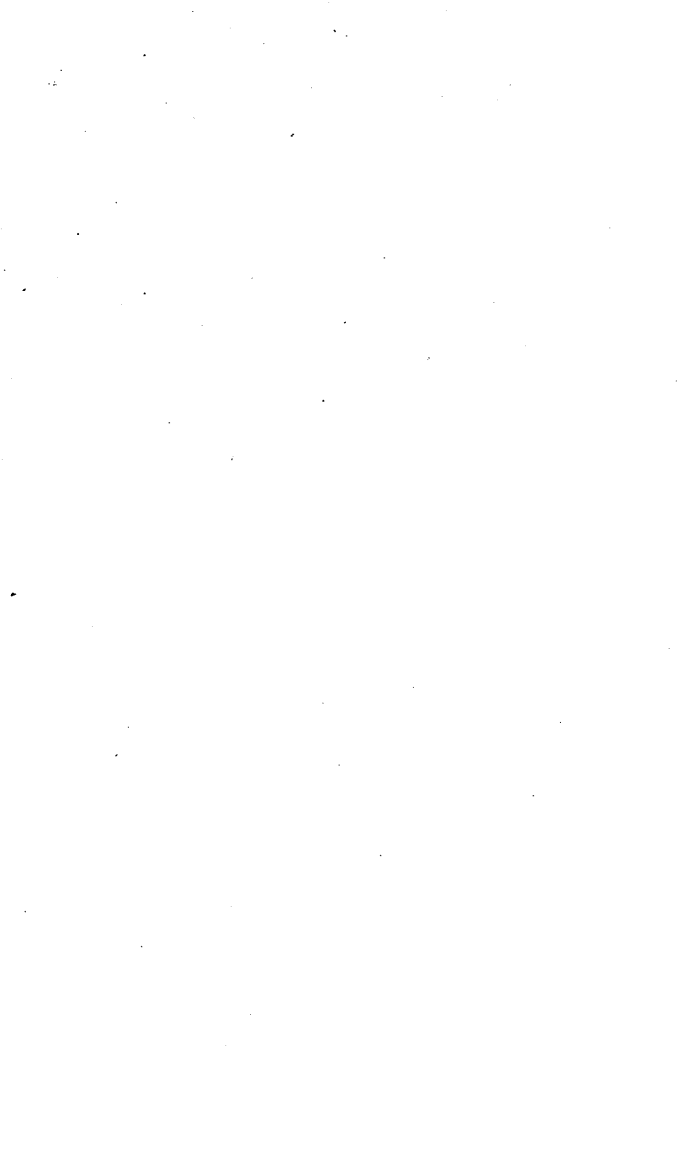
credit and the comfort of a religion, without its restraints, should stand ready to embrace it.

Especially is this not to be wondered at, when the religion of their choice comes recommended to them under the imposing title of "the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" — a "new church" — "the crown of all churches" — built on the ruins of the proper christian church, and as much superior to it in light and privileges, as that was superior to the Jewish. Here are individuals who, only a few days ago, had no thought that they belonged to any church, or that they possessed any religion. They made no pretensions to it, and sometimes felt a painful sense of their need of it. But now, without any change of character or pursuit, or so much as the requisition of any, by merely adopting the Swedenborgian peculiarities, they find themselves suddenly and marvelously exalted. They are in a church, which is *above all churches*; and are in possession of a religion which as much transcends the old fashioned, God-seeking religion of christians, as theirs does the twilight and shadows of Judaism. No wonder that such persons become giddy, at times, with their fancied elevation, and are captivated with a religion which they think has done so much for them.

I might add, in this connection, that not a few profess the religion of Swedenborg, while they are in comparative ignorance of its doctrines. They have caught some single feature of the system, with which

they are gratified; they have read, it may be, a few selected tracts; and they swallow down the whole without any further scruple. Most heartily do I wish that the entire works of Swedenborg were put into the hands of such persons, and that they were doomed to read them through. I can think of no more effectual method of dispelling the delusion, and reclaiming them to the paths of soberness and truth.

But I must not enlarge. Let all who read these pages be thankful for *the Bible*, — *the whole Bible*, — that “sure word of prophecy whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.” Let us love the Bible more than we have ever done. Let us study it with greater diligence and fidelity. Let us interpret it with fairness and honesty. Let us steadfastly cling to it, — and cling to it *all*. There are wandering meteors all about us; and we need a *pole-star*, — need a SUN. God, in his great mercy, has condescended to give us one. Let us not, then, turn away from it in pride and scorn, and plunge into the blackness of darkness forever.



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