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A

# LETTER

TO THE REV. J. PROUD,

*IN REPLY TO HIS REMARKS*

ON

## SEPARATION

FROM

### *THE OLD CHURCH,*

*DEFINED IN THE 32d SECTION OF HIS LAST LEGACY.*

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**BY THE REV. J. CLOWES,**

*Rector of St. John's Church, Manchester.*

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# THE HISTORY OF

THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES

THE FIRST

OF GREAT BRITAIN

BY

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TO

THE REV. J. PROUD.

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MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE perused, with mingled surprise and concern, the 32nd section of your new work entitled *the Aged Minister's Last Legacy to the New Church, &c.*, in which section you revive the old dispute on the subject of separation from the external forms of worship established in the old church. This dispute, I had fondly flattered myself, had been long ago amicably settled, so that both Separatists and Non-separatists were disposed to give each other credit for purity of intention and sincerity of profession, in regard to the doctrines which they received, whatsoever shades of difference might exist as to the several modes and forms of worship which each party thought proper to adopt. But in the indulgence of this reasonable hope, it seems, I have been lamentably disappointed, seeking peace and finding only persecution; expecting a favourable construction to be put upon the actions and motives of my friends and myself, at the very time

that they are misinterpreted and misrepresented as involving in them all that is most base, disorderly and mischievous. What steps then will be most proper to be taken on this occasion? Shall the Non-separatists plead guilty of the crimes with which they are charged, by being content quietly, and silently, to stand in the *pillary* which you have erected for them, exposed to public scorn, the subjects of public defamation, without making any effort to repel the charges of *hypocrisy, dissimulation, prevarication* and *deceit*, with which they are reviled? I apprehend, Sir, that you yourself would not justify our conduct in thus tamely and unresistingly submitting to be calumniated, because you yourself must see that the credit and character of a large body of the church's members are concerned, and that thus the church herself must be a sufferer by our silence. The church herself too must be supposed to be interested in another respect, since if we can prove ourselves to be, not those *hypocrites, dissemblers, prevaricators, and deceivers*, which you are pleased to call us, but on the contrary to have been faithful and true to the church's best interests, and to have regulated our whole conduct by the rule of her pure doctrines, so far as we could discover it, then every member of her community will rejoice to see, that the *Ethiopian's skin* and the *leopard's spots*, with which you have covered us, are changed into that *fine linen, clean and white*, with which the *LAMB'S wife is arrayed, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Under the full conviction then, that the church, on the present occasion, requires us to speak, and that it is therefore our duty to explain the principles of our conduct, and the motives by which we have been influenced, we shall endeavour, in as few words as possible, to obey the church's command, and to do justice to ourselves. We wish however first to observe, that what we have to say on the occasion is not dictated by any spirit of hostility or resentment whatsoever, but rather by the evangelical temper of universal love and charity, gentleness and forbearance, even towards those who differ from us in opinion, and are our most violent accusers. The war therefore which we wage (if it may be called *war*) is not *offensive*, but *defensive*, neither do we seek any *victory* but of truth over error, over ourselves and our passions, that so the God of heaven and of the church, whose high and holy name is JESUS CHRIST, may in all things be glorified, through the exaltation of His adorable, His unutterable love, wisdom, and providence. Commending ourselves, then, to His divine guidance, and imploring His divine aid, we thus proceed with our justification.

In the first place *we* would observe, (for I speak in the name and behalf of my friends, as well as of myself) that in the case under consideration, you appear to us to have overlooked *the single and only proper point*, on which the dispute turns, which you have thought proper to revive, between the Separatists and Non-separatists. For the question is not,

as you seem to conceive, concerning the expediency of external forms and ceremonies of worship in the New Church, nor yet concerning the agreement which ought to subsist between those forms and ceremonies, and the internal principles of life and doctrine to which they are intended to administer. For on this question, we the Non-separatists are perfectly united in sentiment with the Separatists, being fully convinced, not only of the necessity of external worship in the New Church, but also of the propriety of it's harmonizing with internal worship, whenever such harmony can be produced, in an orderly and efficient manner, and sanctioned by proper authority. All therefore that you have said on these subjects in the 32nd section of your *Legacy* is totally irrelevant, because it is altogether and entirely unconnected with the dispute under consideration. Your references also to the writings of our illuminated author, in this instance, are of no account whatsoever, since they assert nothing but that the New Church ought to celebrate external worship, and that this worship ought to be in agreement with her own principles, to all which assertions we cordially assent. But here comes the important question, which, either through inadvertence, or disinclination to examine it, you have entirely overlooked, yet which changes the whole aspect of the dispute, by throwing a new light on the conduct of the Non-separatists, and thus proving it not to be quite so black, so iniquitous and disorderly, as you are pleased to represent it. The question, I say

Is this, what is proper to be done, not when the church has attained it's full growth and perfection of strength, but when it is in the swaddling clothes of it's infant state, just beginning to emerge out of darkness into light; that when it is infirm in it's principles, and more so in it's practices, having not yet acquired the full and proper use of it's *hands* and it's *feet*; consisting also of few members, and these few in a state of such surprize at their new existence and the new world into which they are born, that they know not at first which way to turn themselves, or in what manner to direct their feeble operations? This, I say, is the important question which ought to be asked and sincerely answered, before any just judgment can be formed in the case under consideration.

But out of the above question a multiplicity of other inquiries also arise, of equal interest and moment. For it may be asked, In an *infant* state of the church, such as is here described, can it be wise or prudent to put the members immediately upon external exertions to which their strength is at present inadequate, because their internal principles of life are not yet fully formed? In such an infant state of the church too, which may be supposed to require continual strengthening by an increase of it's members, can it also be wise and prudent for those who are in the truth, to separate themselves, externally and suddenly, from those who are not in the truth, and thus lose all power and opportunity of instructing them, as they must of

necessity do, if they adopt new forms and modes of worship? Can it again be wise and prudent, when you wish to draw men over to your opinions, to begin with an express act of hostility, by condemning their liturgies, and thus rejecting all external communion with them? For was it ever known that any fowler, who intended to *catch* a bird, first began with *scaring* it? Can it further be wise and prudent in a clergyman of the established church, who has received the doctrines of the New Church, to quit his congregation immediately, and thus leave them to perish in false persuasions, instead of teaching them the truth, by still continuing his ministry amongst them? Swedenborg expressly declares, that the New Church is *to be nourished by and grow out of the old*, (see Ap. Exp. 764,) and that the falses in the Old Church are to be removed *by the clergy*: but how now is this to be effected, if the ministers of the Old Church leave their congregations, and thus, by becoming sectarists, give offence to, and repel from the knowledge of the truth, those, whom they ought to have instructed in that knowledge? Swedenborg again teaches, that *the LORD is never willing to destroy suddenly, much less instantaneously, the worship inseeded in any one from infancy, for this would be to pluck up the root, and thereby destroy the holy principle of adoration and worship deeply implanted, which the LORD never breaks, but bends, since being rooted in early life it is of such a nature, that it cannot endure violence, but must be bended with moderation and gentleness*, (A. C. 1992.) Shall



not then both clergy and laity, who have imbibed the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, suffer themselves to be influenced, in this respect, by their LORD's example, and with this view take good heed to themselves, how at any time, they *do violence* to the above holy principle of adoration and worship, either by *breaking* it with the hard tools of rancour and invective, or by neglecting to *bend* it through the softer influence of *moderation* and *gentleness*? For how dares any one venture to *destroy suddenly* what the LORD never *destroys suddenly*? Or what piety, what prudence, what intelligence can be a sanction for exercising less patience and forbearance, even towards the errors and mistakes of mankind, than the LORD Himself exercises?

'Behold' here then, Sir, some of the important questions, which you ought to have weighed deliberately, and to have answered conscientiously, before you took upon you to declare your sentiments so confidently, (I might perhaps be excused if I said so harshly) on the interesting subject of separation from external communion with the Old Church! Behold too, at the same time, the considerations involved in the above questions, which originally induced the Non-separatists to adopt their system of *moderation* and *gentleness* in regard to externals of worship, and which still press powerfully upon them the obligation of continuing to act according to that system! They feel it a duty to be affected towards the holy principle of worship implanted in infancy, as the LORD Himself is affected. They

dare not therefore *destroy it suddenly*, because the LORD *never destroys it suddenly*; neither dare they *break it*, because He *never breaks it*. They continue therefore in the use of those external forms of worship in which they have been educated, because first, they find that the LORD, without *breaking*, *bends* them, in every humble and sincere mind, to the worship of Himself, as the only GOD of heaven and earth, since those forms (I am speaking of the forms in the established church,) like the letter of the HOLY WORD from which they are derived, may be *bended* towards one GOD, or towards three, according to the state of the worshipper's mind, as enlightened, or otherwise, by the eternal truth; secondly, because they thus avoid *doing violence* to the holy principle of worship in others; thirdly, because by this moderation and forbearance they gain a greater ascendancy over the minds of their fellow-men in conducting them to the knowledge of the truth; and fourthly, because in adopting new forms and modes of worship, they must of necessity excite unnecessary prejudices against the truth, and thus prevent many from examining and receiving the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, who might otherwise have been prevailed upon to examine and receive, and thus to extend the blessed boundaries of the LORD'S new kingdom.

But, Sir, these considerations, powerful and commanding as they are, and forcibly as they operate in our minds, are not the *only* considerations on which our conduct has been grounded in regard to that

Non-separation, which you are pleased to term our crime and our reproach. For on this subject, we have attentively examined, and scrupulously obeyed the high authorities deducible from two other sources, each of which is of a nature, you yourself must allow, sufficiently imperative to demand from all mankind, and especially from the members of the New Church, the most unlimited and undisguised acquiescence. The *first* of these sources is the example of the GREAT SAVIOUR and of His Apostles, during their abode here on earth: The *second* is the testimony of our enlightened author E. S. as far as we can collect it from his various writings.

I shall begin with the first of these sources, *the examples of the GREAT SAVIOUR and His Apostles.*

You yourself, Sir, appear to be aware of the weight and influence which attach to these *examples*, since you appeal to them in an early stage of your discussion on the subject of Separation from the Old Church. But what an appeal is it which you have made! Not a single quotation have you produced from the evangelical history in regard to our LORD's conduct on the occasion, possibly because you could not meet with one which suited your purpose: In respect again to His Apostles, you do indeed quote a passage from the *Acts*, which you think illustrative of their conduct, but which only proves to me the lamentable power which prejudice occasionally exercises in human minds. For whence, let me ask, comes it to pass, that you have com-

pletely mistaken the real sense and import of the passage which you quote, and thus have deduced from it an argument which has no ground whatsoever to stand upon? I entreat you, Sir, to reconsider the Apostolic history, and you will assuredly find that I do not charge you unjustly. For what is the simple historical truth contained in the passage to which you allude, but this? Certain Jewish Christians had contended that the *Gentiles* ought to be circumcised, and keep the law, which obligation the *Gentiles* disputed and resisted. The business was therefore referred to the Apostles at Jerusalem, who gave it as their opinion that no such burden ought to be imposed on the *Gentiles*, for that it was sufficient if they *abstained from meat offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication*. But allow me to ask, What has all this to do with the conduct of the Apostles themselves, in regard to their separation from the rites of the Jewish church? The opinion, which they here give, has reference only to the *Gentile Christians*, and not at all to the Jewish ones, for, as I shall show presently, the Apostles and the Jewish Christians still thought themselves under obligation to keep the law, practise circumcision, and attend the synagogue worship. The passage, therefore, which you quote from the Acts in support of your own argument, rather makes against you, than for you, since it proves that one law was ordained for *Gentile converts*, and another for *Jewish converts*, thus that the

former were emancipated from Jewish rites and ordinances, but not so the latter.

I am extremely sorry, Sir, to be under the necessity of thus convicting you of mistake and misinterpretation in a point of so much importance, but the cause of truth requires it, and therefore having discharged this duty, I shall now proceed to produce proofs from the evangelical history, that what you say on the subject of Separation from the Old Church is not supported either by the example of our LORD, or of His Apostles.

It is strange to me, and quite unaccountable, except from the operation of that prejudice, which, I am sorry to find, can sometimes spread it's dark film over aged eyes, that in discussing the subject of Separation from the Old Church, you have entirely overlooked, or at least concealed from your readers, those passages in the gospel history, which advert to the LORD's conduct in regard to the Jewish church and the services of the temple and the synagogue. Allow me then to call those passages to your recollection, because I am persuaded you will agree with me that the LORD's example, in this instance, ought to have the weight and authority of an absolute command with all his devout followers. In the *first* place then it is most evident, that the LORD never separated Himself from the temple and synagogue worship, for we read, that He submitted to be *presented* in the temple, and also to be *circumcised*; He likewise frequently *taught* both in the temple and the synagogues, as He Himself testifies,

when He says, *I ever taught in the synagogue and the temple, whither the Jews always resort*, (John xviii. 20.) In the *second* place it is equally evident, that He paid respect to the rites of the Mosaic law, and to the authority of the priests appointed by that law, for when He had cured a leper, He discharges him with these words, *Go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them* (Matt. viii. 4. Mark i. 44. Luke v. 14.) In the *third* place it is again evident, that He did not separate His disciples from their former teachers, the Scribes and Pharisees, but on the contrary positively requires that they should attend diligently the instruction which they had been accustomed to receive from that source, for thus He expresses Himself, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*, (Matt. xxii. 2, 3.) In the *fourth* place; when He forewarns His disciples of the persecutions which they were to expect after His departure out of the world, He mentions this as one, *They shall put you out of the synagogue*, (John xvi. 2.) which is a manifest proof that the disciples never put *themselves* out of the synagogue, for had this been the case, how could they be said to be put out by *others*, and how therefore could the prediction of their DIVINE LORD and MASTER have been accomplished? Indeed, in such case, what would have been the *persecution*?

It is plain, then, from the above testimony, that the LORD never authorized by His example, any

more than by His precept, any separation from the external services of the Jewish church, but on the contrary, that He strictly charged all His followers to continue in those services.

Let us now see what was the conduct of those followers, and particularly of the Apostles themselves, after their LORD's ascension, in regard to their LORD's example and precepts, as above noted.

You assert at page 294 of your *Legacy*, that *from the time JESUS CHRIST ascended to His glory, His Apostles and disciples assembled together in His name, and we hear no more of their continuing members of the temple or synagogue.* But, my dear Sir, where did you collect this information? Not certainly from the only authentic records of the conduct of those primitive Christians, since had you consulted those records with proper attention, they must immediately have convinced you of your mistake. For only take the trouble for a moment of looking with me into the Book called *the Acts of the Apostles*, which contains the genuine history of what they did and said after their LORD's ascension, and what do you read there? *Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.* (chap. iii. 1.) Again, *The angel of the LORD by night opened the prison doors, and brought them (the Apostles) forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.* (chap. v. 29 to 32.) Again,

*And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach JESUS CHRIST, (chap. v. 42.)* Again, *When they (Barnabas and Saul) departed from Perga, they came into Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down, (chap. iii. 14.)* Again, *It came to pass in Iconium that they (Barnabas and Saul) went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed, (chap. xiv. 1.)* Again, *Him (Timotheus) would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters, (chap. xvi. 3.)* Again, *Now when they (Paul and Silas) had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, (chap. xvii. 1, 2.)* Again, *Therefore disputed he (Paul) in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, (chap. xvii. 17.)* Again, *And he (Paul) reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath-day, (chap. xviii. 4.)* Again, *And he (Paul) came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews, (chap. xviii. 19.)* Again, *A certain Jew named Apollo, who was instructed in the way of the LORD, began to speak boldly in the synagogue, (chap. xviii. 24, 25, 26.)* Again, *He (Paul) went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, (chap. xix. 8.)* Lastly, when Paul returned to Jerusalem,



after preaching the gospel in various parts of Asia, we are informed that James and all the elders accosted him in these words, "*Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together, for they will know that thou art come: Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them: Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads, and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law,*" (chap. xxi. 20 to 25.) This address, we afterwards read, had it's intended effect, for it is written at verse 26, that *Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, and that an offering should be offered for every one of them.*

Behold here, Sir, a true statement of the conduct of the Apostles and first converts to Christianity, in regard to the Jewish temple and ordinances, as we find it handed down to us in that authentic record called *the Acts of the Apostles*, and then compare this statement with your own on the same subject! You have taken upon you to assert, that *from the*

time **JESUS CHRIST** ascended to His glory, we hear no more of His Apostles and disciples continuing members of the temple or synagogue, but the traditions of the Jews gave way to the doctrines of **JESUS CHRIST**, the ceremonies of the Jews to the rituals of the gospel. (See *Legacy*, p. 294.) But, my dear Sir, what rashness could tempt you to make this unguarded assertion, which you here find so positively contradicted by the conduct even of the Apostles themselves? For what shall we say is to be understood by *Peter and John going up together into the temple at the hour of prayer*; by the angel of the Lord saying to them, *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people*; by their daily in the temple ceasing not to teach and preach **JESUS CHRIST**; by *Barnabas and Saul going together into the synagogue of the Jews, and speaking*; by *Paul circumcising Timothy*; by *Paul so repeatedly attending the synagogue*; and lastly, by his submitting to purify himself with the four men who had a vow on them, and this at the instigation of James and all the elders, and to avoid giving offence to the Jewish proselytes? (See extracts above from the *Acts of the Apostles*.) Is there any thing in all this like the separation you speak of from the Jewish synagogue? Or rather, doth not the whole history of the Acts of the Apostles uniformly testify, that for a long time after the ascension of their LORD, the Apostles and Jewish proselytes still continued to attend both the temple, the synagogue, and the Jewish external worship and ordinances?

To the above evidence respecting the conduct of the Apostles, I might add the testimony of ecclesiastical historians, particularly of Eusebius bishop of Cæsarea, in his account of the Apostle James, the first bishop of the Christian church at Jerusalem. For the historian relates concerning this pious man, that by reason of his extraordinary sanctity of life, *he was the only person that had free access into the Holy of Holies, in the Jewish temple, and that he was afterwards thrown down from the top of the temple by some Jewish Rabbis, who were enraged at the firmness with which he maintained the doctrines of Christianity.* I might remark also, that we never read, or hear any mention made, of the Apostles *building new temples* for the celebration of any particular form of worship of their own, or that they ever recommended to others the erecting of such temples, which most probably they would have done, had they and their proselytes been entirely detached and separated from the service of the temple and the synagogue. But, I trust, enough has been already said to convince every candid and reasonable person, and even yourself, that you are not altogether correct, or rather that you are altogether mistaken, in your statement of the conduct of the Apostles after their Lord's ascension to glory.

I proceed therefore now to the consideration of another high authority, on which the Non-separatists ground their justification, and which is deducible from another source, viz. the testimony of our

enlightened author E. S. so far as we can collect it from his various writings.

This testimony has frequently been adverted to, and urged, in former publications, but as you appear either to have forgotten, or overlooked it, I shall take the liberty of calling it again to your recollection.

Allow me then, Sir, to observe, that in all the voluminous writings of our enlightened scribe, there is not to be found a single passage, which even hints at the necessity of his readers separating from the *externals* of the worship in which they have been educated, by erecting new temples, and instituting new forms and modes of worship. A necessity is indeed insisted on of *separating from other churches in doctrine and life*, but this is a perfectly distinct consideration from separation as to *externals of worship*. Indeed, the *externals of worship*, except in relation to *baptism* and the *holy supper*, appear to have been made little account of by the scribe of the New Jerusalem, insomuch that in his comment on the fiftieth Psalm he asserts, that *the LORD desireth not sacrifice and external worship*; and again in his comment on the fifty-first Psalm he says, that *the LORD prays for purification, in which case He will teach divine truths, and not external but internal worship*. (See summary Exposition.)

But although our venerable scribe says not a single syllable to show the necessity of separating from the *external* worship of the Old Church, he urges many reasons for continuing in it, at least till

the New Church shall attain a greater fulness and maturity of growth. For it has already been observed what his remark is concerning the holy principle of worship implanted in infancy, how it ought not to be *destroyed*, because the Lord *never breaks, but bends* it. To this remark may be added three other (to me) most satisfactory reasons, deducible from the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, why every reader should pause, at least, before he quits those externals of worship in which he has been educated. The first of these reasons may be found in the author's Exposition, in his Ap. Exp. n. 670, of that passage in the 11th chapter of the Apocalypse, where it is said, that *the two witnesses ascended into heaven in a cloud*. The second may be found in the same work, n. 764, in his Exposition of the passage in the 12th chapter, where it is written, that *the earth helped the woman*: And the third may be found in what he testifies concerning the clergy, where he says, that *they are to be instrumental in eradicating the falses of the Old Church*. (T. C. R. n. 784.)

Now, Sir, respecting the first of the above reasons, you yourself know, as well as I can tell you, that our enlightened author's Exposition of the passage in the Apocalypse concerning the *two witnesses*, where it is said, that *they ascended to heaven in a cloud*, is to this effect, that the New Church, signified by the two witnesses, was to be separated from the Old Church, *as to internals, but not as to externals*. You know further, that by the *externals* here

spoken of are meant, according to the same author, *the externals of the Word, of the church, and of worship*. Is not this then a sufficient reason why a receiver of the doctrines of the New Church should hesitate, before he separates from the *externals of worship* in the Old Church? For can it be safe to oppose the testimony of the messenger of the New Jerusalem, who declares, that such separation was to be confined to *internals*, and not extend to *externals*? You will perhaps contend, as the Rev. Mr. Jones has contended, that the above testimony relates to the church *in the spiritual world*; and not to the church *in the natural world*. But allowing this to be the case, (which yet I am not disposed at all to allow, since our author has made no such exception)—but, I say, allowing it for a moment to be so, I would then ask, Is it wise, or is it prudent, for the church *in the natural world* to adopt a conduct directly opposed to that of the church *in the spiritual world*? For what sufficient reason can be assigned, why *separation as to internals, but not as to externals*, should be expedient in the one case, and not in the other?

In regard again to the second of the above reasons, as grounded in our author's Exposition of the passage in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, where it is written that *the earth helped the woman*, you again know, as well as I can tell you, that our author's interpretation of these words is to this effect, that *the church, which is called the New Jerusalem, is to tarry (or abide) for a time amongst those*

*who are in the doctrine of faith separate (from charity and good works) whilst it grows to the full, until provision be made (for it's establishment) amongst greater numbers.* You know also the reason which he assigns for this delay as to separation, viz. *that in the old church there are some who live the life of faith, which is charity, and hence it is that the New Church, which is called the holy Jerusalem, is helped by these latter, and is also increased.* (See Ap. Exp. 764) Allow me now, Sir, to ask the question, Has the wisdom and prudence, contained in the above explication, been acted upon by all the members of the New Church? Have they waited patiently, in external communion with the Old Church, till the New Church was arrived at it's *fulness*? Rather, in some instances, have they not been impetuous and even violent, to do that *immediately* which their favourite and enlightened author declares ought not to be done, until the church had attained a *fulness* of growth? It is in vain to urge, on this occasion, that the church has long ago attained *that fulness*, for can a church, in this kingdom, for instance, be said to be *full*, when the number of souls in that church, compared with the number of souls contained in the kingdom, and which the church is capable of admitting, is only in the proportion of four or five thousand to sixteen millions, or of one to three thousand? Have not therefore the Non-separatists, in this instance, given a commendable proof of their attention and attachment to the wisdom and prudence of their heavenly-directed

teacher's Exposition, by *tarrying*, as he advises, amongst the members of the Old Church in *externals*, in order that the New Church may attain the fulness of it's growth, and the maturity of it's strength?

But I hasten to the consideration of the *third* reason above adverted to, why a separation from the externals of the Old Church is not at present adviseable, as it may be deduced from what our enlightened author observes concerning the *clergy*, viz. that *the New Church cannot be formed, unless falses be first eradicated, which must be effected amongst the clergy, and thus amongst the laity.* (T. C. R. n. 784.) For what is this but saying, that the *clergy* must first extirpate falses, by the implantation of truths in their own minds, and thus be rendered instrumental in eradicating falses from the minds of the *laity*? But who, let me ask, are here to be understood by the *clergy*? Surely none but such, as have received *episcopal ordination*, for Swedenborg was acquainted with no other. And how are these *clergy* to *eradicate falses amongst the laity*, but by remaining in their respective churches, and teaching truths? The conclusion therefore is evident, that Swedenborg never meant to intimate that the *clergy*, on receiving the truth, should quit their churches, but quite the contrary, since in quitting their churches, they must of course leave the *laity* uninstructed in truth, and thus could never be instrumental in eradicating falses which Swedenborg declares was to be the effect of their teaching. It is plain then to me, as the sun at noon-



day, that every clergyman of the established church in this country, who has received the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, is bound by the authority of Swedenborg's testimony, to continue his ministry in the church to which he is appointed; and that if he does not so continue his ministry, he then offends against the express declaration of his heaven-directed teacher, and in so doing, annuls the blessed power and privilege with which he is gifted, of eradicating falses amongst his congregation. In further proof of this assertion, (if it wanted any) I might appeal to the case of the late Mr. Hartley, Rector of Winwick in Northamptonshire, translator of the treatises on *Influx*, and on *Heaven and Hell*, and the most confidential friend of Swedenborg in this country, who yet, so far from being advised by Swedenborg to quit his church, as he certainly would have been had Swedenborg thought it necessary, continued in the ministry of the Old Church to the end of his life, and most earnestly importuned me to do the same.

How then, Sir, are we to account, on any rational ground, for the three facts above stated, *first*, that Swedenborg interprets *one* passage in the Apocalyptic pages, as relating to a separation of the New Church from the Old, *as to internals, but not as to externals*; *secondly*, that he interprets *another* passage in the same work, as announcing that *the New Church was to tarry for a certain period with the Old*; and *thirdly*, that *falses in the Old Church were to be eradicated by the clergy*? How, I say, shall we

give any rational account of the above facts, except by supposing that Swedenborg, in the *first* instance, saw the danger, or at least the inexpediency, of the New Church separating from the Old *as to externals*; and in the *second* instance, that he saw the danger of a *hasty* separation; and *thirdly*, that he never intended to call the *clergy*, who had received the doctrines of the New Church, to any separation? Do you still then urge us to comply with you in your favourite object of separation from the externals of the Old Church? We tell you plainly that we *dare not*? Do you ask why we dare not? We tell you with equal plainness, that we dare not counteract the examples of JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles, and at the same time reject the counsel of our enlightened teacher. Do you still insist, that by our Non-separation we prevent many from receiving the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem? We wish to reply, but with all humility and distrust of our own judgment, that we do not think ourselves answerable for the *consequences*, but for the *motives* of our conduct, leaving the consequences to the divine providence of the MOST HIGH. We should be extremely sorry to be instrumental in excluding any from the blessed light of the New Jerusalem, but if their admission to that light depends on our acting contrary to the convictions of our consciences, grounded in divine example and precept, we can only say, we *cannot*, because we *dare not*, promote it.

Having now, Sir, endeavoured to explain to you

the true ground, on which the Non-separatists justify their conduct, I shall only beg leave to detain you a moment longer, whilst I make a remark or two on some assertions contained in your Section *on Separation from the Old Church*.

It has been abundantly proved above, by multiplied quotations both from the Evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles, that neither JESUS CHRIST, or His Apostles, ever separated from the *externals* of the Jewish church and worship: It has been also proved, by quotations from the writings of Swedenborg, that he never encourages any separation of the members of the New Jerusalem church from *external* communion with the Old Church, but on the contrary, urges prudential cautions against it, and in one passage declares expressly, that the two churches were to be separated *as to internals, but not as to externals*. What then, Sir, are we to think of your unguarded assertions, when we hear you say, that *from the time JESUS CHRIST ascended to His glory, we hear no more of His Apostles and disciples continuing members of the temple or synagogue?* And again, *I venture to assert, that we have no authority, example, or precedent to justify the conduct (of the Non-separatists?)* And again, *However we may hesitate, demur, and endeavour to plead for a Non-separation, it is most evident that not one single justifiable argument can be advanced in it's favour, no not a single command, example or authority in all the whole Word, or the Writings* .(See pages 294, 299, 312.) Really, Sir, when I read these rash asser-

tions, I am led to deplore more and more that declension of the human mind from it's pristine state of integrity, which could expose it to be the dupe of such inconsideration. For are the examples of JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles *no* examples? Is the authority of Swedenborg *no* authority? Are the arguments resulting from both *no* justifiable arguments? How then was it possible for any man, and especially for a member and aged minister of the LORD's glorious New Church, with the Bible and the writings of E. S. before his eyes, so flatly to contradict the plain testimony of both! I weep therefore unceasingly over the weaknesses of my brethren, and I most earnestly supplicate the MOST HIGH, that in His adorable mercy He will be pleased to guard us all, with a double guard, against the corruptions of our own hearts, and at the same time against those erroneous reasonings, and wrong conclusions, into which those corruptions have a continual necessary tendency to betray us.

Again, Sir, how durst any member of the New Church venture to pervert, as you have done, at page 300, that passage in the Revelation, (chap. xi. 14.) where it is said to the two witnesses, *Come up hither*, by applying the words to the Non-separatists, as if they contained a call from heaven to them to *come* into your newly-constructed temples, and adopt your new forms and ordinances of worship? Swedenborg, you know, or ought to know, interprets the words as denoting, that the two witnesses *were taken up into heaven*, (Ap. Rev. 512.) Were

you not then afraid, Sir, to adopt another interpretation, and an interpretation also at such variance with the words themselves? For can the call, *Come up*, apply in any way as a call to come up to things *external*? or can the term, *hither*, when uttered by a voice from heaven, mean a *building of brick or stone*? Really, Sir, I am shocked at such gross perversion, not to say profanation, of the holy Word of the MOST HIGH.

But, Sir, you have not only perverted the holy Word, and contradicted it's plain testimony, together with the testimony of the writings of E. S. in your zeal for Separation from the Old Church, but you have added calumny to such perversion and contradiction, by expressing yourself in language, which no zeal can warrant, which the best cause cannot sanction, and which in general is only resorted to, when truth, and reason and argument fail. For to this effect I read in the 307th page of your book, *How must our minds feel for the dissimulation, prevarication, and mental reservation we are obliged to, while we are in appearance devoutly joining in forms, words, prayers and worship, in which our hearts cannot unite*: And again, at page 308, *In fact, this is not only hypocrisy and gross deception, but it is telling the congregation we are of their faith, &c.* And again, at page 303, *The very state, (viz. of disorder in New Church establishments,) which is urged as a cause for Non-separation, is the state they themselves (the Non-separatists) have contributed to promote.* These, my dear Sir, you will surely allow, are heavy charges,

especially when urged by an *aged minister*; but are you aware that they apply alike to JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles, as to the Non-separatists? Are you aware, I say, that according to your reasoning, both JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles, were *dissemblers, prevaricators, hypocrites and deceivers*, since in attending the Jewish temple and synagogue, as they were constantly in the habit of doing, they, (agreeably with the tenour of your argument) set an example of all that same *dissimulation, prevarication, mental reservation, hypocrisy and deceit*, of which you accuse the Non-separatists? You must either then prove (which it is impossible you can do) that JESUS CHRIST, and His Apostles after his ascension to glory, never joined in the temple and synagogue service, and never conformed to Jewish ordinances, or you must load their memories with all the same opprobrious epithets which you have heaped on us the Non-separatists of the present day. In regard to your other charge of *our being accessory to all the disorders which have taken place in New Church establishments*, you really make us smile, and remind us of those philosophers, who either ascribe effects to wrong causes, or confound causes with effects, since the truth is, that our foresight and apprehension of the disorders to which you allude, constituted one, amongst many other reasons, why we dreaded the idea of separation, and therefore the disorders themselves were the cause of our Non-separation, and not our Non-separation the cause of the disorders.

One observation more, and I have done. You appear to lay great stress on the *visibility* of the New Church, and on the necessity of such *visibility*, for thus you write at page 313, *The New Church must be a visible external church from internal principles*; and again you repeat at page 314, *The church on earth must be a distinct, visible, external church, separate from all others, seen and known to be such in the world.*—Now, Sir, I would maintain, that no church, properly speaking, can be *visible*, if by being *visible* you mean, as I should suppose you must mean, *visible* to mortal eyes; for by the term *church*, you must be well aware, is not to be understood *a mere visible building of wood and stone, nor yet any mere visible forms and ceremonies of worship*, but by the term *church* is meant and implied the LORD'S kingdom here on earth, which kingdom, as being a *spiritual* kingdom, and consisting of *spiritual* principles, cannot possibly be an object of *corporeal sight*. Accordingly, when JESUS CHRIST was questioned by the Pharisees as to the time *when the kingdom of God should come*, He replies in these ever-memorable and edifying words, *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation* (or outward show;) *neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you*, (Luke xviii. 20, 21.) And what is all this but saying, that the church also, which is the *kingdom of God* here on earth, *cometh not by observation, neither shall they say* of it, *Lo here! or lo there!* for the church (or kingdom of God here on earth) *is within you?*

We conceive then, Sir, on the authority of the LORD's own words, that the New Church, properly considered, can never become a *visible* church, or a church to be pointed at by a *Lo here!* or *lo there!* Its external worship may indeed be rendered *visible*, but then it is well to be noted, that *external worship* is distinct from the church, and ought not therefore to be confounded with the church, inasmuch as the church, according to the testimony of our author, may exist without external worship, and actually did so exist in the most ancient church (see A. C. 420.) A wicked and unbelieving person may also perform *external worship* as well as the true believer, and thus *visibly* may pass for a true believer, in like manner as a proud man may *visibly* appear humble, and a covetous man may *visibly* appear generous.

*Visibility* then, Sir, it should seem, has nothing to do with the *real* church, because *visibility* belongs only to things *merely external*, whereas the *real* church, being the *invisible kingdom of God*, or an *invisible* principle of heavenly love, wisdom, and life from God, descending into, and operative in human minds, cannot possibly be rendered *visible* by any external signs, forms, or ordinances whatsoever, any more than the principles of good and of truth, or of charity and faith, which constitute it, can be rendered *visible*. It is therefore written in the parable, that *the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, which, when a man hath found, he hideth*, (Matt. xiii. 44;) and hence too we read of the *hidden manna*, (Rev. ii. 17.)



The above remarks, Sir, are applied by the Non-separatists to that blessed and glorious *New Church*, which is at this day announced as the fulfilment of the counsels, the providence and the predictions of the MOST HIGH, because they conceive this church to mean and to be nothing else but the descent, formation, and operation of heavenly principles of love and of life in human minds, and that therefore it includes within its blessed pale all those sons and daughters of men, who are influenced by such principles, whatsoever forms of external worship they may choose to adopt, or in whatsoever places they may think best to express their adoration of their HEAVENLY FATHER. For the Almighty, we know, *dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, but in the living spiritual temples of *humble and contrite hearts*, or with all those who love Him and keep His commandments. The question therefore concerning the proper characteristic of a *New-church-man* is, not in what *place* he celebrates his worship, or in what *form of words* he expresses it, but whether he loves the LORD above all things, and his neighbour as himself? For where this love is, there, we believe, is a member of the New Church, and where this love is not, there, we believe, is a member of the Old Church. The difference therefore between the members of the New Church, and the members of the Old, doth not, according to our judgment, consist in the difference of places where they perform their worship, but in the difference of the principles which govern their lives, since a *New-church-man*,

properly speaking, is one who is governed by charity and faith combined, whereas an Old-church-man, properly speaking, is one who is governed by what he calls faith separate from charity. And here, Sir, we would observe further, that if you could multiply your new *visible* temples to a thousand times their present number, and fill them with a thousand times the *visible* numbers which they at present contain, this would be no proof at all to us of the increase and enlargement of the LORD'S New Church, since it is possible that in a new temple there may be an unclean heart, through the separation of faith from charity, or of life from doctrine. On the other hand, if we observe in an old temple, and in the use of old forms of worship, a devout and sincere worshipper, who joins charity to his faith, and a good life to his doctrine, there we rejoice in beholding and acknowledging a New-church-man, and and there too we are thankful at witnessing the increase and enlargement of the LORD'S glorious New Church. We would not however be here understood as impeaching at all the conduct of those, who have thought it right to build, or who think it their duty to attend, new *visible* temples, for we dare not meddle with the consciences of men, and therefore would rather give them credit for uprightness and sincerity, than load them with contumely and reproach, because they do not think and act like ourselves: For we are taught by our enlightened author, that *the LORD, by means of charity, entereth into and operateth upon all in a different manner, according to the*

*particular temper of each, and thus disposeth all and every one according to the arrangements of order, as in heaven, so on earth, and thus the will of the Lord is done.* (A. C. 1285.) It is evident, therefore, that a Separatist may be led in one way, and a Non-separatist in another, and yet both may be fulfilling the will of their FATHER *which is in heaven*, and like the various colours of the *rainbow*, may unitedly form that heavenly symbol, which expresses, more forcibly than words can do, the everlasting covenant of divine mercy, protection and blessing. All therefore that we mean to assert is this, that it is possible an Old-church-man may be found in a new temple, and in the use of new forms and modes of worship, as on the other hand, a New-church-man may be found in an old temple, and in the use of old forms and modes of worship. Thus, Sir, we would not confine the boundaries of the LORD's glorious New Church within the narrow *visible* limits of wood and stone, of terms and of forms, limits which the LORD Himself hath no where ordained, but we would rather extend them through the universe of created intelligencies, in whatsoever region such intelligencies may be found, by whatsoever name they may be called, or in whatsoever way they may choose to express their acknowledgment of the multiplied mercies they receive from their HEAVENLY FATHER. For it is our firm belief, that the second blessed Advent of our LORD, which we at this day commemorate, together with the heavenly doctrine of the New Jerusalem by which it is announced, was thus

intended as a general blessing unto all people, nations and languages, and that all therefore are partakers of that blessing, who fear His great and holy name and keep his commandments. Thus we believe, that *the river of the water of life, now proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the LAMB,* will not suffer itself to be confined within the contracted banks of human authorities, conclaves, and ordinances, but will diffuse it's living and fertilizing streams amongst all sects and denominations of Christians, who, in agreement with the prophetic requisition, *rend their hearts, and not their garments, and turn unto the LORD their GOD,* (Joel ii. 13.) Whilst therefore we thank you for your kind application of the divine caution which says, *Come out of her, my people, &c.* (page 309) by which you mean that we should come out from the ordinances and service of the Old Church, we trust that we both have obeyed, and are obeying this counsel, inasmuch as we verily believe that the only true and profitable way of *coming out of*-the Old Church, and entering into the new, is to *come out* from all evil and error, by acknowledging JESUS CHRIST in our hearts and understandings as the ONLY TRUE GOD, and by keeping His holy commandments of love and charity.

Wishing therefore, and praying earnestly, that all mankind may thus *remember themselves, and turn unto the LORD their GOD with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength,* and including yourself, dear Sir, and all the separated brethren in this

devout prayer, I cannot conclude my long letter in words better suited to express my present feelings, than in those contained in an extract from a work, published some years ago, and addressed to the receivers of the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem. The words are these, "There is therefore but one kind of *Separation*, and but one kind of *change*, which I would at present recommend, and that is a Separation from all evil and false principles of heart and life, and a consequent change of nature, that so by true regeneration you may be led into that heavenly spirit of solid wisdom, grounded in universal love and charity, and operative in all Christian meekness, moderation, gentleness, and good works, which is the only spirit in which you can ever hope to find heaven yourselves, or to lead others thither. Convince the world thus, that the temper and spirit of the New Church is not a *partial, sectarian, and bigotted* temper of spirit, which excites horror, and from which all wise men flee away, but that it is *universal, not limited to a sect, not servilely attached to forms and ceremonies*, consequently conciliating and attractive, and such as, like it's DIVINE GIVER, *will draw all men unto it*. Let mankind see by the order, harmony, sobriety, purity and peace of your lives, that ye yourselves have found the truth, and you may then have a good hope of leading them to seek it, and enabling them to find it, where you have sought and found it, and will thus adopt a more probable method of recommend-

“ing the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and  
 “making converts to them, than if you should build  
 “a hundred new places of worship, and establish  
 “a hundred new forms and ceremonies, in every  
 “town of the united kingdom.”

In the spirit of the counsel contained in this extract, and with every cordial wish for your welfare and happiness,

I remain, dear Sir,

Sincerely your's,

J. CLOWES.

*Manchester, March 20th, 1818.*

